

Community Health Impacts of a Casino in Toronto

Dr. David McKeown
Medical Officer of Health

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The Health Impacts of Gambling Expansion in Toronto-Technical Report

- Coauthored by TPH and the Centre for Addiction and Mental Health (CAMH)
- Focus on problem gambling and its effects on individuals, families and communities

Toronto Public Health Position Statement on Gambling and Health

- A new casino in the GTA would likely increase the prevalence of problem gambling (Currently affecting 11,000 people aged 18+ in the GTA)*
- 10 policy recommendations to reduce the harms of gambling
- Endorsed by the Board of Health in November 2012
- Made available to the public at City of Toronto casino consultations

* 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.

The Board of Health:

- Recommended to City Council that based on health evidence pointing to severe health risks associated with gambling, that the Ontario Lottery and Gaming Corporation (OLG) not be invited to expand gambling in the City of Toronto
- Requested the Medical Officer of Health to undertake further research on community health impacts, analyzing such issues as crime, local economic development, neighbourhood impacts, social safety net impacts and to report back to the Board of Health prior to Council's deliberation on the matter

Health Impact Assessments (HIAs) are commonly used to:

- Identify health risks and benefits associated with diverse policy issues;
- Inform or influence the decision making process; and
- Identify measures that would mitigate any negative health impacts of a decision

Current HIA:

- rapid or “screening” HIA, using published studies, major reviews
- looks at several areas of potential impact on community

Evidence on Employment Impacts

Potential Area of Impact	Predicted Change	Predicted Impact on Community Health/Wellbeing	Explanatory Notes
EMPLOYMENT			
Local Jobs	Increase	Positive	Improve health
Shift Work	Increase	Negative	Worsen health
Regional Unemployment Rate	No Change	No effect	Have no effect on health

Predicted changes and impacts based on the published studies reviewed in this report

Evidence on Economic Development

Potential Area of Impact	Predicted Change	Predicted Impact on Community Health/Wellbeing	Explanatory Notes
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT			
Tourism	Increase	Mildly Positive	Could indirectly improve health through local job creation and local business development
Local business development	Could increase or decrease	Inconclusive	Could be either positive or negative for health since data from other jurisdictions indicate different directions of change

Predicted changes and impacts based on the published studies reviewed in this report

Potential Area of Impact	Predicted Change	Predicted Impact on Community Health/Wellbeing	Explanatory Notes
CRIME			
Property crime	No change or possible increase	Neutral or Negative	Possibly worsen or leave health unchanged
Violent crime	No change or possible increase	Neutral or Negative	Possibly worsen or leave health unchanged

Predicted changes and impacts based on the published studies reviewed in this report

Potential Area of Impact	Predicted Change	Predicted Impact on Community Health/Wellbeing	Explanatory Notes
NEIGHBOURHOOD IMPACTS			
Traffic volume and congestion	Increase	Negative	Worsen health
Air pollution	Increase	Negative	Worsen health
Motor vehicle accidents	Increase	Negative	Worsen health

Predicted changes and impacts based on the published studies reviewed in this report

Social Safety Net Impacts

Potential Area of Impact	Predicted Change	Predicted Impact on Community Health/Wellbeing	Explanatory Notes
SOCIAL SAFETY NET IMPACTS			
Public service funding	Increase	Positive	Improve Health
Public service demand	Increase	Negative	Worsen Health

Predicted changes and impacts based on the published studies reviewed in this report

- Social cost research is highly complex, contentious and varies in methodological approach considerably
- U.S. research in the 1990's has estimated that the social costs of problem gambling could range from \$6,300 to \$53,000 per problem gambler per year

- Overall, a new casino is anticipated to have greater adverse health-related impacts on Toronto's population than beneficial impacts