

## Lottery Sales, Profits Rising During Pandemic

[Coverage Developing] Despite changes in consumer behavior and sharp restrictions on capacity at restaurants and pubs, the Massachusetts Lottery generated greater sales and profits over the six months running from July through December 2020 than during the same six months in pre-pandemic 2019. Executive Director Michael Sweeney told the Lottery Commission on Tuesday morning that the agency sold \$2.723 billion worth of products in the first half of the fiscal year, a roughly 2 percent increase over the same timeframe in 2019. Those sales have generated an estimated profit of \$531.7 million for the Lottery, a 4.3 percent increase over the \$509.5 million profit that had been generated at the same point last fiscal year. "A very strong six months. Again, particularly when you factor in the pandemic. Frankly, I think it was a historic performance," Sweeney said. He later added, "Overall, I think the Lottery is performing very well and holding its own ... and again, these numbers are not reflective of what occurred during January as a result of the two large jackpots in MegaMillions and Powerball." The boost in sales and profit materialized through six months despite a 12.4 percent decline in Keno sales, which typically make up about 20 percent of the Lottery's total annual sales. The only product category that sells more than Keno, scratch tickets, has seen a \$105.3 million or about 5.8 percent increase in sales over the first six months of fiscal 2020. The Lottery's prize payout percentage was roughly identical during the two six-month periods -- 73.15 percent through six months of fiscal 2021 compared to 73.72 percent for the first six months of fiscal 2020. The Lottery's experience through the first half of fiscal year 2021 mirrors what the Department of Revenue has seen with state tax collections. Through December, state government had collected \$372 million more in taxes from people and businesses than it did during the same six pre-pandemic months of fiscal year 2020. - Colin A. Young/SHNS