



ONLINE GAMBLING IN UNPRECEDENTED TIMES: RISKS AND RG STRATEGIES

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Outline /

- 1) COVID-19 pandemic is impacting online gambling behaviour
- 2) It is impacting gambling risk factors
- 3) Safeguards operators can implement now to minimize risks
- 4) What the industry might consider when moving forward



RGC: Preventing Problem Gambling

- Home base in Toronto, conducting work globally
- RGC is an independent non-profit organization
- Our mission is to prevent problem gambling and reduce its impacts
- 35+ years experience in research, prevention, and education
- 360 perspective: people who gamble, the public, operators, regulators, policy makers, and treatment professionals



A photograph of three men sitting on a couch in a living room. The man in the center is holding a smartphone and looking at it. The man on the left is looking at the phone, and the man on the right is looking down. The image has a teal overlay. The text "COVID-19 pandemic is impacting gambling behaviour" is written in white, bold, sans-serif font across the center of the image.

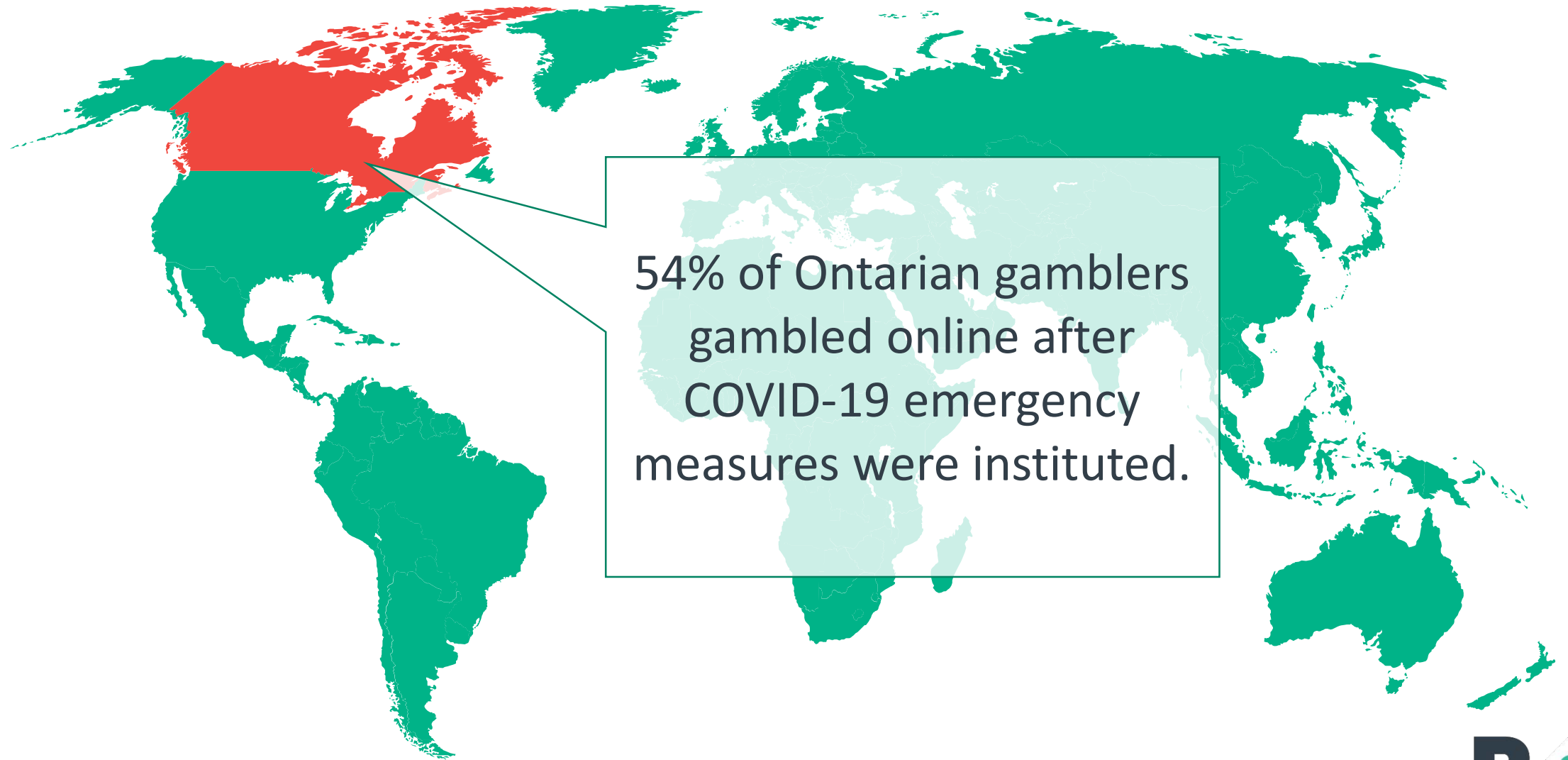
COVID-19 pandemic is
impacting gambling
behaviour

Online gambling is on the rise...



