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Pennsylvania Physicians Respond to Joint Commission HR 60 Recommendations, Call for Stronger Protections Against Gambling-Related Harm

Pittsburgh, PA 7/16/2026. The Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society (PaPS), in collaboration with the Pennsylvania Society of Addiction Medicine (PSAM), today responded to the [*Joint State Government Commission's report*](#) released this week examining the public health consequences of sports betting and interactive gambling expansion in Pennsylvania.

PaPS and PSAM commend the Commonwealth for undertaking a comprehensive evaluation of gambling-related harm and its impact on Pennsylvanians. The Joint State Government Commission's immediate recommendations—including prohibiting the use of credit cards for gambling, establishing player limits, eliminating autoplay features, addressing youth exposure and advertising, restricting prop bets, and curtailing or eliminating VIP programs—closely align with the evidence-based recommendations outlined in the [*Position Statement on Mitigating Gambling Harm in Pennsylvania*](#) published jointly by PaPS and PSAM earlier this year. These findings represent an important step toward reducing preventable gambling-related harm and advancing a public health approach to gambling regulation in Pennsylvania.

“Gambling disorder is a recognized and treatable psychiatric condition with profound impacts on mental health, financial stability, and family systems,” said Kavita Fischer, MD, DFAPA, Past President of PaPS and board member for Stop Predatory Gambling and lead for Doctors Against Gambling. “The recommendations on pages 103–105 reflect the growing body of evidence showing that product design, advertising, unlimited access, and industry practices including VIP hosts contribute to harm. We urge lawmakers to treat gambling-related harm with the same seriousness applied to other preventable public health threats.”

The Public Policy Chair for PSAM, Robert Tessier, MD, MPH, states: “The expansion of easily accessible forms of gambling in Pennsylvania has certainly increased state revenue, but at a significant human cost. The commission's recommendations recognize this rapidly expanding problem and support that our state has a responsibility to engage in prevention efforts through evidence-based safeguards and improve access to proven treatments for gambling disorder.”

As per their earlier statement PaPS and PSAM emphasize that the “Commonwealth now stands at a pivotal moment: **taking action today can protect current and future generations, safeguard vulnerable individuals, and uphold Pennsylvania’s responsibility to prioritize health over industry expansion.**”

About the Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society (PaPS): The Pennsylvania Psychiatric Society is the leading professional organization representing psychiatrists across the Commonwealth. A district branch of the American Psychiatric Association, PaPS and the APA are committed to advancing quality psychiatric care, advocating for sound public policy, and promoting mental health for all.

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About the Pennsylvania Society of Addiction Medicine (PSAM): The Pennsylvania Society of Addiction Medicine (PSAM), a state chapter of the American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM), represents more than 400 Pennsylvania physicians and other providers specializing in addiction treatment. The mission of PSAM is to provide a collaborative community and resource for the physicians and associated professionals dedicated to excellence in advancing the science and best practices of substance use research, education, and clinical care for individuals and families living with substance use disorders. Our shared humanitarian goals are to improve and save lives.

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