



Building a Safe Workplace and Community

Community Violence Intervention

Introduction

The American Hospital Association’s Hospitals Against Violence (HAV) Advisory Group developed the Building a Safe Workplace and Community [framework](#) to guide health care leaders in their efforts to prevent and mitigate violence. The framework focuses on four pillars necessary for implementing a comprehensive violence mitigation strategy: culture of safety, violence intervention, trauma support and risk mitigation. For each pillar, the advisory group developed an issue brief.



Based on the advisory group’s conversations with University of Chicago Medicine and Grady Health System in Atlanta, two health systems leading the way in community violence intervention practices, this issue brief examines hospitals and health systems’ role in community violence intervention.

The Connection Between Hospitals, Health Systems and Community Violence Intervention

According to the World Health Organization’s (WHO) Violence Prevention Alliance (VPA), community violence is a type of interpersonal violence “between two people who are unrelated, and who may or may not know each other, that typically takes place outside the home.” Community violence

KEY DEFINITIONS

Violence Intervention

Collaboration with community partners, hospital-based programs and others to prevent ongoing or future incidents of violence ([AHA, 2021](#)).

Community Violence Intervention

An approach using evidence-informed strategies to reduce violence through tailored community-centered initiatives. These multidisciplinary strategies engage individuals and groups to prevent and disrupt cycles of violence and retaliation and establish relationships between individuals and community assets to deliver services that save lives, address trauma, provide opportunity, and improve the physical, social and economic conditions that drive violence. ([U.S. Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, 2024](#)).

Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs (HVIPs)

HVIPs are multidisciplinary programs that combine the efforts of health care staff with trusted community-based partners to provide safety planning, services and trauma-informed care to violently injured people ([The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention, 2024](#)).

The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention

An approach that seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence ([World Health Organization, 2024](#)).

is a public health issue that can manifest differently across communities based on the social and environmental risk factors experienced by individuals within the community, but can typically include “fights among groups, shootings on streets or at schools, cycles of violent conflict in neighborhoods, assault by strangers, violence related to property crimes, and violence in workplaces and other institutions.” Common injuries can include gunshot wounds, stabbing wounds and physical assault.

Given that **nonfatal injuries** are over **100 times more common** than homicide and that repeat victimization is a common phenomenon, hospitals and health systems are a critical stakeholder in both identifying and intervening with those at highest risk for violence. When somebody is a victim of violence and becomes a patient at a hospital, they are already interacting and building trust with hospital staff as they receive treatment. This presents an opportunity to engage in community violence intervention services, as victims may be disconnected from other social systems and community organizations that provide these services. Hospitals and health systems play an important role in reaching victims and their social networks as they spend time in the hospital recovering from their injuries and hospital teams can be well-positioned to educate and connect patients to violence intervention programs and services.

Community violence intervention programs can help keep patients from needing hospital care and incurring the

FOCUS

Key Activities of HVIPs

Intervention

Begins with a brief intervention in the emergency department or at the hospital bedside.

Care

Followed by intensive, long-term community-based case management services in the months following the injury.

Follow-up Services

Crisis intervention, linkages to community-based services, mentoring, home visits, follow-up assistance and long-term case management are provided by culturally competent front-line workers who are from the same or similar communities as the clients they serve.

Addressing the Social Drivers of Health

HVIPs elevate the issues of the revolving door of violence while addressing inequity and building partnerships with communities and survivors of violence.

Source: [The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention](#), 2024

Safety Strategies that Worked

John Muir Health

Interrupting the Cycle of Violence in Northern California

Established in 2010, Beyond Violence (BV) is a hospital-based violence intervention and prevention program that seeks to interrupt the cycle of violence and reduce the total number of people injured by interpersonal violence, reduce re-entry of people into criminal justice systems and link people with local resources that help them live nonviolent lifestyles. The program utilizes a collaborative model to provide patients with timely hospital bedside support, crisis management, linkages to a robust network of health and social support services, and connection to various local nonprofit organizations.

At the core of the BV program is the referral of patients to an intervention specialist, who typically resides in the communities they serve and is physically located within the partner organizations clients utilize for program activities. Intervention specialists and mental health therapists collaborate with social services staff to provide wrap-around support to patients and their families who have been affected by interpersonal violence. These service providers offer deep empathy, compassion and relational healing as well as linkages to practical and needed resources for recovery, including mental health and substance use treatment, career and education support, legal advocacy, housing and food support, and emergency funds.

