**[Date]**

Assemblymember Jesse Gabriel

California State Capitol P.O. Box 942849

Sacramento, CA 94293

**Re: Assembly Bill 1929 (Gabriel) - Support**

Dear Assemblymember Gabriel,

**[Organization name]** is proud to support AB 1929 (Gabriel) to provide Medi-Cal coverage for violence prevention services for survivors of community violence and other individuals at highest risk of exposure to community violence. This bill would codify and sustain a recent proposal by the Department of Health Care Services (DHCS) to expand the Medi-Cal program’s support for violence prevention services that work to promote healing and recovery after violent injury and interrupt chronic cycles of violence, unaddressed trauma, and retaliation.

Too often in our healthcare and criminal justice systems, gun violence is not discussed and dealt with as the public health crisis that it is. Gun violence not only leads to bodily injury, if not death, but also mental health trauma for the victim and the community. Even worse, gun violence is often not a one-time event. Our healthcare systems have saved countless lives from violence, but they 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.

Violence prevention services use innovative and effective patient-focused strategies to break that cycle and reduce rates for violent injury recidivism. Evaluations have repeatedly demonstrated that integrating professional violence intervention services into patient care corresponds with large reductions in rates of injury recidivism. In its formal analysis of AB 166 (Gabriel) in 2019, the U.C. Health Benefits Review Program predicted, using what it called “a conservative estimate,” that violently injured patients receiving covered violence prevention services would experience a ***50% reduction*** in risk of violent re-injury, but that ***just 3%*** of patients recovering from community violence injuries in California received those services. This means thousands of missed opportunities every year to effectively intervene, promote healing, and save lives.

Providing Medi-Cal coverage for violence prevention services for gun violence and community violence victims will help expand utilization of these services in California and would likely even result in cost savings to the state Medicaid program and to our justice system. With AB 1929, violence prevention services 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.

For these reasons, we support AB 1929.

Sincerely,

**[Name and signature here]**