



University of Maryland Medical Center
R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center
Center for Injury Prevention & Policy
22 South Greene Street
Baltimore, MD 21201

February 14, 2024

**Written Testimony in Support (FAV) of
Center for Firearm Violence Prevention - Establishment
HB583**

Dear Chair Clippinger, Vice Chair Bartlett, and distinguished member of the committee,

As the state's Primary Adult Resource Center (PARC) and the core element of Maryland's EMS system, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center stands in full support of HB 583 for the establishment of a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention within the Maryland Department of Health.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center, located in the heart of Baltimore, treats nearly 600 victims of firearm injuries each year from across the state. As Maryland's busiest trauma center, we have borne witness to the devastating consequences of firearm violence firsthand. Each day, our dedicated medical professionals confront the immediate aftermath of shootings, working tirelessly to stabilize patients and provide them with the best chance of recovery. However, our work does not end there. We recognize the imperative to address the root causes of violence and to prevent future injuries from occurring.

In 1998, under Dr. Carnell Cooper's leadership, the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center started one of the nation's first Hospital Violence Intervention Programs (HVIP). Through a multidisciplinary team approach, Shock Trauma's HVIP program integrates medical care with social services, mental health support, and community resources to address the root causes of violence while attempting to break the cycle of violence and promote healing.

Dr. Cooper and the team conducted one of the first randomized, prospective evaluations of an HVIP. They were able to demonstrate the effectiveness of the HVIP model in significantly reducing re-injury due to gun violence, years of incarceration, cost of care, and unemployment (Cooper, 2006). This white paper gave way to other HVIP programs across the country and increasing public funding to support them.



Gun violence is a complex societal issue rooted in systemic disparities and requires a multifaceted, organized approach for effective treatment. It pervades various aspects of society, impacting individuals, families, communities, and institutions alike. Addressing gun violence entails proactive measures to address underlying social determinants such as poverty and lack of opportunity which requires a coordinated approach. Collaboration among government agencies, law enforcement, healthcare providers, victim services, and community organizations is essential for developing innovative solutions and mobilizing communities to create safer environments. This legislation takes an important step in creating a center responsible for the coordination of these efforts in a manner that is rooted in a public health approach.

By consolidating resources, coordinating efforts, and fostering collaboration among federal, state, and local agencies, the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention will serve as a hub for innovation and evidence-based research. It will empower communities with the tools and knowledge needed to implement targeted interventions and disrupt the cycle of violence. Moreover, it will provide a platform for sharing best practices, along with scaling and supporting successful initiatives statewide.

The R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center understands the fight against gun violence extends far beyond the walls of our hospital. It requires a collective commitment from policymakers, healthcare providers, community organizations, and concerned citizens alike. By investing in prevention, intervention, and community engagement, we can build safer, healthier communities for all Marylanders.

In conclusion, we urge you to support HB 583 and take decisive action to establish a Center for Firearm Violence Prevention and Intervention in Maryland. We look forward to being part of this state-wide effort to turn the tide against gun violence and pave the way for a brighter, more secure future for all Marylanders.