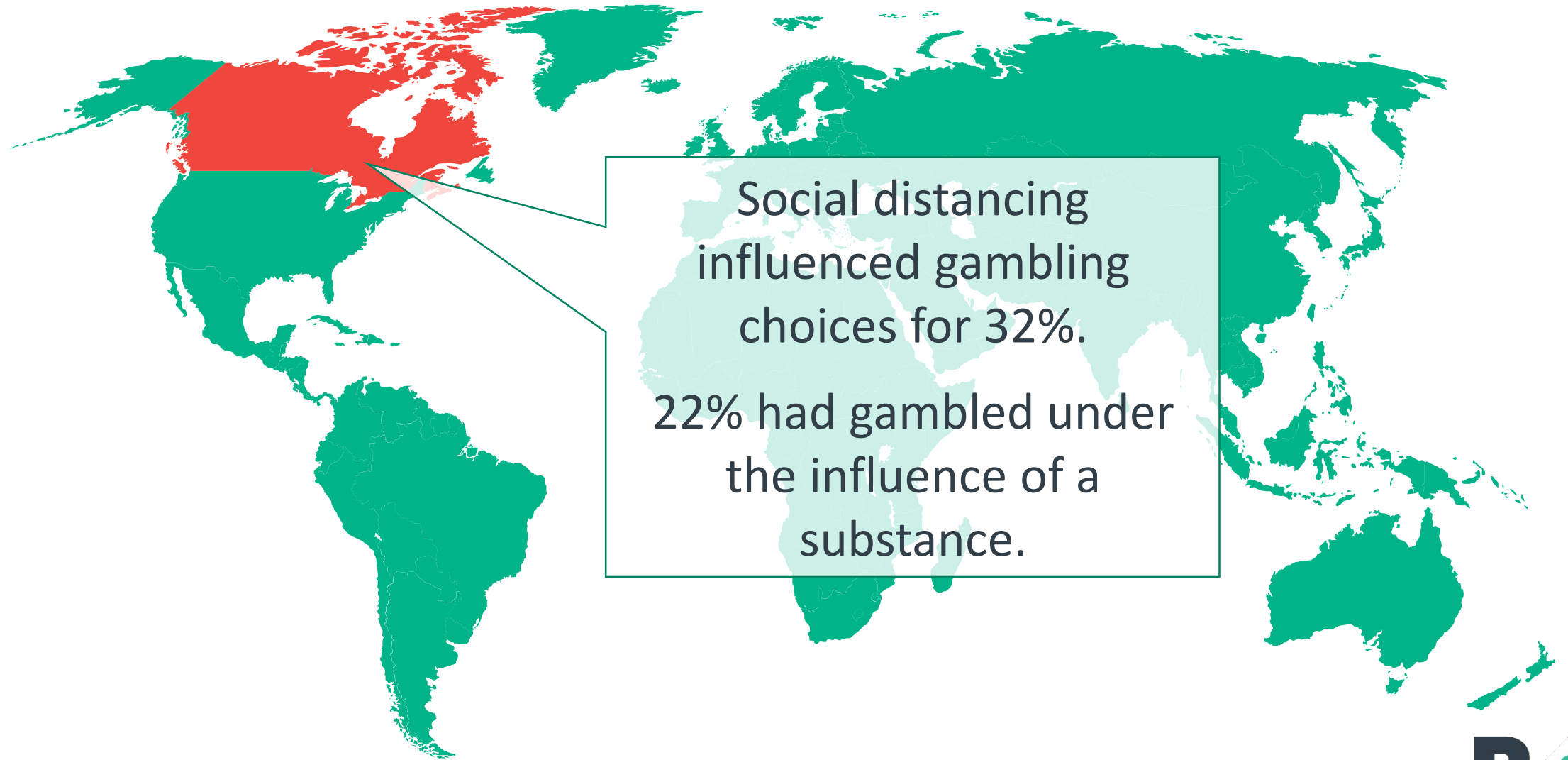
Worldwide **59%** of gamblers have reduced their spending, but **32%** have looked for new types of betting.

Online gambling is on the rise...

