



DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH

Wes Moore, Governor · Aruna Miller, Lt. Governor · Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H., Secretary

February 29, 2024

The Honorable Pamela Beidle
Chair, Senate Finance Committee
3 East Miller Senate Office Building
Annapolis, MD 21401-1991

RE: Senate Bill 475 - Center for Firearm Violence Prevention- Establishment

Dear Chair Beidle and Committee members:

The Maryland Department of Health (Department) respectfully submits this letter of support for Senate Bill (SB) 475, which establishes the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention in the Department. The mission of the Center shall be to reduce firearm violence, harm from firearm violence, and misuse of firearms in Maryland by partnering with federal, state, and local agencies and affected communities to implement a public health approach to violence reduction.

The establishment of the Center advances Governor Moore's mission to make Maryland a State that is safe and the State Plan priority of creating safer communities. The center builds upon the violence prevention strategy and work of the Department and will complement the work of the Governor's Office of Crime Prevention and Policy and other State agencies. The Department's strategy, and the work of the Center, focuses on applying a public health framework to interventions across the lifespan, understanding that interventions can work upstream, especially for impacting the risk of youth violence.

The current work of the Department addresses victims of violence on a continuum, in real time through post recovery, including the long-term effects of trauma. The current strategy works across the administrations of the Department; the establishment of the Center will enhance the current work to not only focus it but leverage other state agencies to assist in data collection efforts.

The Department strongly supports SB 475. The establishment of the Center for Firearm Violence Prevention will not only focus current strategy at the Department but will allow for coordinated cross agency and office collaboration.

If you would like to discuss this further, please do not hesitate to contact Sarah Case-Herron, Director of Governmental Affairs at sarah.case-herron@maryland.gov.

Sincerely,

Laura Herrera Scott, M.D., M.P.H.
Secretary