North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention Year End Report 2023

Developed by:

Dr. Gerard V. Tate, LMSW Executive Director, NC Office of Violence Prevention

Table of Contents

1.	Message from the Director		
2.	Summary of 2023 Accomplishments 4		
3.	Continuing Efforts and Future Outlook 5		
4.	Conclusion		
5.	. Appendices		
	o A. North Carolina Violence Prevention Activities 2023-24 7-15		
	o B. Advisory Board Members 17-18		

Message from the Director

As the first six months of the North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention's operation conclude, I extend my heartfelt gratitude to Governor Cooper. His visionary leadership in establishing this vital office has been pivotal in our mission to reduce violence and firearm misuse in our state. This office stands as a testament to his commitment to the safety and well-being of all North Carolinians.

In these early stages, our collaboration with the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) has been invaluable. Under the leadership of Secretary Kinsley and Dr. Tilson, our State Health Director and Chief Medical Officer, DHHS has provided essential support and guidance. Their involvement, including the funding of a Deputy Director position, ensuring partnerships with all departmental divisions, particularly the Division of Public Health, and their engagement of state-level community health and major hospital systems has been instrumental in strengthening our integrated approach to violence prevention and has greatly enhanced our capacity to address violence prevention comprehensively.

I would also like to express my gratitude to our Department of Public Safety team. Secretary Buffaloe, Chief Deputy Secretary Hoekstra, and Deputy Secretary Valand have been integral in overcoming the initial challenges of establishing a new office and setting a strategic direction for our mission.

Furthermore, I am deeply thankful to our partners in violence prevention, law enforcement, public health, medical services, hospital systems, and city and county leadership. Our partners on the OVP Advisory Board have provided critical collaboration in our journey towards a safer North Carolina. Their collective efforts and support have been invaluable in shaping our strategies and initiatives. As we move forward, I am filled with optimism and confidence that together, we will make a significant impact on the lives of North Carolinians.

Dr. Gerard V. Tate, LMSW

Executive Director, NC Office of Violence Prevention

North Carolina Department of Public Safety



Summary of 2023 Accomplishments

The North Carolina Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) was launched by Governor Cooper through Executive Order 279 on March 19, 2023, to create safer communities across the state. OVP's approach involves building strategic partnerships, coordinating with state, county, and municipal violence prevention initiatives, and harnessing national and federal resources for technical assistance, training, and funding. Our goal is to synergize these efforts for an effective response to community violence and its related consequences.

Operating within the Department of Public Safety and in close partnership with the Department of Health and Human Services, OVP advocates for a comprehensive, public health-informed approach to violence prevention. This strategy emphasizes collaboration, data sharing, research, and support across various sectors. We work closely with stakeholders, including city and county authorities, medical and educational institutions, and community organizations, aiming to develop impactful partnerships at both state and regional levels. Our interventions in community violence, law enforcement initiatives, and hospital-based violence intervention programs are interconnected and evidence-based.

Promoting and expanding effective practices, policies, and programs is a central aspect of our work. We are dedicated to identifying and disseminating strategies that effectively reduce violence and its risks, integrating these into broader policy and program frameworks to ensure sustainable community benefits.

In our first six months, we concentrated on establishing a foundational framework for future interventions and positioning OVP as a central coordinator in North Carolina's fight against community violence. This involved conducting site visits, analyzing reports, and engaging with stakeholders to deeply understand the root causes of community violence and the challenges in implementing successful statewide programs. We have begun gathering research and forming partnerships with effective programs at the state, national, and international levels. Moving forward, we aim to use these insights to develop tailored and interconnected violence prevention strategies that align with the diverse needs of North Carolina's communities, adhering to a comprehensive, public health, and safety-informed approach.

Our success hinges on strong partnerships with local governments, law enforcement agencies, healthcare providers, and community organizations. These collaborations are crucial in developing comprehensive, community-led responses to violence.