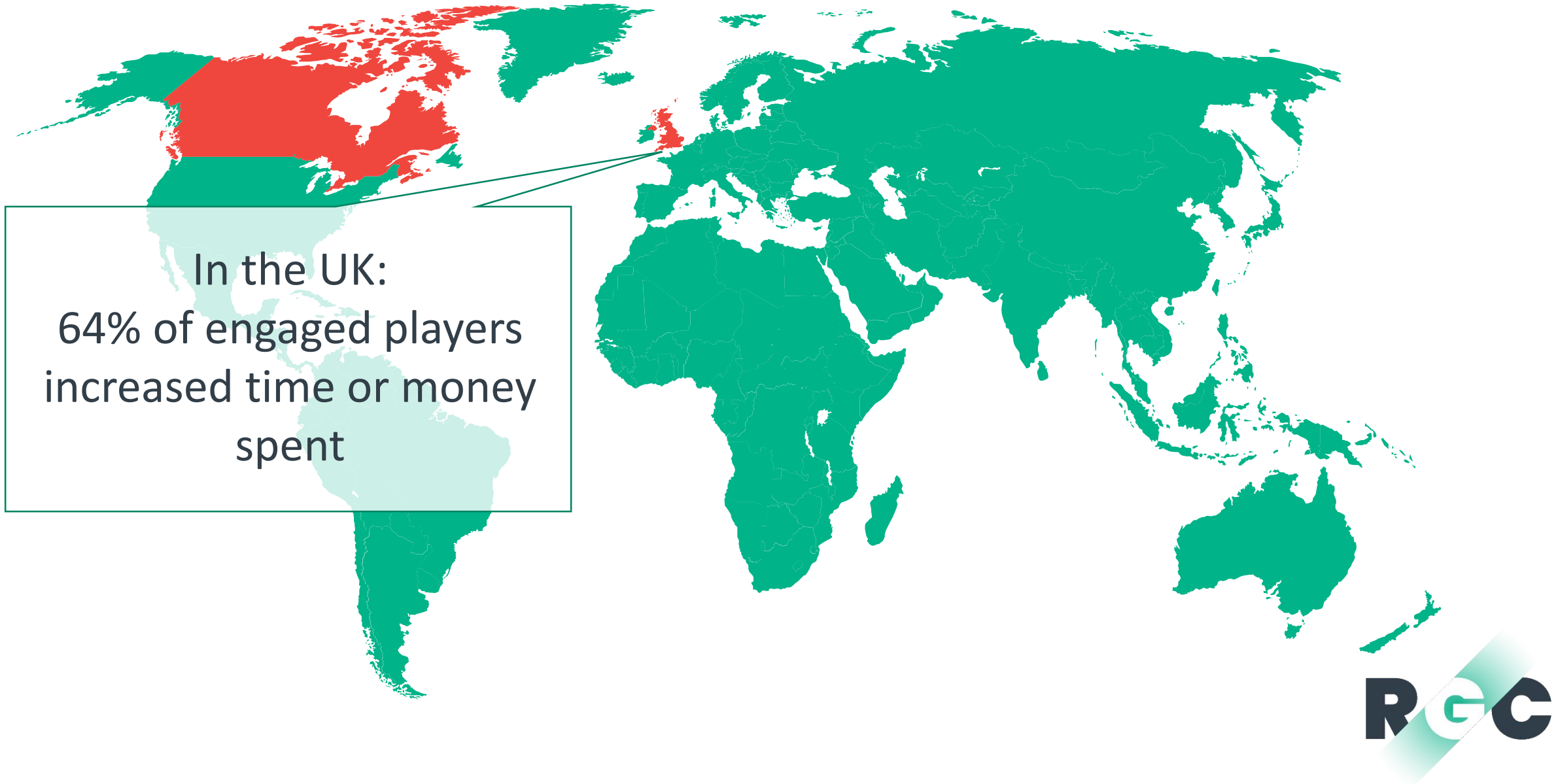


54% of Ontarian gamblers
gambled online after
COVID-19 emergency
measures were instituted.

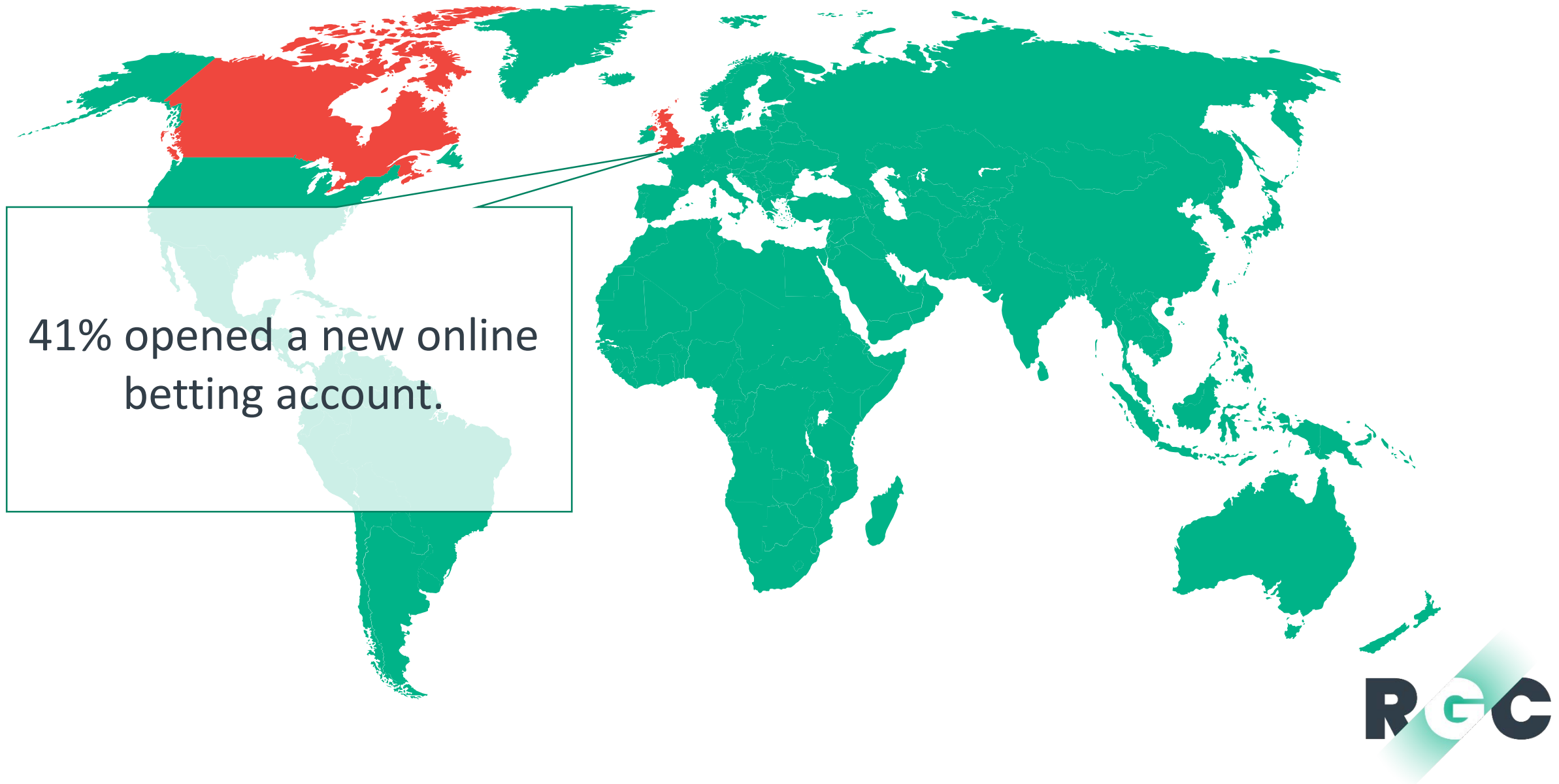
Online gambling is on the rise...



