



The Commission on
Women, Children, Seniors, Equity & Opportunity

CWCSEO

Connecticut General Assembly

Gun Violence Intervention & Prevention Advisory Committee Conducts Inaugural Meeting

For Immediate Release

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(Hartford, CT) 9/30/21 – The newly created *Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention Advisory Committee* conducted its inaugural meeting on Wednesday, September 29th, 2021. The committee will facilitate public discussions related to gun violence intervention and prevention in the State of Connecticut.

"Gun violence in distressed communities can hurt individuals and families across generations, in fact, violence can hold back communities that are working hard toward breaking cycles of poverty and achieving success," said Steven Hernández, Esq., Executive Director of the legislature's Commission on Women, Children, Seniors, Equity, & Opportunity (CWCSEO). *"We commend the General Assembly, and particularly Senator Marilyn Moore, for their shared vision in bringing together experts in communities to both prevent and respond restoratively to gun violence, while addressing its root causes: poverty, trauma, and despair."*

"This is a pivotal moment in addressing gun violence and prevention in CT. The advisory group must be comprehensive and inclusive engaging the voices of those impacted and those that do the work if we are to end this violent crisis. We are experiencing unnecessary loss of lives; youth and innocent bystanders across the state." – State Senator Marilyn Moore

Based on public act number 21-35 § 9, the committee will consult with all stakeholders that are working on these issues including: victim services, law enforcements, people impacted by gun violence among others, to develop strategies that street-level practitioners and providers – and data – affirm will reduce rising gun violence in the state.*

"With the unanimous passage of Public Act 21-35, our state is now in a position to use Medicaid funding for multidisciplinary prevention and intervention work, which we know saves lives," Andrew Woods, veteran executive director of the 23-year-old North End agency Hartford Communities That Care (HCTC), said today. Andrew was appointed as Chair of this committee by State Senator Martin M. Looney, President Pro Tempore of the Connecticut General Assembly, *"I am gratified to Chair the Advisory Committee now charged with taking the next step, to identify effective strategies and government and private funding opportunities to sustain that work, after consulting with community outreach organizations, victim service providers, researchers – and victims themselves."*

The committee will be holding a public hearing on **Wednesday, November 17th, 2021 from 5:00 PM to 8:00 PM**, VIA Zoom. We would love to hear from members of the public, grassroots organizations, community-based organizations and local violence prevention activists on what lessons and lived experiences the committee can reflect upon as we seek recommendations on how to reduce community and gun related violence. Individuals who are unable to attend the public hearing and are interested in submitting written testimony, can do so by providing a PDF document to Dr. Pina Violano, Pina.Violano@cga.ct.gov by 5:00 PM November 12th, 2021 Dr. Violano was appointed by the CWCSEO



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leadership as the Fellow & Primary Administrator for this Advisory Committee. For those interested in providing verbal testimony during the public hearing, please contact Dr. Violano, Pina.Violano@cga.ct.gov by 5:00 PM November 15th, 2021 . Note, that all public testimony **must be limited to a maximum of three minutes**.

Per Dr. Violano, "This is a tremendous opportunity for all citizens of the State of Connecticut and beyond to participate in the crafting of policy recommendations, which is instrumental in the mission of reducing gun violence here in the State of Connecticut. We encourage all citizens to have a voice and welcome your input".

The full 15 member Advisory Committee includes: Carl Schiessl, Connecticut Hospital Association; Leonard Jahad, Connecticut Violence Intervention Program, Inc.; Ebony Epps, Regional Youth Adult Social Action Partnership; Dr. James Dodington, Yale New Haven Hospital; Dr. Kyle Fischer, the Health Alliance for Violence Intervention; Dr. Charles Johndro, Hartford Hospital; Jackie Santiago, Compass Youth Collaborative; Jeremy Stein, Connecticut Against Gun Violence; Glendra Lewis, Project Longevity; Dr. David Shapiro, Saint Francis Hospital & Medical Center; and Deborah Davis, Mothers United Against Violence and Michael Makowski and Colleen Violette from the State Department of Public Health's Injury & Violence Surveillance Unit.

The act requires that the committee report on its findings and recommendations to the Public Health and Human Services committees of the Connecticut General Assembly by January 1, 2022. The committee terminates when it submits the report or on January 1, 2022, whichever is later.

The CWCSEO, is a non-partisan agency within the legislative branch of government. CWCSEO staff works to eliminate disparities by identifying opportunities, building connections, and promoting equity. Most importantly, we serve the legislature and the people of the state by promoting best practices and driving sound public policy via data driven research and a cross-cultural approach to policy innovation.

Note: The CWCSEO organizes and administers the committee according to PA 21-35.

* According to PA 21-35 § 9 the committee shall:

1. Consult with community outreach organizations, victim service providers, victims of community violence and gun violence, community violence and gun violence researchers and public safety and law enforcement representatives regarding strategies to reduce community violence and gun violence;
2. Identify effective, evidence-based community violence and gun violence reduction strategies;
3. Identify strategies to align the resources of state agencies to reduce community violence and gun violence;
4. Identify state, federal and private funding opportunities for community violence and gun violence reduction initiatives; &
5. Develop a public health and community engagement strategy for the Commission on Gun Violence Intervention and Prevention.

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