



PREVENTING VIOLENCE  
AND DEVELOPING  
YOUTH LEADERS

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September 14, 2019

Governor Gavin Newsom  
1303 10<sup>th</sup> Street, Suite 1173  
Sacramento, CA 95814

Re: Assembly Bill 166 (Gabriel) - Support

Dear Governor Newsom,

On behalf of Youth ALIVE!, Oakland's anchor organization for violence prevention, intervention and healing, we want to reiterate our support of Assembly Bill 166 (Gabriel) which would establish a violence prevention services pilot program within Medi-Cal to cover the provision of targeted violence prevention services to gunshot patients and other violently injured victims enrolled in Medi-Cal, if these patients are identified by their health care providers as high risk for violent re-injury. This bill would create a 5-year pilot to support delivery of these violence prevention services in at least nine hospital-based or hospital-linked violence intervention program sites across the state, and it would direct the Department of Health Care Services to report to the Legislature regarding this pilot program's implementation and impact.

Youth ALIVE!'s Caught in the Crossfire program, founded by Sherman Spears, was the very first hospital-based violence intervention program (HVIP). This program is now a federally recognized best practice, and a proven model that has been replicated in dozens of cities across California and other parts of the United States, as well as abroad.

Nationally, some studies have shown that, without intervention, as many as 44% of violently injured patients will return to medical care for a subsequent injury. It is irresponsible, immoral, and expensive to discharge violently injured patients without providing them with the appropriate aftercare to heal and remain injury-free – which is what HVIPs provide. While modern medicine has saved countless lives from violent injuries, most healthcare systems routinely fail to address violently injured patients' risk of re-injury after these patients exit the hospital. This creates a revolving door of violent injury and trauma centers too often see the same victims repeatedly. HVIPs use innovative and effective patient-focused strategies to break that cycle and reduce rates for violent injury recidivism. Evaluations have repeatedly demonstrated that integrating HVIP services into hospital trauma centers corresponds with large reductions in rates of injury recidivism and long-term increases in patients' wellbeing.

Unfortunately, funding for HVIPs has not always kept up with the need. HVIPs in California now require a steadier and more viable source to continue growing their operations and programs.

The Senate Appropriations cost analysis for this bill provided an estimated total cost of \$3.35 million for the five years of operation, averaging out to \$670,000 a year. Medi-Cal pays about \$19,523 total per firearm assault hospitalization, so this bill would result in direct cost savings to Medi-Cal if it prevents just 35 shootings a year. 35 individuals is a small fraction of the 5,600 people shot by someone else each year in this state.

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Providing Medi-Cal coverage for violence prevention services for gunshot victims will help expand utilization of Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs in California and would likely even result in cost savings to the state Medicaid program and to our justice system. With AB 166, HVIPs can continue their preventative work and harness state and federal funding to reduce the cycle of violence that plagues many of our cities and destroys many of our communities. This bill passed with bipartisan support and is supported by a broad coalition of medical groups and gun violence prevention groups.

For these reasons, Youth ALIVE! respectfully requests your signature on AB 166.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Anne Marks", is written over a faint, light blue horizontal line.

Anne Marks  
Executive Director