

Governor Phil Murphy

ICYMI: Governor Murphy and Acting AG Platkin Announce \$10 Million in Federal Funds to Support Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs that Reduce the Cycle of Gun Violence in Communities

08/8/2022

TRENTON - Governor Phil Murphy and Acting Attorney General Matthew J. Platkin today announced the allocation of \$10 million in federal American Recovery Plan (ARP) funds to continue funding for the State's Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs), which directly help gun violence victims and serve to break the cycle of gun violence.

In January 2020, the Murphy Administration and the Attorney General's Office awarded \$20 million in federal Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars to fund nine HVIPs across New Jersey to reach victims of gun violence and others touched by violence at the time of crisis. These programs are considered by experts and practitioners to be one of the crucial strategies for violence intervention and prevention services and established New Jersey as a national leader in stemming gun violence. A primary goal of the HVIP is to link hospitals with community-based organizations that are already working hard to assist victims and prevent the spread of violence.

By partnering with community organizations to provide services to victims and families in hospitals following a shooting, the program has shown an ability to reduce the cycle of gun violence when retaliation is most likely to occur and spread. When the \$20 million in competitive federal VOCA funding was announced, selected hospitals received two years of HVIP funding, some of which the hospitals sub-awarded to community-based providers in their areas to help directly deliver services to those impacted by gun violence. At the end of the two-year grant period, the Attorney General's Office made available a third year of VOCA funding in the amount of \$10.3 million.

Building on the success of this program and to further develop and strengthen a community-based approach to public safety, in 2021 Governor Murphy and the Attorney General's Office announced the creation of an entirely new grant program to meaningfully expand violence intervention work in New Jersey, announcing \$10 million in state funding to establish Community-Based Violence Intervention Programs (CBVIs). Currently, CBVI grants directly fund more than 20 community organizations in 15 municipalities covering every region of the State, supporting intervention strategies that help communities reduce homicides and shootings by developing healing relationships among the groups and individuals who are at the center of gun violence.

During this time, the AG's Office learned of an upcoming decrease in federal VOCA funds that would also support HVIPs and worked with the Murphy Administration to identify alternative sources of funding. The federal ARP funds will provide this alternative funding source for the HVIP program for at least another 12 months after the VOCA funds are expended. Further details on this competitive program will be made available in the upcoming months.

"Earlier this year, I signed my comprehensive Gun Safety 3.0 package, which strengthened gun laws across our state, bringing us one step closer to a stronger, fairer, and safer New Jersey. Today's continued funding of the Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program is another step toward that reality," said **Governor Murphy**. "I am proud of the work that this Administration has done thus far and am committed to continuing to address the gun violence epidemic our state is facing."

"Make no mistake – this investment in our HVIP initiative will save lives," said **Acting Attorney General Platkin**. "Thanks to the Governor's leadership, New Jersey will continue its groundbreaking efforts in violence intervention programming by disrupting cycles of violence before they start. I applaud the challenging, but essential, work of our hospital and community partners and will continue to champion these programs as Attorney General."

"Thank you to the Governor, the Acting Attorney General, and their teams for their fast action and continued support," said **Aqeela Sherrills, Executive Director of the Community-Based Public Safety Collective**. "Thanks to the New Jersey Violence Intervention and Prevention Coalition for their lifesaving work. We look forward to continued partnership with the Attorney General's Office to advance community-based public safety in New Jersey."

"It is reassuring that the Governor and his team have made the necessary investment to keep existing Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs operable for the rest of the year," said **Will Simpson of the New Jersey Violence Intervention and Prevention Coalition**. "The NJVIP will support any and all efforts to establish more expansive, long-term funding for a community-centered public safety ecosystem. We are looking forward to having more consistent and transparent communication with the Office of the Attorney General and the Murphy Administration to ensure the needs of the community are being heard and met."

"The Paterson Healing Collective is pleased to learn that the Governor has heard our calls to action so that we can keep doing the life-changing and life-saving work we have been doing for the last two years," said **Dr. Liza Chowdhury, Director of the Paterson Healing Collective**. "Our survivors and community members rely on our services and we could not afford to lose the resources that positively impact their lives. We look forward to continued efforts to sustain HVIPs and CVI programs in the future."

"As a gun violence survivor, I know the importance of the work," said **Pam Johnson, Executive Director of the Jersey City Anti-Violence Coalition**. "From a personal standpoint and a professional standpoint, I know that with this investment we can save more lives and do more healing."

"I am grateful to the Murphy Administration and the Attorney General's Office for finding the resources to maintain these powerful community led programs," said **Rev. Dr. Charles F. Boyer, Founding Director, Salvation and Social Justice**. "I never doubted their commitment to this work. These programs are critical for putting the public back in public safety."

"We applaud the Attorney General's Office for addressing the urgent need to support the work of hospital and community-based violence intervention programs in New Jersey," said **Joe Kim, Associate Director, Training and**

Technical Assistance at The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. "As the lead technical assistance agency for the HVIPs across NJ, the HAVI is committed to the ongoing work of ensuring that victims of violence are given the resources and supports they need to heal from trauma and break cycles of violence. We are proud to stand with our community and hospital partners to ensure these services are sustainable for years to come."

"Revive South Jersey understands the importance of providing services to victims of gun violence and then working proactively to prevent future victimizations," **said Jonathan Cummings, Executive Director of Revive South Jersey.** "As a South Jersey stakeholder that has been partnering with the Bridgeton Police Athletic league for the last five years, we understand the necessity of this work in our community. The investment in the HVIP will provide critical support to continuing the vital service of working to prevent gun violence in the state."

"One of our team members has served over 200 victims of violence at University Hospital's HVIP, preventing retaliation and repeat victimization. We are grateful that she and the rest of the team will continue to serve victims uninterrupted." **–Statement from the Newark Community Street Team.**

The initial \$20 million VOCA investment along with the additional third year of VOCA funding in HVIP grants were awarded to the following hospitals:

- Center for Family Services, City of Camden, Camden County
- Trinitas Health Foundation, Elizabeth, Union County
- AtlantiCare Atlantic City, Atlantic County
- Capital Health, Trenton, Mercer County
- Jersey City Medical Center (RWJBarnabas), Jersey City, Hudson County
- Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital, New Brunswick (Serving Middlesex, Somerset and Union Counties)
- University Hospital, Newark, Essex County
- Jersey Shore University Medical Center/Hackensack Meridian, Monmouth County (Focusing on Asbury Park, Neptune Township and Long Branch City)

St. Joseph's Health, Paterson, Passaic County

Governor Phil Murphy

Statewide

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