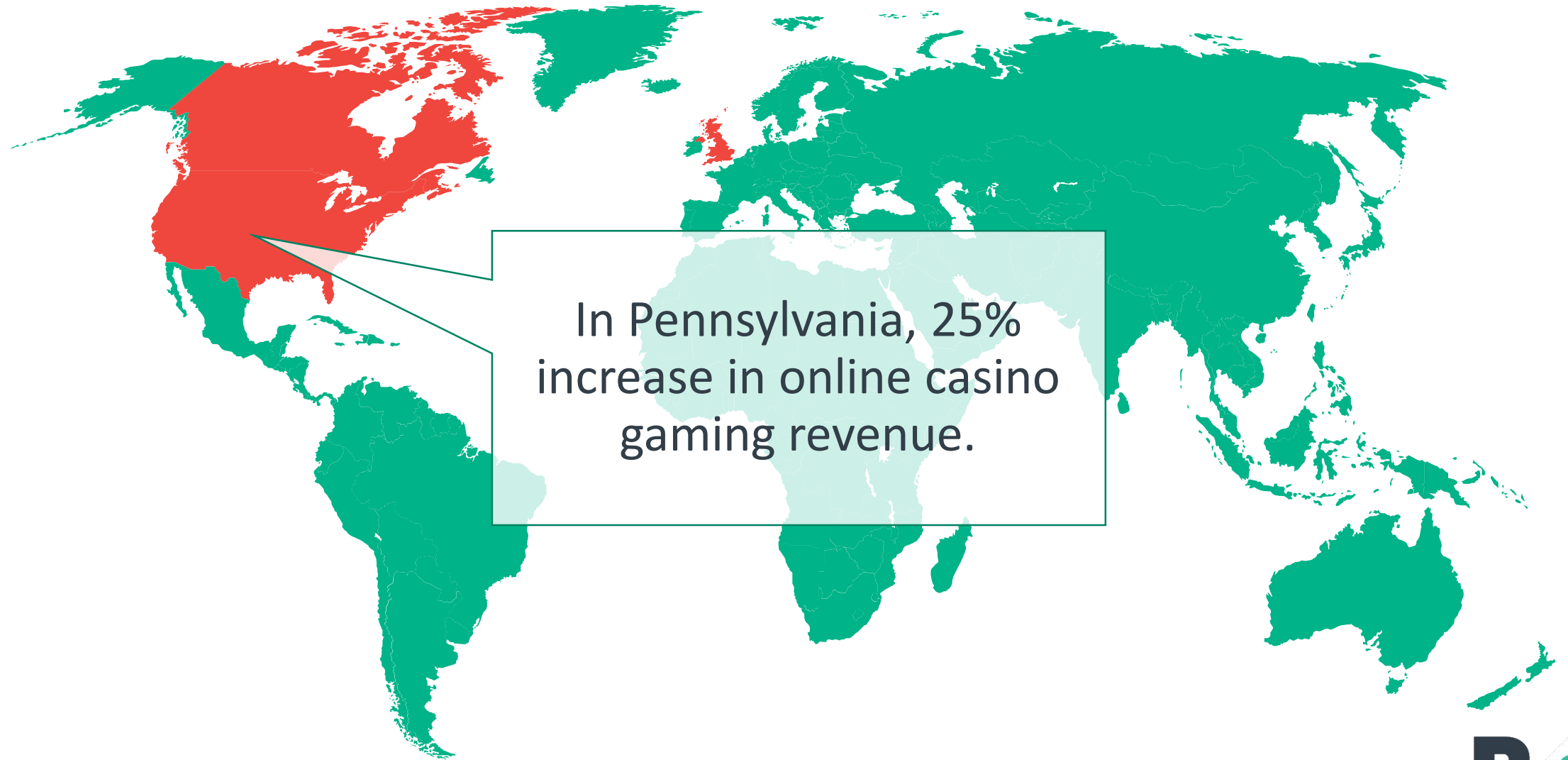
Online gambling is on the rise...



Online gambling is on the rise...



Online gambling is on the rise...