Continuing Efforts and Future Outlook

As we forge ahead into 2024, our strategic focus in North Carolina is directed toward enhancing community safety and reducing violence. A pivotal advancement is the anticipated hiring of a Deputy Director by the end of the first quarter, under the auspices of NC DHHS. This crucial addition will significantly bolster our leadership capacity. Concurrently, we are emphasizing the integral role of the Training and Technical Assistance Coordinator, funded through federal grants, to assist local governments and community organizations in combating community violence.

In a novel initiative, we are also launching a graduate-level internship program in partnership with local universities. This program is aimed at cultivating future leaders in violence prevention and community safety, providing them with practical experience and academic knowledge. Additionally, our efforts include forming collaborations with the private sector, academic researchers, and field experts to establish a dedicated entity for training and technical assistance. This will empower grassroots organizations and law enforcement agencies with evidence-based violence prevention strategies, also aiding City and county-level Offices of Violence Prevention and Community Safety, alongside hospital-based intervention programs across the state.

Our pursuit of additional federal funding is geared towards ensuring the sustainability and growth of local and county evidence-based interventions. A statewide network of hospital-based violence intervention entities is being developed to foster a community of learning and best practice sharing. Another ambitious goal for the year is the formation of a statewide coalition of community violence intervention programs, serving as a hub for collaboration and impact enhancement.

These initiatives are part of a larger, concerted effort to tackle the challenge of violence in our communities. The timeline (Appendix A) we have set forth not only marks our progress but also underscores our commitment to strategic action and determination in this endeavor. We take pride in our accomplishments and remain focused on our goal of developing a comprehensive strategic plan by July 1, 2024. This plan will outline a long-term vision for a whole-of-government approach to community violence prevention in North Carolina. As we continue to build upon our achievements, our resolve to make North Carolina a safer, more peaceful place is stronger than ever. We look forward to the opportunities ahead and are dedicated to fostering a community environment where safety and peace are paramount.

Appendices

North Carolina Violence Prevention Activities 2023-2024





North Carolina views violence, including firearm violence, as both a public safety and a public health issue. North Carolina has state and community level assets, initiatives and programs that are briefly described in the white paper Keeping Families and Communities Safe. Through collaboration of the Governor's office and state agencies, in particular the Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) and the Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS), we have built upon these existing efforts to expand our work on Violence Prevention. This document lays out steps that have been taken in 2023 and steps that are anticipated in 2024.

Administrative

	Accomplished	
+	March 2023:	Office of Violence Prevention (OVP) established by Governor Cooper via Executive Order 279 to be located in the Department of Public Safety.
+	July 2023:	OVP Executive Director hired.
+	Sept 2023:	DPS and DHHS Executed Memorandum of Agreement that NCDHHS would provide position and funding for OVP Deputy Director.
+	Dec 2023:	OVP Community Violence Advisory Board named.
+	Dec 2023:	First Advisory Board meeting.
	Planned	
+	Jan 2024:	Hire Deputy Director.
+	Jan 2024:	In Person Planning Session OVP Advisory Board.
+	Summer 2024:	Hire Program Manager to oversee Technical Assistance.

Safe Storage

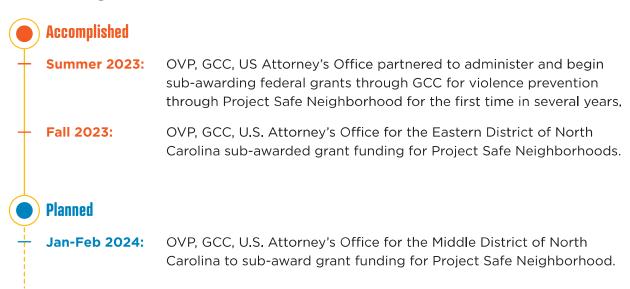


Violence Interruption Programs

Accomplished	
2023:	NC Medicaid 1115 waiver <u>Healthy Opportunity Pilots Fee Schedule</u> allows for use of Medicaid dollars to help fund Hospital and Community Violence Interruption Programs in three regions of the state. Working with one pilot region that has both a hospital and a community violence interruption program.
Oct 2023:	Governor's Crime Commission (GCC) awarded Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) dollars to Hospital Violence Interruption Programs.
Oct 2023:	GCC applied for and was awarded competitive funding via Office of Justice Programs' Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI).

