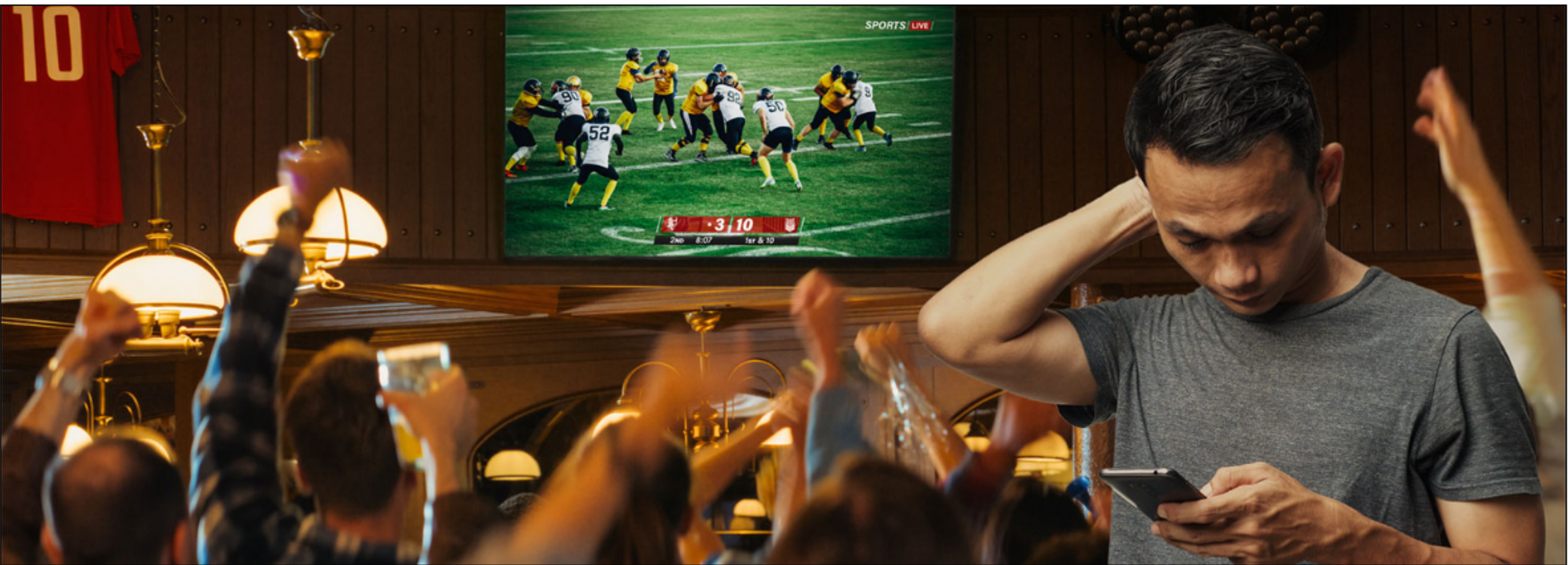


# New Survey Shows Rising Rates of Disordered Gambling Among Marylanders Since Legalization of Online Sports Betting

October 22, 2025



Jessica Brown, PhD

Since the legalization of mobile sports betting in Maryland nearly three years ago, the rate of disordered gambling in the state has increased by 42%, from 4% of Marylanders to 5.7%. That is according to a survey of more than 3,600 respondents conducted from May to July 2024. The survey was led by [The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling](#) at the University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM).

The survey results are the first data available since the legal availability of mobile sports betting in the state.

“The rise in disordered gambling prevalence is concerning, and we will continue to track these patterns,” said survey lead author [Jessica P. Brown, PhD](#), Associate Professor of Epidemiology & Public Health at UMSOM and Director of Research at The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling.

Disordered gambling is defined by the American Psychiatric Association as a persistent and recurrent problematic gambling behavior that leads to clinically significant impairment or distress.

“Some of the common warning signs include being unable to set limits on gambling, lying to loved ones to cover up losses and feeling restless or irritable when not gambling,” said [Christopher Welsh, MD](#), Medical Director and Director of Research at The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling and Professor of Psychiatry at UMSOM. “Problem gambling also commonly occurs alongside other substance use disorders involving alcohol, tobacco, and other drugs. Those with depression and anxiety are also at higher risk.”



Heather Eshleman, MPH

To conduct the study, The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling surveyed more than 3,600 adult state residents and found that most of the respondents (90%) participated in gambling activities like gambling at a casino, gambling on horse races, or engaging in sports betting at some point during their lives. This has remained consistent over the past 15 years since the Center first began conducting the surveys. In addition, 207 survey respondents were identified as having problematic behaviors that met the criteria for disordered gambling.



Christopher Welsh, MD

“Our findings emphasize the ongoing need for prevention, treatment, policy change, and recovery support services to individuals and communities,” said [Heather Eshleman, MPH](#), Director of Operations at The Maryland Center for Excellence on Problem Gambling.

The responses highlighted several major findings detailing an increase in online sports betting participation and the opportunities for enhancement in services such as the need for targeted

intervention strategies.

## Impact of Mobile Sports Betting in Maryland:

- **17%** of Marylanders reported betting on sports in the past year, with 12% betting on online or mobile platforms--almost quadrupling from 3% in 2022 when it was first legalized.
- **15%** of Maryland adults who had gambled on sports in the past year met criteria for disordered gambling.

## Impact on High-Risk Communities:

- Men are affected at nearly **triple** the rate of women (8.2% vs 3.6%) More than half (66%) of Marylanders with disordered gambling are male.
- African American adults face problem gambling rates nearly three times higher than white adults. (10.6% vs 3.6%)
- Disordered gambling was higher among Hispanics (8.8%) compared to non-Hispanics (5.5%)

## A Rise in Help-Seeking

The study found some positive developments: an increase in the number of Maryland residents seeking help for problematic gambling behaviors. In 2024, 13% of Marylanders with a history of disordered gambling reported that they had ever sought help via the toll-free helpline, Gamblers Anonymous or outpatient services like private counseling. That is an increase of 73% from 2022. In addition, nearly half of survey respondents reported that they were aware of the toll-free 1-800-GAMBLER helpline.

The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling will continue to study the risk factors associated with problem gambling and work with stakeholders across the state to maintain and enhance the service delivery model for individuals and families.

## About the Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling

The [Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling](#) (the Center) is a program of the University of Maryland School of Medicine and funded by the Maryland Department of Health’s Behavioral Health Administration. The Center promotes healthy and informed choices regarding gambling and problem gambling through public awareness, training and education, prevention, technical assistance to the behavioral health care system, peer recovery support, research and public policy. It does so by working closely with appropriate state stakeholders and bringing together experts from a variety of disciplines including psychiatry, medicine, epidemiology, social work, law and others.

## CONTACT

Holly Moody-Porter  
Sr. Media Relations Specialist, UMSOM  
[hmoody@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:hmoody@som.umaryland.edu)

Mike Kafes  
Communications and Public Relations Manager, The Maryland Center of Excellence on Problem Gambling  
[Mkafes@som.umaryland.edu](mailto:Mkafes@som.umaryland.edu)

