

# The Health Impacts of Gambling Expansion in Toronto

**Dr. David McKeown**  
**Medical Officer of Health**

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# Prevalence of Problem Gambling

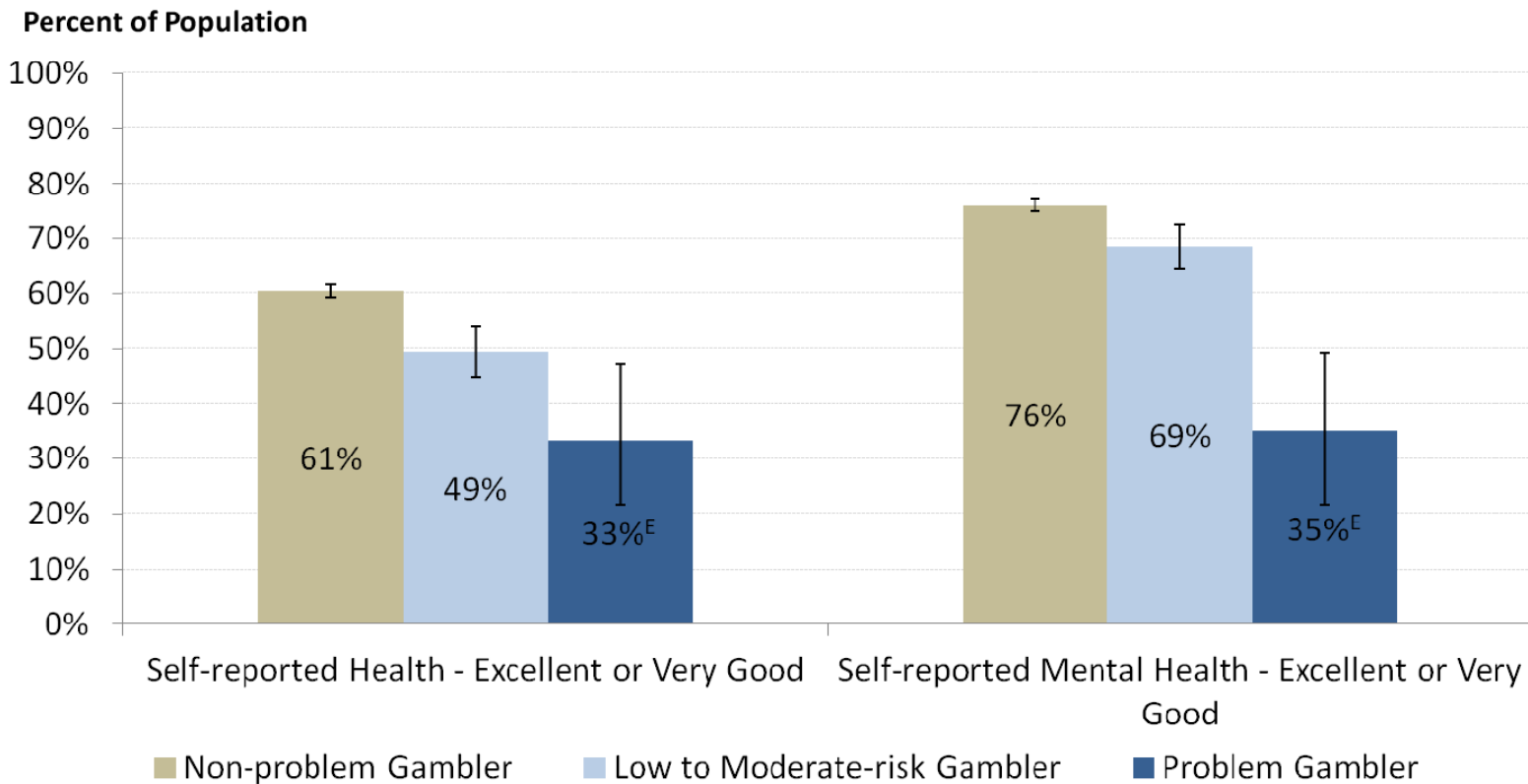
- Some estimate that the Ontario prevalence of problem gambling (including both moderate risk and problem gamblers) is between 1.2% and 3.4%
- Toronto Public Health focused on the most severe form of problem gambling - estimated 11,000 people aged 18+ (0.2%<sup>E</sup>) in the GTA and 25,000 (0.3%) in Ontario\*
- At-risk gamblers - approximately 129,000 people aged 18+ (2.8%) in the GTA and 294,000 (3.0%) in Ontario\*