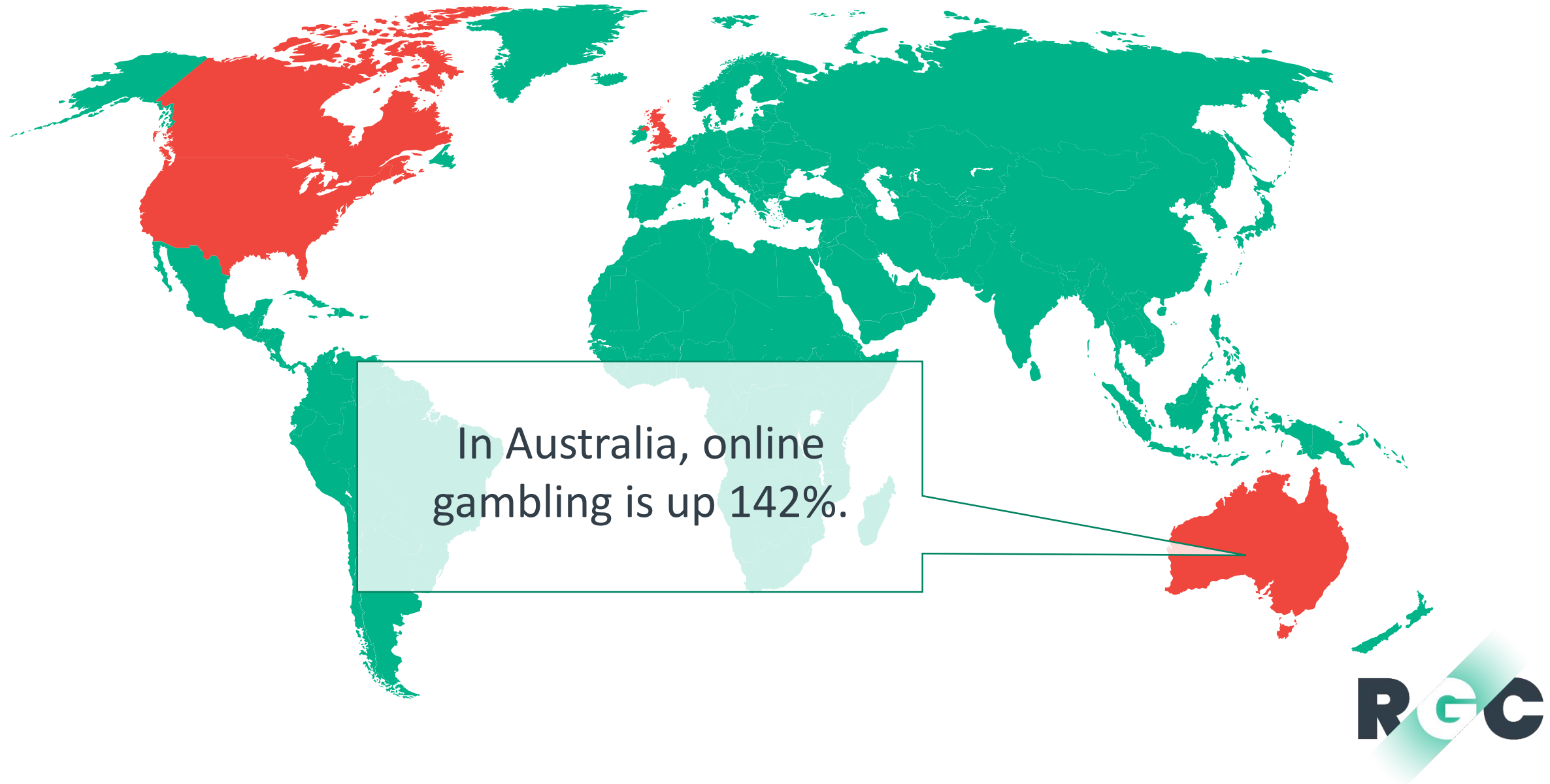
In Pennsylvania, 25%
increase in online casino
gaming revenue.

Online gambling is on the rise...



20% increase in new
player sign-ups in New
Jersey.

Online gambling is on the rise...



Emerging Wagering Opportunities

- Casino games
- Alternative sports betting
- esports
- Virtual sports
- Other events, like politics, television, and even COVID-19 outcomes
- Poker