Source: www.johnmuirhealth.com/about-john-muir-health/community-commitment/our-programs/beyond-violence.html

significant costs of treatment stemming from violence. Violent injuries generate significant costs in medical and behavioral health care. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's [Cost of Injury Data](#), violence-related injuries cost over \$950 billion in 2020 and the average cost of hospitalization for a non-fatal violent injury is approximately \$29,200. Additionally, patients and families who survive violent injuries can have long-term physical and psychological impacts such as [impacts to mobility and cognitive function](#), substance use disorder, depression, anxiety, and PTSD, all of which are costly to diagnose, treat and manage effectively. Community violence also comes with a non-quantifiable and far-reaching [societal cost](#), as its presence in a community can cause "chronic trauma, affect child development, and increase the risk of chronic health issues later in life for community members" in addition to causing increased burden on a community's business sector and justice system. Hospitals and health systems that contribute to reducing the magnitude and frequency of violence through intervention programs are helping to reduce these costs, as well as improve the health and quality-of-life outcomes of the patients and families they serve.

As trusted pillars of their communities, hospitals and health systems play an essential role in the community violence intervention ecosystem, the [network](#) that "connects a city's violence prevention infrastructure in order to implement a comprehensive slate of strategies that address violence [dynamics](#)." While hospitals serve a vital role in the continuum of services to address violence reduction for their patients, they cannot go at this alone. They work alongside community partners who possess varied perspectives, goals and areas of expertise to create solutions that address the entire spectrum of community violence. Hospitals and health systems coordinate with other stakeholders, such as community-based organizations, faith-based organizations, schools, offices of neighborhood safety and public health departments. Working together, these

Safety
Strategies
that Worked

Grady
Health
System

Transforming Trauma at Grady Health

The Interrupting Violence in Youth and Young Adults (IVYY) project is a pioneering hospital-based violence intervention program at Grady Health System in Atlanta. Launched on Jan. 18, 2023, IVYY is dedicated to preventing and reducing violent crime across metropolitan Atlanta by serving victims of gun violence aged 14 to 34.

Program Model: IVYY employs a comprehensive, three-pronged approach to support and rehabilitate its patients:

- **Violence Intervention Specialists:** These community leaders, deeply rooted in Atlanta's neighborhoods, engage with patients at their bedside. They provide crucial coaching and mentorship throughout the patients' healing journey, fostering trust and offering guidance based on lived experience.
- **Outpatient Clinic:** The IVYY outpatient clinic ensures continuity of care by offering ongoing mental, social and physical health services. This holistic approach addresses the multifaceted needs of gun violence survivors, promoting long-term recovery and well-being.
- **Circle of Safety:** The Circle of Safety extends IVYY's reach into the community, working tirelessly to connect patients with vital resources. This network strengthens community ties and provides the necessary support systems to help individuals rebuild their lives and prevent future violence.

At the heart of the IVYY Project is a powerful guiding principle: **"Trauma that isn't transformed is transferred."** This belief underscores their mission to address not only the physical injuries but also the underlying trauma that fuels the cycle of violence. By transforming trauma, IVYY aims to break this cycle, fostering healing and resilience in both individuals and communities.

Source: www.everytown.org/press/the-ivyy-project-at-grady-awarded-100000-grant-from-the-everytown-community-safety-fund-to-sustain-critical-gun-violence-prevention-work-in-atlanta

stakeholders can elevate a shared vision of public safety within the community, maximize the response to parts of the community at higher risk of violence and make violence reduction a sustainable outcome. This will not only benefit the patients and families they serve, but also the members of the health care workforce feeling safe in their hospital's community to provide high quality care.

Supporting Patients and Families Holistically through Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs

According to the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI), [hospital-based violence intervention programs](#) (HVIPs) are multidisciplinary programs that identify patients at risk of repeat violent injury and link them with hospital and community-based resources aimed at addressing underlying risk factors for violence.