E – Moderately high sampling variability; interpret with caution.

\* Data Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007/08. Statistics Canada, Share File, Knowledge Management and Reporting Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

# Health Impacts of Problem Gambling

## Self-Reported Health and Mental Health by Type of Gambler, Aged 18+, Ontario, 2007/08



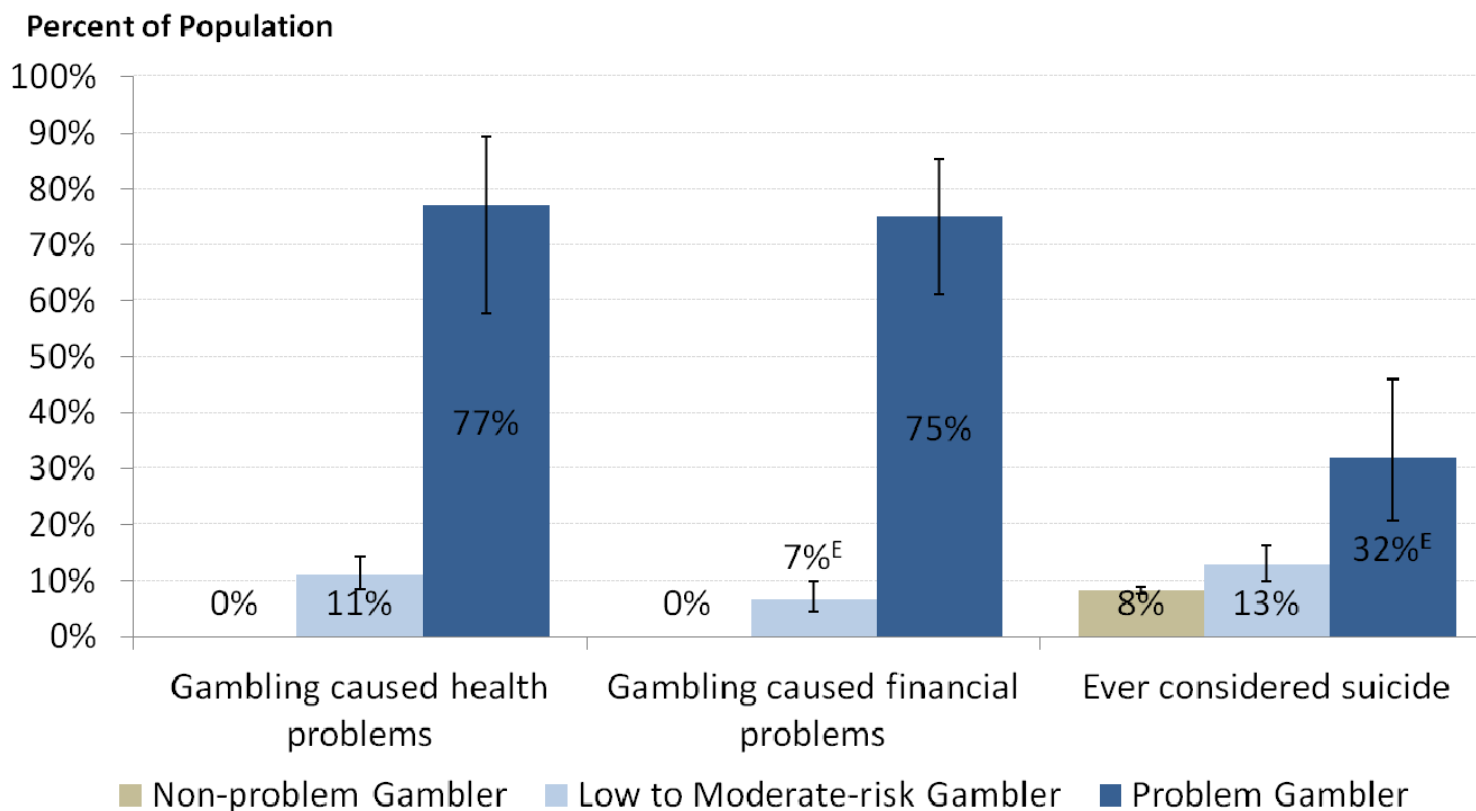
Notes: (1) Gambling classifications are based on a modified version of the nine-item Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), part of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). (2) Error bars (I) denote 95% confidence intervals. E – Moderately high sampling variability; interpret with caution. Low-risk and Moderate-risk gamblers were combined due to small sample sizes. See Appendix for the full data table.

Data Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007/08. Statistics Canada, Share File, Knowledge Management and Reporting Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care.

Prepared by: Toronto Public Health

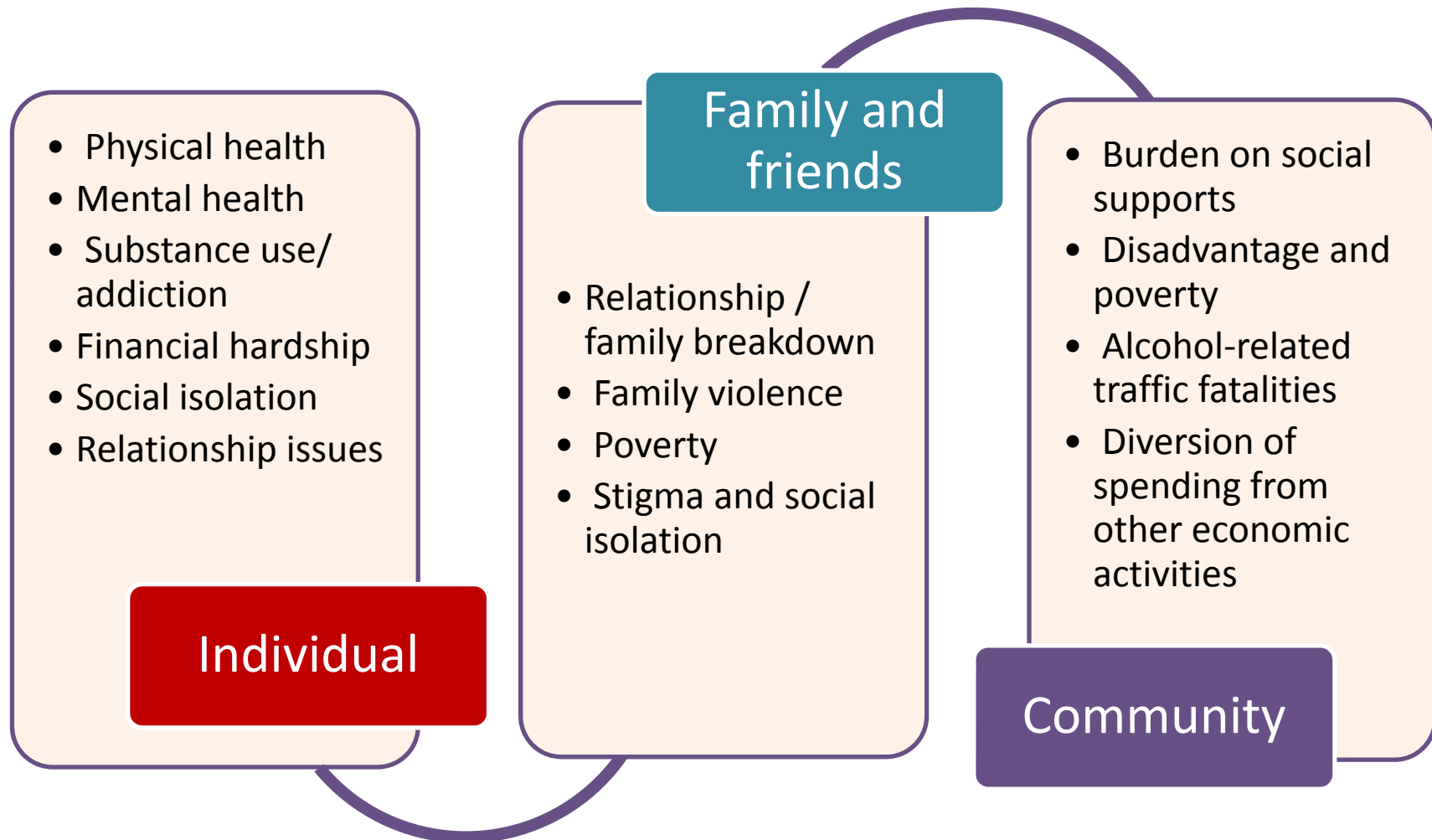
# Health Impacts of Problem Gambling

Health Impacts Reported "At least Sometimes" in Past 12 Months by Type of Gambler, Aged 18+, Ontario, 2007/08



Notes: (1) Gambling classifications are based on a modified version of the nine-item Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI), part of the Canadian Problem Gambling Index (CPGI). (2) Error bars (I) denote 95% confidence intervals. (3) "At least sometimes" is an aggregate of almost always, most of the time and sometimes in the past 12 months. E – Moderately high sampling variability; interpret with caution. Low-risk and Moderate-risk gamblers were combined due to small sample sizes. Gambling caused health problems and financial problems are part of the PGSI and were used to classify type of gambler. Given this, we would anticipate significant differences between gambler types, These differences are still meaningful and illustrate the differentiation in behaviour between problem gamblers and lower risk gamblers. Data Source: Canadian Community Health Survey, 2007/08. Statistics Canada, Share File, Knowledge Management and Reporting Branch, Ontario Ministry of Health and Long-Term Care. Prepared by: Toronto Public Health

# Impacts are Wide-Ranging



- Overall evidence indicates that problem gambling tends to:
  - increase with availability