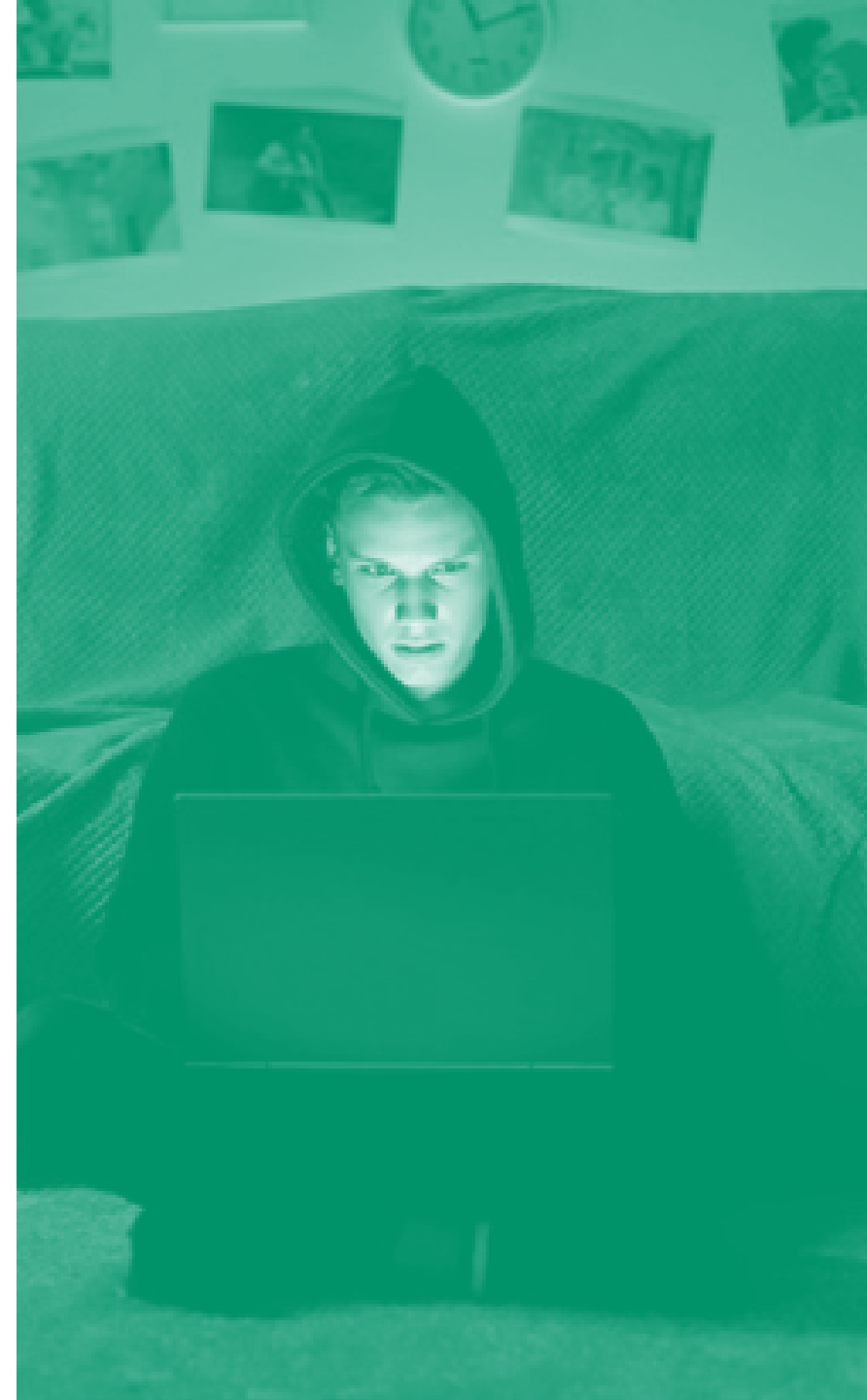




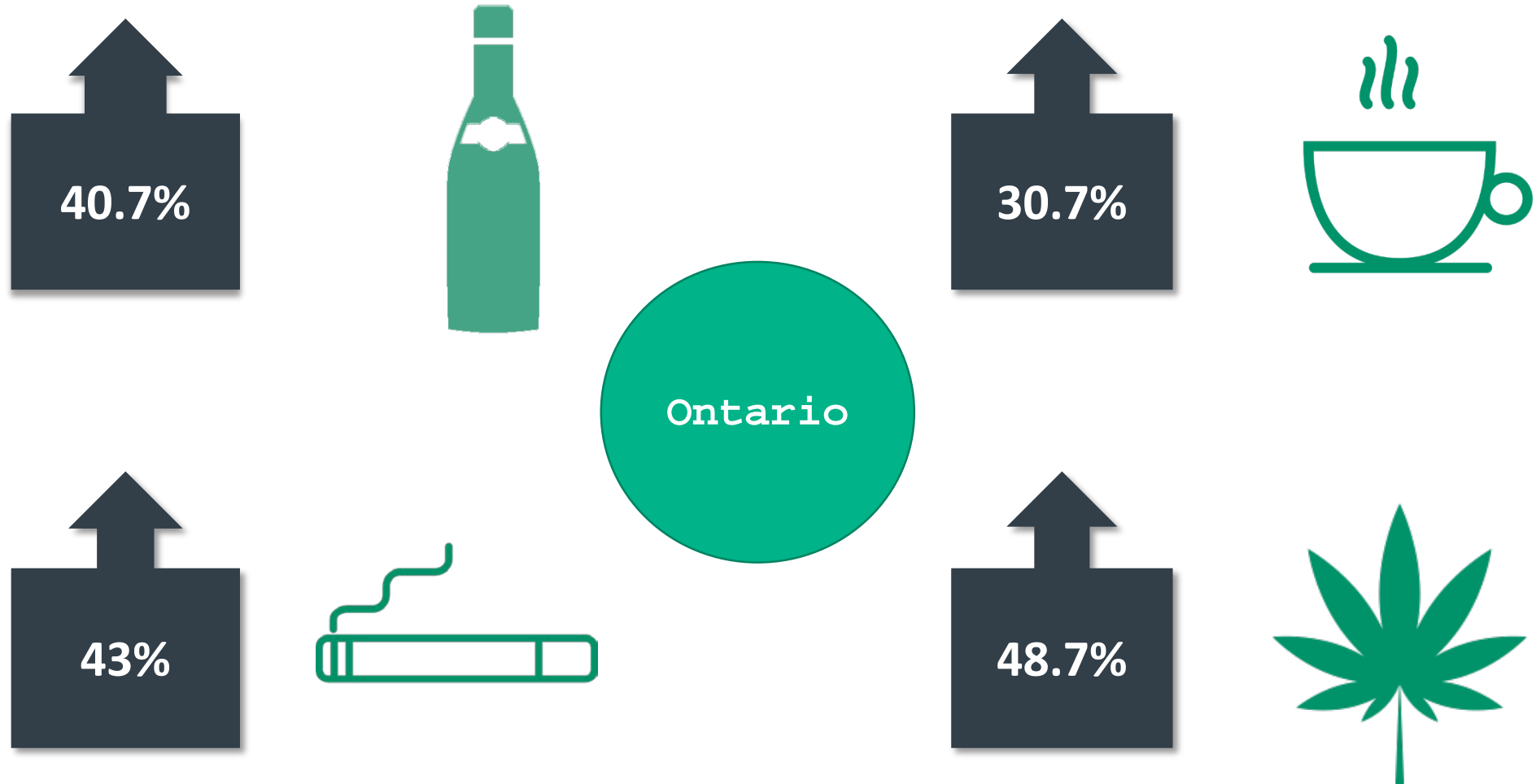
New risks to players and operators

COVID-19 Risk Factors

- Recession, job loss, financial uncertainty
- Isolation and loneliness
- Stress and mental health
- Substance use



Substance Use



Risk Factors in Practice

Player Profile: Gambling for income after being laid off

- Goes online for “something to do”: wins a small jackpot
- Begins gambling as a source of income
- Doesn't know how the games work
- Bets more than what's affordable
- Increases financial stress and anxiety
- Begins chasing losses



Safeguards that
operators can
implement
to minimize risk



Unprecedented Times =

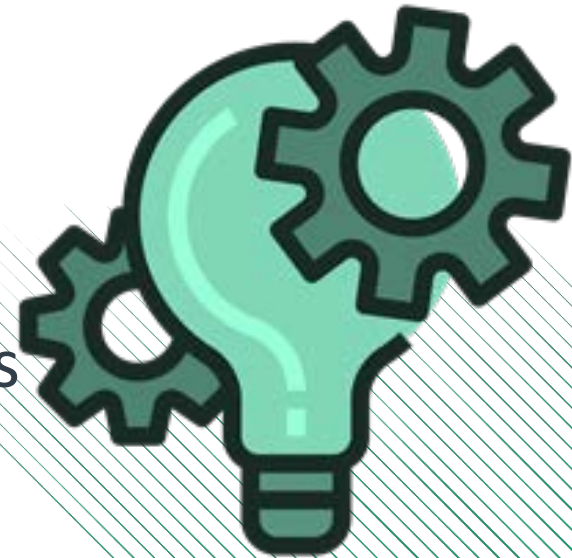
Innovation



- Hospitality industries are being nimble, creative and entrepreneurial
- Essential businesses and essential services have also adapted quickly
- We need to **prepare the gambling industry for its worst day**

An Opportunity to Innovate

- Increase level of customer service
- When choosing games to add, consider risk factors such as speed of play, autoplay etc.
- Try something new to *incentivize* RG behaviours
- Strengthen links with treatment providers
- Use all of the data and resources at your disposal



Player Monitoring

- Engage in stricter monitoring and boost customer contact
- Re-examine the markers of risk
- Consider adding new markers



Player Communications

- **New** players: Thorough onboarding
- **Existing** players: pre/post COVID reports
- **All** players:
 - COVID-specific RG messaging
 - Incentivized RG messaging vs 'play more'



Marketing and Advertising

- Ensure that messaging doesn't imply that gambling could relieve negative impacts of social distancing or economic recession
- Step up RG messaging overall and within ads
- Consider replacing marketing for new players with RG messages
- Vet messaging by RG experts



Case Study: Safeguards Being Implemented in the UK

The **U.K. Gambling Commission** has urged operators to:

- Be diligent with affordability checks
- Increase RG interactions
