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**Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention**

**Date: April 19, 2023 Meeting Minutes**

**Time: 9:00 AM to 11:00 AM**

**Location: Zoom Virtual Meeting**

**Attendees:**

Virtual Commission Members:

Carl Schiessl (CHA), Jacquelyn Santiago (COMPASS Youth Collaborative), Leonard Jahad (CTVIP), Ebony Epps (RYASAP), Andrew Woods (Hartford Communities that Care), Jeremy Stein (CAGV), David Shapiro (ST. Francis Hospital), James Dodington (Yale New Haven Health), Charles Johndro (Hartford Hospital), Deborah Davis (Mothers Untied Against Violence), Kyle Fischer (health Alliance for Violence Intervention), Colleen Violette (DPH), Susan Logan (DPH), Kerri Raissian (UConn ARMS), Commissioner Manisha Juthani (DPH), Commissioner Vanessa Dorantes (DCF), Bradely Richards (DSS), Pina Violano (CWCSEO).

**1/11/2023 Meeting Minutes Approval:** Correction on name spelling requested and Jacquelyn attended in person not remote. Pina V. made motion to approve, and Mike M. seconded the motion. All in favor of approving.

**Public Comment**: Pastor AJ Johnson thanked us on the work everyone is doing but is concerned that the report has not made it to our legislators or made public. Commissioner responded that the document is final and will go out right after the meeting to the entire commission and legislators.

**Legislative Update:**

Adam Skowera from DPH provided an update. Governor published his budget which included an extra 2.5 million in ARPA funding for the commission, appropriations published their budget on April 18th and did not have the same funding but did have a separate stream of gun violence funding going to the judicial branch that will be worked out in negotiation as the budget process progresses. The Governors large act addressing gun violence HB 6667 made it through the judiciary committee and included a lot of provision to other legislation. Legislative session is progressing forward and opened for questions.

Brief discussion of the current legislation on gun permit waiting period.

Carl- HB 6667, 2.5 million was removed. We should discuss the removal of this funding and try and persuade the legislators to continue this funding. $400,000 General funds was kept in the budget and youth violence $6,000,000 was included. What are the proponents of this money will be used for? Saw increase in project longevity as well.

Commission- gun violence as public health issue is a new, last year first time DPH received any funding to address this through a public health issue.

Jeremy- another import update, increase from 2.5 to 6,000,000, encouraging to see this number will increase as we continue our work.

Carl suggests the subcommittee understands this better. Does anyone on the commission know anything about the ask of the $6,000,000?

Commissioner- historically lots of money has gone to judicial, thoughts might be to have the funds continue to go there.

Miriam- project longevity has received funding, the $6,000,000 is in general funds so it will not be going away. The 2.5 million was our ask for re-allocation of the ARPA funds. Right now, the commission has no input on the $6,000,000 so that is a thought to have the commission to have someway to have some input on this. Advocacy from the commission would be important for legislators to know.

Jeremy- some of these questions may be answered during the updates from subcommittee updates.

Commissioner- Addressed some comments in the chats and the concerns about the RFP process. We are very close to having these funds out the door, we have had challenges but are making very good progress. Wheels of government are turning, and this is moving along to have the money out the door and into the hand of the communities who need it.

**Media Campaign**:

General funds are being utilized for media campaign. Looking for input from the commission on the focus and topics of the media campaign. Looking to address community gun violence as a public health crisis and supporting through data highlighted in CT. Planning to work with a marketing company within CT to create messaging and promote on social media outlet. Goal is to have the messaging ready to launch for national gun violence awareness day which is the first weekend of June. Also hoping to utilize the color orange which is used as awareness around the country. Feedback from the commission is welcomed.

**Subcommittee Updates:**

**RFP Grant Criteria and Award Subcommittee**

Goal is to launch the RFP very soon, DPH is still working on executing contract with the RFP administrators. Hoping for an early fall start date for executing contracts with the awardees. Hoping to fund seven grants. RFP will be sent out within a week of the contract execution with the RFP administrators.

Carl- what is the aggregate number of funds that will be utilized to fund the seven mini grants?

Susan- Awards are for three years, $88,300 per award per year, 1.9 being utilized to fund the mini grants. Funding is through December 2026 for the community agencies.

Commissioner- Addressed the concern being brought up as to why the entire amount of funds is not going directly to the mini grants or why DPH is bringing on a fiduciary to implement the awards. Even if DPH initiated the RFP internally, funds would still have to go to staff to oversee the grants and the RFP and contracting process. ARPA funding has very strict reporting requirements and to be able to adhere to them we need the support staff to be compliant and continue to receive this funding.

**Sustainability – Financial and Legislative**

April 3rd met virtually, well attended almost all subcommittee members attended. Discussed the two bill, HB 6667 & HB 6659. Many unanswered questions. Subcommittee was keeping an eye on both these proposals. Continue to be concerned as a subcommittee on transparency and alignment. Subcommittee will see how the legislative session ends and deal with the card that are delt with addressing community gun violence, will also sort through other funding and provide the commission with a snapshot on how the funds are being utilized and identify gaps.

Jeremy- Seeking more transparency on the contracts and funding. Understand the confidentiality laws but encourage more information to the commission members. Taking more advantage of the expertise of this commission. Federal money is also on the horizon.

Commission- subcommittee should provide further information on all the available funding and having a holistic view of the funding.

Further conversation on the use of the funds and implementation of the programs.

**Partnerships, Programs, Stakeholder, and Community Engagement:**

Anderw- Subcommittee has continued outreach statewide to join our partnership and subcommittee.

Pastor Johnson- Organizer with the Greater Hartford Interfaith Action Alliance. Mission is to impact gun violence and support the organization who are doing the work on the ground. Advocation for funding. Created a coalition with many participating organizations. Taking Wednesday to go capitol to educate on the work they are doing and the need for additional funds, advocating- “CT coalition to end gun violence”. Engaging as many people as possible and engaging of all the organizations working together.

Johanna Schubert – Director of the statewide hospital intervention program collaborative at Hartford communities that care. They have been joining on Wednesday advocacy days. Question that is continuously asked is how much funds are being spent now and what type of metrics are being used to track effectiveness of these program. Have been able advocate for the evidenced based programs and show how we know what we are doing and what is working and why funding is needed to move forward. Had the pleasure to speak with Senator Blumenthal about the federal office on gun violence.

**Data Evaluation and Analysis of Grant-funded Programs**:

Mike- Has an epidemiologist been hired yet for DPH? (Yes). RFP is to come out soon and when we see the RFP, they are eager to think about evaluation and recommendations, they continue to have concerns that the evaluation RFP is delayed.

**Commission Next Steps:**

Quarterly Commission Meetings July 19th, October 18th in person, early December meeting briefly to review and submit the report.

Monthly Subcommittee are strongly recommended to continue to meet monthly and have a standing meeting scheduled.