



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

February 24, 2026

Written Testimony in Support (FAV) of Senate Bill 561
Maryland Medical Assistance Program - Community Violence Prevention Services -
Reimbursement and Provision of Services
Senate Finance Committee

Good afternoon, Chairwoman Beidle and Members of the Committee.

My name is Justin Graves and I am the Director of Trauma Programs at the R Adams Cowley Shock Trauma Center and I'm here in strong support of Senate Bill 561.

As a leader of a hospital-based Violence Intervention Program, I have seen firsthand the lifesaving impact of community violence prevention services. The original legislation allowing Medicaid reimbursement for this work was an important and visionary step aimed at helping stabilize services for victims of violence at a critical moment in their recovery.

However, we recognized that not all individuals doing this work had access to coverage, and many community-based organizations face significant financial challenges sustaining these services. SB561 thoughtfully expands the scope to be more inclusive, ensuring that more programs, and more patients, can benefit.

The bill's expansion of telehealth is particularly important. Phone coaching and case management sessions are not just convenient, they are essential. Not every patient has reliable transportation, broadband access, or the ability to attend formal telehealth visits. Phone-based engagement allows us to meet patients where they are. It is how we connect, coach, monitor progress, and hold individuals accountable to their goals. For many of our clients, this consistent contact is the difference between disengagement and continued recovery.

Additionally, expanding the number of approved certification programs strengthens the workforce. Having more training options allows programs to better manage staff turnover and build a sustainable pipeline of qualified professionals.

SB561 strengthens access, equity, and sustainability in community violence prevention. I respectfully urge a favorable report.

Thank you for your consideration.

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Justin Graves
Director of Trauma Programs