- Onboard new customers responsibly
- Avoid exploiting the crisis
- Review thresholds for risk indicators
- Ensure proper testing of new products
- Stop bonuses for users showing harm



To learn about RGC's work in the UK, visit responsiblegambling.org/uk-gambling-research

Case Study: Safeguards Being Implemented in the UK

- The **Betting and Gaming Council** has:
 - Introduced a 10-pledge action plan
 - Added 25+ age filtering for ads
 - Removed/changed TV and radio ads
- The **Advertising Standards Authority** has launched a public alert service.
- Stakeholders need to work together to find RG sweet spot



To learn about RGC's work in the UK, visit responsiblegambling.org/uk-gambling-research

A close-up photograph of a person's hands shuffling a deck of playing cards. The hands are positioned in the center, with fingers deftly moving the cards. The deck has a red and white patterned back. The background is dark and out of focus, showing some blue and white objects. The entire image is covered with a semi-transparent teal overlay. Centered over the image is white text with a thin black outline.

What the industry
might consider when
moving forward

Lead with Purpose

- Now is the time to improve RG, not cut it, to avoid a tsunami of self-exclusions and burnt out players
- Be proactive in identifying new ways to support your customers
- Base RG programs, tools, and strategies in evidence
- Monitor, evaluate, and adapt



To learn about RGC's applied research, visit
responsiblegambling.org/for-industry/rgc-centre-for-advancement-of-best-practices

New Players, New Normal, New RG Training

- Move RG ethos upstream
- Move beyond compliance at induction
- Update and refresh core training
- Add segmented training for customer service reps, marketing and C-suites
- Use ongoing reinforcement– training is not a one-time event





The Benchmark of Responsible Gambling

Benefits of RG Check



Trusted

RG Check is a globally recognized brand. An RG Check accreditation is a sign that the operator has the highest level of standards built into its offering.