  - increase with proximity to a venue → currently our closest casino is Port Perry – 80 km away
  - be unevenly distributed in the community → males, youth, those with low-income, etc., are among the most vulnerable; all potential sites have vulnerable groups nearby
- Size of impact is hard to predict
- Toronto's large size, diversity, low baseline access and prevalence of problem gambling could mean greater impacts

- Problem gambling has negative health impacts on individuals, families and communities
- Any expansion in gambling access in the GTA will likely increase health risks from problem gambling for Toronto and nearby communities, with a greater effect on closer communities compared to those further away
- Discussion of the potential health impacts of establishing a new casino in Toronto must inform decision-making

# Toronto Public Health Position Statement on Gambling and Health

- **Limit gambling availability**
- **Mitigate impact on problem gambling by:**
  - limiting hours of operation
  - restricting electronic gaming machine numbers, speed and operation
  - eliminating casino loyalty programs
  - prohibiting ATMs
  - prohibiting credit
  - reducing maximum bet size
  - mandating daily loss maximum
  - strengthening self-exclusion
  - issuing monthly statements
  - restricting alcohol purchase



- Report and Position Statement will inform the City's public and stakeholder consultation process
- The Toronto Public Health Position Statement on Gambling and Health is available online for public review (<http://www.toronto.ca/health/>)
- Board of Health advice to City Council on health impact of gambling expansion