A growing number of hospitals and health systems are embracing this model to combat the revolving door of

FOCUS

Actions Hospitals and Health Systems Can Take to Support Community Violence Intervention

- **Build** meaningful relationships with other community violence intervention stakeholders in the community, including but not limited to non-profit organizations, public health departments, offices of neighborhood safety and law enforcement.
- **Assess** what data may be available at the hospital- and/or system-level that can demonstrate the effects of community violence on your patients, families and communities, including data on the health and financial impacts of community violence on patients, the hospital/health system and the community. Consider sharing data with other local hospitals and health systems to benchmark and create solutions for mitigating violence together.
- **Support** the role of violence prevention professionals by building this workforce and including violence prevention professionals as important members of the care team.
- **Recognize** upstream factors that drive violence in the community and work with partners within the local community violence intervention ecosystem to contribute to the improvement of social drivers of health in the community.
- **Meaningfully engage** those at highest risk of violence to connect them to resources, including case management, mentoring and referrals to community organizations that can help address social needs.
- **Advance** community-driven, culturally responsive and equity-focused approaches to violence prevention.
- **Consider** using the [HAVI Standards and Indicators](#), which were developed to promote model fidelity and best practices across all HVIPs. This includes centering racial equity and trauma informed/healing centered practices and engaging with credible messengers to provide wraparound care to people injured by community violence.
- **Seek** to provide trauma-informed care, meaning that care is approached with an understanding of the trauma patients may have experienced and its impact on health and recovery. Trauma-informed care recognizes that effectiveness in the health care settings requires a more complete understanding of the experiences of patients and how those experiences impact current health and health care.
- **Engage** the governing board in your workforce and community violence prevention strategies so they can support and champion these initiatives for your hospital, health system and the community. Board members are business and community leaders, and they can play an important role in leading and highlighting hospital and health system violence prevention activities in the community.

violent injury in their communities. Since the introduction of the first HVIP in the mid-1990s, this proven model has continued to proliferate across the country. To date, there are over [40 HVIPs](#) across the U.S.

Investing in HVIPs is a critical way that hospitals and health systems can address violence and its effects. HVIPs provide comprehensive trauma-informed care to survivors of violence through violence prevention professionals, who are individuals with lived experience that support survivors in navigating the road to health and well-being. Community members are also an essential partner in ensuring an HVIP is responsive to the needs of those most impacted by violence, including the family members and support networks of the violently injured patient.

States can use Medicaid to [reimburse HVIP services](#). Seven states—Connecticut, Illinois, California, Oregon, Colorado, Maryland and New York—have elected to add these benefits and more states are working to add them to ensure that patients and families have access to HVIP services.

The HVIP model holds promise in preventing violence, healing communities and reducing costs.

**Are you interested
in establishing
your own HVIP?**

Learn more from
**the Health Alliance for
Violence Intervention**
about how to get started.

Resources

AHA Resources

- [Hospitals Against Violence Framework: Building a Safe Workplace and Community](#)
- [Issue Brief: Mitigating the Risk of Violence](#)
- [Issue Brief: Providing Trauma Support to the Workforce Following an Incident or Threat of Violence](#)
- [Issue Brief: Mitigating Violence in a Culture of Safety](#)
- [The Public Health Approach to Addressing Gun Violence](#)
- [Supporting Victims and Communities of Mass Violence Incidents](#)
- [Youth Violence Prevention](#)
- [Webinar: Advancing Health Equity through Public Health Approaches to Community Violence](#)
- [Boardroom Brief: How Boards Contribute to a Safe Workplace and Community](#)

AHA Members in Action

- [Stemming Violence, Supporting Community Health: One California Hospital's Plan](#)
- [Quick intervention steers violence survivors toward path of healing](#)
- [Detroit Life is Valuable Everyday \(DLIVE\) - Detroit Medical Center – Sinai-Grace Hospital](#)
- [Healing Hurt People - Chicago - John H. Stroger, Jr. Hospital of Cook County](#)
- [Hahnemann University Hospital – Healing Hurt People](#)
- [Violence Intervention Program at Children's National Hospital](#)
- [At-Risk Intervention and Mentoring Program at UHealth University of Colorado Hospital](#)
- [Regional One Health's positive alternatives to youth violence](#)
- ['Cradle to Grave' helps at-risk youth understand gritty reality of gun violence](#)

Other Resources

- [Department of Justice, Office of Justice Programs, Community Violence Intervention](#)
- [Health Alliance for Violence Intervention. Transformative Guidance on Victim Services Funding for Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs](#)
- [Everytown Research and Policy, Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs: A Guide to Implementation and Costing.](#)