Collaborative

The goal of an RG Check accreditation is to ensure that operators have the highest standard of RG programming in place. The process is collaborative and scalable.



Convenient

If successful, accreditation is granted for three years, after which operators may apply to be reaccredited for a further three-year period.

RG Accreditation for iGaming



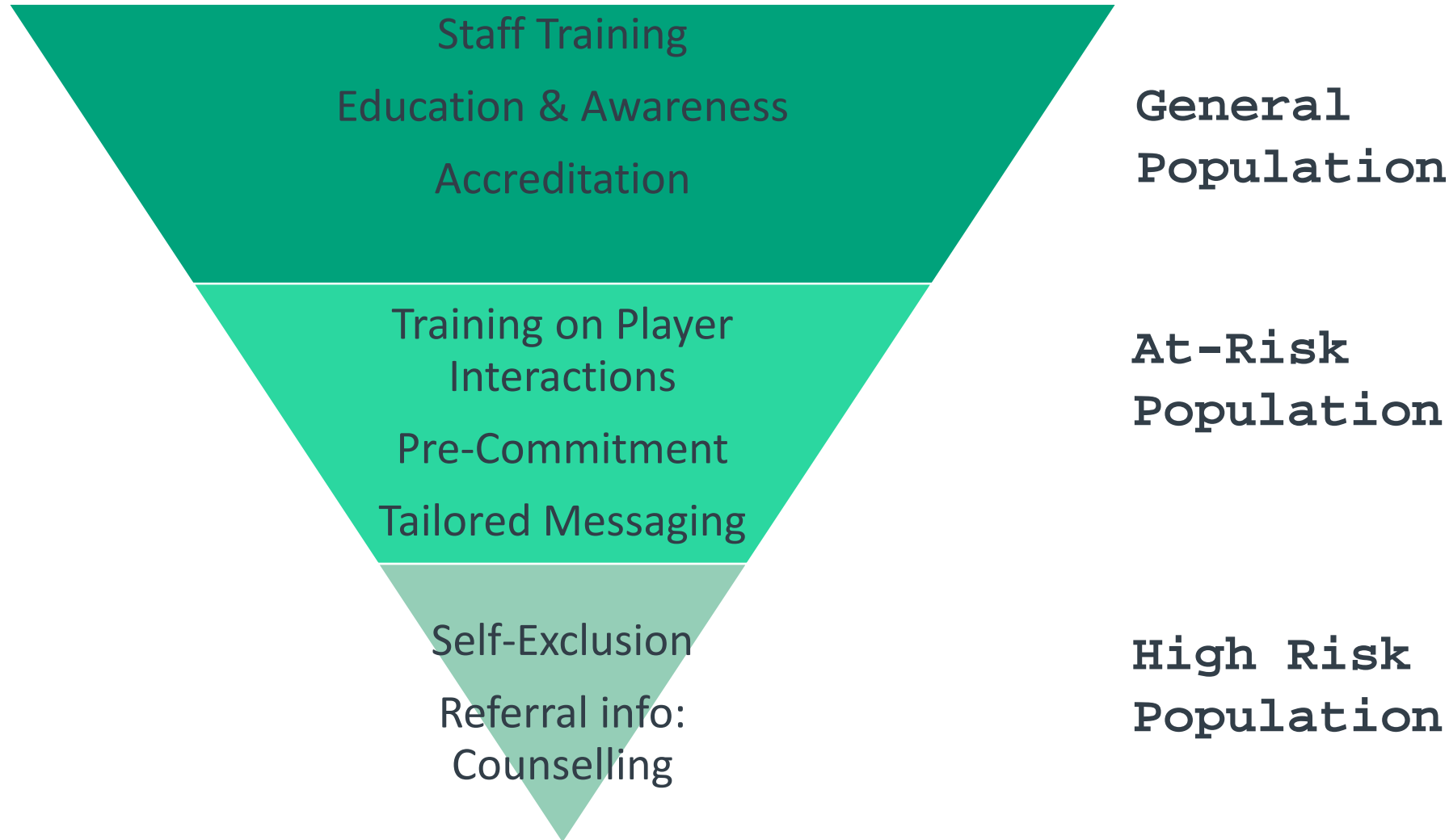
- Objective evaluation of RG policies and procedures
- Identifies strengths and areas for improvement
- Provides tools for improvement
- Reassures customers that their safety is a priority
- Increases public confidence



To learn more, visit rgcheck.com



Programs across the Player Journey



RG Strategies: Treatment

- Harm reduction
- Reach out to the paradoxical patient



RG Strategies: Operators

- RG upstream
- Incentivize players and staff to use RG



RG Strategies: Regulators

- Incentivize RG implementation
- Broad, cross-sector focus



RG Strategies: Research

- Collaborate
- Work with inter-disciplinary teams



Any follow up:

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www.responsiblegambling.org





Returning to Casino/Land-based Gaming: What Operators Need to Know



May 28th, 2020
1:00 – 1:45 pm EST



Register Today