

July 1, 2021

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Vice Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Chair
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kay Granger
Ranking Member
Committee on Appropriations
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chair Leahy, Vice Chair Shelby, Chair DeLauro, and Ranking Member Granger:

As leading health care, medical, and public health organizations, the undersigned 33 signatories urge Congress to provide funding to support hospital-based violence intervention programs (HVIPs) and other community violence interventions. These multidisciplinary programs aim to help break the cycle of violence, including the nation's gun violence epidemic, by connecting patients at risk of experiencing or perpetrating violent injury with key hospital, community-based, and case management services to prevent repeat injury and retaliatory violence.

Violence, including injury and deaths from firearms, is a major public health problem in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), homicide was responsible for over 19,000 deaths in 2019¹ and was the leading cause of death for 15-34 year-old non-Hispanic Black men.² Survivors of violence suffer corresponding physical and emotional injuries and may lack the support networks or resources to manage the long-term effects and prevent their recurrence. In collaboration with community partners, HVIPs initiate trauma-informed interventions within the hospital setting as patients recover and follow up with long-term services such as counseling, job training, mentoring, home visits, and other assistance. By addressing some of the social determinants of health and specific risk factors associated with violent injury, HVIPs have been successful in reducing future violence and lowering health care costs.³

Regrettably, demand for such services far outstrips the capacity nationwide, and there is currently no dedicated federal funding stream to support such effective programming. President Biden's fiscal year (FY) 2022 budget requests \$100 million for the CDC to implement intervention programs to address the causes of violence and reduce health inequities. The request is in addition to a proposal in the American Jobs Plan to invest \$5 billion over eight years to support community violence intervention programs, including those in hospital settings. In addition to support for funding through the Department of Health and Human Services, President

¹ <https://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal.html>

² <https://webappa.cdc.gov/sasweb/ncipc/leadcause.html>

³ Purtle J, Dicker R, Cooper C, Corbin T, Greene MB, Marks A, Creaser D, Topp D, Moreland D. Hospital-based violence intervention programs save lives and money. *J Trauma Acute Care Surg.* 2013 Aug;75(2):331-3.

Biden and lawmakers in both the House and Senate have also proposed funding to support community-based violence intervention programs through the Department of Justice in FY 2022.

We urge you to support FY 2022 funding for these programs, which are an important component of any comprehensive strategy to apply proven public health solutions to this public health epidemic. Through support for these and other strategies to interrupt cycles of preventable injuries, we can continue to combat violence and save lives.

If you have any questions or would like additional information, please feel free to contact Tannaz Rasouli, AAMC Senior Director, Public Policy & Strategic Outreach, at trasouli@aamc.org or Jason Kleinman, AAMC Sr. Legislative Analyst, Government Relations, at jkleinman@aamc.org.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Physical Medicine & Rehabilitation
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Medical Toxicology
American College of Physicians
American College of Surgeons
American Geriatrics Society
American Nurses Association
American Psychological Association (APA)
American Public Health Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Surgical Association
America's Essential Hospitals
Association for Prevention Teaching and Research
Association of Academic Chairs of Emergency Medicine (AACEM)
Association of Academic Health Centers
Association of Academic Health Sciences Libraries
Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC)
Association of Psychologists in Academic Health Centers
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of University Radiologists
Big Cities Health Coalition
Catholic Health Association of the United States (CHA)
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service, Inc.
Federation of American Hospitals (FAH)
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Healthy Teen Network
Prevention Institute
Safe States Alliance
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine (SAEM)
Society of Academic Associations of Anesthesiology and Perioperative Medicine
Society of General Internal Medicine
The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention