



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

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CWCSEO Designee, Commission on Community Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention

August 31, 2022

Advisory Committee Pre-work



Appointed Advisory Committee Members

- Deborah Davis - MUAV
- Dr. James Dodington - YNHH
- Ebony Epps - RYASAP StreetSafe Bridgeport
- Dr. Kyle Fischer - The HAVI
- Leonard Jahad - CTVIP
- Dr. Charles Johndro - Hartford Hospital
- Glendra L. Lewis - Project Longevity
- Michael Makowski - CT DPH
- Jacquelyn Santiago - COMPASS Youth Collaborative
- Carl Schiessl, Esq.- CHA
- Dr. David Shapiro - St. Francis Hospital
- Dawn Spearman - YANA
- Jeremy Stein, Esq. - CAGV
- Colleen Violette - CT DPH
- Andrew Woods - HCTC – **Chairman**
- TJ Nuccio- Administrator
- Dr. Pina Violano- Advisory Fellow & Primary Adm.

Mandate That Established the Advisory Committee

Public Act 21-35 § 9 — GUN VIOLENCE INTERVENTION AND PREVENTION ADVISORY COMMITTEE

- Establish a committee to advise the Public Health and Human Services committees on a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of programs and strategies to reduce gun violence.
- Establish a Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Committee.
- The committee's purpose was to advise the Public Health and Human Services committees on establishing a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, community-centered programs and strategies to reduce street-level gun violence in the state.

Advisory Committee Charges

1. Consult with community outreach organizations, victim service providers, community violence and gun violence victims and researchers, and public safety and law enforcement representatives on strategies to reduce these types of violence;
2. Identify effective, evidence-based community violence and gun violence reduction strategies;
3. Identify strategies to align state agency resources to reduce this violence;
4. Identify state, federal, and private funding opportunities for community violence and gun violence reduction initiatives; and
5. Develop a public health and community engagement strategy for the Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention.

The act requires the committee to report on its findings and recommendations to the Public Health and Human Services committees by January 1, 2022. The committee terminates when it submits the report or on January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

Process & Timeline

Advisory Committee meetings:

- 09/29/21 – Inaugural Meeting
- 10/15/21 – CT Gun Violence Data Presentation; Subcommittee Workgroups Structure developed
- 11/12/21 – Subject Matter Expert Presentations
- 11/23/21 – Oral report out of findings from Subcommittee Workgroups
- 12/03/21 – Final Written Report of Findings from Subcommittee Workgroups
- 12/10/21 – First Draft of Executive Summary
- 12/22/21 – Formal Advisory Committee Vote to Approve Final Report. Committee requested minor edits
- 12/30/21 – Formal vote to accept the Final Report with amendments; Formal Committee Adjournment; Final Executive Report was submitted to the Chairs of the Public Health and Human Services Committees and to all Appointing Authorities

All meetings were recorded & made available to the public

- CT-N Live
- CWCSEO Facebook Live

Established Subcommittee Workgroups

Established Subcommittees

1. Policy & Funding

- Tri-Leads: Carl Schiessl, Jeremy Stein & Jacquelyn Santiago

2. Evidenced-Based Programming & Research

- Co-Leads: Dr. James Dodington & Dr. Kyle Fischer

3. Community Engagement & Public Health

- Co-Leads: Deborah Davis & Michael Makowski

Assistance in writing & editing the final report

- Ken Ashworth-Volunteer Research Assistant, HCTC
- TJ Nuccio
- Dr. Pina Violano
- Andrew Woods

Subject Matter Expert Presentations

CT Specific Data Presentation-10/15/21

- Michael Makowski, MPH, Epidemiologist-CT DPH
 - ***CT Violent Death Reporting System & Homicide Victimology in CT from 2015 to 2021***
 - At least 559 people victims of homicide 2015 - 2019
 - During Pandemic 2020 - 157 homicides
 - 76% of homicides were committed with a firearm
 - 70%- Bridgeport; Hartford; New Haven
 - \$430 million in measurable costs to CT each year

