



Maryland Violence Intervention and Prevention Program Fund – Appropriation
Senate Budget and Taxation Committee – February 22, 2023
Testimony of Adam Rosenberg, Executive Director, LifeBridge Health Center for Hope and
Freedom Lisa Jones, Director of Community Violence Intervention, Center for Hope
Position: **SUPPORT**

We write in SUPPORT of SB598, which would provide critical sustained and adequate funding violence Intervention and prevention programs across the state.

Center for Hope, a subsidiary of LifeBridge Health, is a comprehensive violence intervention program that provides trauma-informed crisis intervention and prevention services to over 6,000 patients and community members each year who have experienced domestic violence, child abuse, elder abuse, and community/gun violence.

Urban gun violence is a preventable public health disease that we treat through an evidence-based nexus of four interconnected programs. In FY 22, 1) our hospital response teams at Sinai Hospital and Grace Medical Center provided crisis response and intensive case management bedside to 425 violence and 61 gunshot survivors, during the critical weeks when patients are vulnerable to re-injury or expected to retaliate 3) our Safe Streets sites (which are now 6) interacted with 600 community members and mediated 260 disputes, and saw fewer or, in one catchment area, zero shootings for an entire year; 3) Our Kujichagalia Center provided life skills and workforce support to 30 gunshot patients 4) Our PAAVE (Pathways to Advocacy Against Violence Every day) program provided trauma-sensitive case management, mental health and meaningful referrals to 74 children and families who experienced or witnessed a homicide or a near-fatal incident. Our connected programs have helped patients and their families heal from the pain and trauma of their injuries, avoid re-injury, stop the cycle of retaliatory violence, improve their lives and make the community safer.

VIPP funding, however, has been inconsistent. For example, Kujichagulia's FY19 VIPP money was cut. There have been inconsistent VIPP funding notices since, including FY2024 VIPP funds. This makes it hard to retain or add qualified staff. Additional VIPP funding would allow us to, e.g., provide 24/7 coverage by our Hospital Response Team at Grace Medical Center; provide clients relocation assistance away from dangerous situations/neighborhoods; and provide workforce development. It would also help other groups across the state start or expand violence prevention services, which is critical for all Marylanders.

We request a FAVORABLE report for SB598.

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