Subject Matter Expert Presentations-11/12/21

- Dr. Kyle Fischer, Policy Director-The HAVI
 - ***“Federal Funding Overview-Medicaid Updates”***
- Greg Jackson, Executive Director-Community Justice Action Fund
 - ***“The Role of Community Violence Intervention Strategies”***
- Aswad Thomas, MSW, National Director-Crime Survivors for Safety & Justice
 - ***“Supporting Crime Survivors”***

Community Voices

Community Provided Critical Firsthand Lived Experiences

Public Safety Hearing (Public Safety & law enforcement leaders, grassroots organizations, local violence prevention activists, service providers) - **11/5/21**

- 14 - Oral Testimonies
- 4 - Written Testimonies
- **General Public Hearing** (Faith-based leaders, youth, VPPs, Healthcare Providers, Community College Representatives, service providers, attorneys, gun violence advocates, researchers, survivors of victims of homicide, representatives from prison re-entry programs)-**11/17/21**
 - 47 - Oral Testimonies
 - 26 - Written Testimonies

There was overwhelming support from the general public to establish a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, evidence-informed, and community-centric programs and strategies to reduce street-level gun violence in the state of Connecticut.

Youth Voices

Firsthand accounts of youth experience with community gun violence

- **Bridgeport**
 - Community forum with youth lead by Ebony Epps, StreetSafe Bridgeport - 11/29/21
- **Hartford**
 - Greater Hartford Youth Leadership Academy at Hartford Communities that Care. Youth use a Problem-Solving Framework to study their exposure to gun violence & to build recommendations for preventing gun violence.
- **New Haven**
 - Comments shared by Sean Reeves, Sr., Co-Founder, S.P.O.R.T. Academy from youth who attended one of the Academy's Chess Giveaway Events or entered or worked at the Hazel St. Community Garden in Newhallville.
 - Letter by Rep. Robyn Porter sharing her observations as an invited guest of Trel Morrison, MSW *Daniel's Company Youth Leadership Mentoring Program* held at Wilbur Cross High School in New Haven, CT, included representation of youth from multiple schools throughout NH.

Collection of Data from State Agencies

Written requests of information from Key State agencies :

- Department of Children & Families
- Department of Public Health
- Department of Mental Health & Addiction
- Office of Fiscal Analysis
- Office of Legislative Research
- Police Transparency & Accountability Task Force

Mandate 1- Recommendations

Mandate 1:

“Consult with community outreach organizations, victim service providers, victims of community violence and gun violence, community violence and gun violence researchers, and public safety and law enforcement representatives regarding strategies to reduce community violence and gun violence.”

- The Community Engagement and Public Health Subcommittee focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony, presentations, and deliberations during the Advisory Committee meetings.

Recommendation:

- After weighing the homicide data presented from the Department of Health and hearing testimony from law enforcement officials, clergy, surviving victims of gun violence, and loved ones left behind by violence, the Community Engagement and Public Health Subcommittee **recommends as feasible and actionable, the creation of a standing Commission to address gun violence intervention and prevention.**
- For the bridging of bureaucratic silos and building of local trust, it will be important to draw upon best practice and technical guidance as well as appropriate **representation on the Commission from the full set of state agencies that engage with children and families, including the State Department of Education, as well as from the membership of this Advisory Committee.**

Mandate 2 - Recommendations

Mandate 2:

“Identify effective, evidence-based community violence and gun violence reduction strategies”

- The Evidence-Based Programming and Research Subcommittee focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 5th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings, the November 12th subject matter presentations, and the deliberations of the Advisory Committee.

Recommendations:

Emphasize the implementation and evaluation of key programs:

- **Violence Intervention:** Community and hospital programs
- **Training and Technical Assistance:** Community-centric programs at national and local levels- Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (the HAVI); Certification & training of VPPs;
- **Survivor Support Services:** Programs focused on Social Services & Psychological support for survivors of gun violence, including the community at large.

Mandate 2 – Recommendations Continued

Mandate 2:

“Implement Effective Evidenced-based & Evidenced-Informed Programs”

- The Evidence-Based Programming and Research Subcommittee focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 5th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings, the November 12th subject matter presentations, and the deliberations of the Advisory Committee.

Recommendations Continued:

- **Coordination between Programs & Services must be a core element of success:** Requires the creation of systems reporting outcomes and informatics, including comprehensive services & shared resources for the frontline workers.
- **Trauma-Informed Care:** Framework is for training program providers to engage victims and individuals at risk of violence and treat accordingly. Through the use of “credible messengers.”
- **Place-Based Strategies & Coordinated Events:** Including vacant lot and green space improvements.

Mandate 3- Recommendations

Mandate 3:

“Identify strategies to align the resources of state agencies to reduce community violence and gun violence.”

- The Policy and Funding and Evidence-Based Programming and Research Subcommittees focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 12th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings and policy analyses of federal and state initiatives.

Recommendations:

- Make **use of current federal grant programs** it administers, including **Medicaid reimbursement for prevention and intervention services by trained and certified VPPs**.
- Determine which policy and funding approaches now functioning in Connecticut – and in other states – present the most promising approaches to reduce gun violence.
- Both **targeted and competitive state grant programs** are needed to address prevention and intervention needs in cities disproportionately impacted by gun violence.

Mandate 4- Recommendations

Mandate 4:

“Identify state, federal, and private funding opportunities for community violence and gun violence reduction initiatives.”

- The Policy and Funding and Evidence-Based Programming and Research Subcommittees focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 12th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings and policy analyses of federal and state initiatives.

Recommendations:

- Analyses show a **wide range of federal funding streams, state opportunities, and private support sources are available**. The Commission must **ensure these opportunities are fully maximized to sustain prevention and intervention programs that demonstrate a net public benefit**.

Mandate 5- Recommendations

Mandate 5:

“Develop a public health and community engagement strategy for the Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention.”

- The Community Engagement and Public Health Subcommittee focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 12th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings, as well as the Advisory Committee meetings, including the November 12th subject matter experts’ presentations.

Recommendations:

- Place the responsibility for health and behavior problems on identifiable risk factors, not on people.
- Promote the process of institutionalizing prevention in the community.
- Incorporate strength-based practices designed to empower our youth and develop local solutions.
- Maximize efforts and resources to effectively reduce the level of risks and increase the protective factors in the community.
- Provide concrete data and information trends to inform decision making and benchmark progress.
- Strengthen the ability to track crime prevention program effectiveness.

Mandate 5-Recommendations Continued

Mandate 5:

“Develop a public health and community engagement strategy for the Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention.”

- The Community Engagement and Public Health Subcommittee focused on this mandate, drawing upon testimony delivered in the November 12th Public Safety and November 17th General Public Hearings, as well as the Advisory Committee meetings, including the November 12th subject matter experts’ presentations.

Recommendations Continued:

- **Identify and review systemic obstacles that our youth face on a day-to-day basis that are some of the root causes of violence.**
- **Specifically, address the systemic community risk factors which have caused racial disparities in the juvenile justice system for Black and Brown youth.**
- **Research and identify the geographical areas which are most impacted by gun violence.**
- **Effective community engagement and partnership that include the sharing of evaluation data.**

The Final Report & Overarching Recommendation

The Final Report was submitted to the Public Health and Human Services Committee's of the Connecticut General Assembly on December 30, 2021.

The [Final Report](#) can be located on The Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity's Website. For any questions on locating a copy of the report, please contact TJ Nuccio at Thomas.nuccio@cga.ct.gov.

Overarching Recommendation:

The Advisory Committee recommends that the General Assembly establish a Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention to coordinate the funding and implementation of evidence-based, evidence-informed, and community-centric programs and strategies to reduce street-level gun violence in the state.



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