Nov 2023: Submitted new Medicaid 1115 waiver proposal to expand Medicaid funding of violence prevention services statewide and to include gun locks and gun safes. **Planned April 2024:** OVP statewide convening of local violence prevention programs. **Spring 2024:** GCC will provide additional funding for Community and Hospital Violence Interruption programs via awarded competitive funding from Office of Justice Programs' Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) and Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Byrne SCIP funding. 2024-2025: Technical assistance and training for programs include developing: Mandatory training modules for Violence Interrupter Workers. • State-wide training & certification for Violence Interrupter Workers. • Online training for law enforcement to create public health informed programs. • Providing technical assistance for local municipalities to be more successful in funding applications. Fall 2024: If 1115 Waiver request is approved by CMS, Medicaid funding of violence prevention services statewide and safe storage can be expanded.

Project Safe Neighborhood



Suicide

Accomplished and Ongoing Work			
2023:	Continuation of Safe storage efforts, CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means) training and train-the-trainer events, gatekeeper training, creation of local FST (Firearm Safety Teams), Faith Leaders for Life Coalition, and local community suicide prevention teams.		
Oct 2023:	Hired a State Suicide Prevention Coordinator, in conjunction with the UNC Suicide Prevention Institute, to coordinate work of the NC Suicide Prevention State Action Plan		
- Nov 2023:	Collaboration with Academic Partners — UNC Suicide Institute Symposium — connecting researchers and bridging to communities — ncIMPACT suicide prevention teams (15 teams covering 24 counties).		
— Dec 2023:	Suicide Data webinar (highlighting firearms work) to ncIMPACT suicide prevention teams.		
Planned			
2024:	Continuation of support of local Firearm Safety Teams, Faith Leaders for Life Coalitions, CALM and gatekeeper trainings.		
— Jan 2024:	Suicide Prevention Programming for ncIMPACT suicide prevention teams. NC Injury Free Academy on Suicide Prevention for eastern NC.		
- Mar 2024:	Youth Suicide Prevention Conference in eastern NC.		
— June 2024:	NC Injury Free Academy on Suicide Prevention for western NC. ncIMPACT Final Forum for Suicide Prevention Teams.		
- Oct 2024:	Virtual NC Injury Free Academy on Suicide Prevention.		

Reentry



Accomplished and Ongoing Work

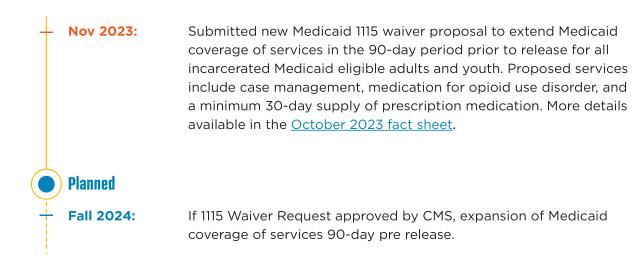
2023: DEPARTMENT OF ADULT CORRECTION

• Educational Programming — includes GED, HiSET, Associate's degree, Bachelor's degree, vocational training and apprenticeships. Multiple partnerships with colleges, universities, community colleges, and small businesses.

- State IDs for Incarcerated People DAC partnered to DMV to provide 90 days prior to release.
- **HOPE University** provides free educational programming for all incarcerated people and for up to a year after release. Popular courses include culinary arts, carpentry, finances, plumbing, legal studies and more. 319,567 courses completed, 1,720,657 hours spent learning (as of 12/10/23).
- Local Reentry Councils LRCs are an organized network of individuals and agencies that provide programming and support for justice involved people. This includes housing, employment, transportation, MAT (medication assisted treatment) and more. There are currently 17 and with work underway to create 30 additional LRCs.

DEPARTMENT OF ADULT CORRECTIONS/DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

- Medicaid Eligibility As of December 1, 2023, 2,105 incarcerated people were approved for Medicaid under Medicaid expansion.
 DAC has identified 4,800 whose release dates are in the next 6 months. 4,000 of those will be eligible for Medicaid.
- Serious Mental Illness Specialist Care Coordination Liaisons of Behavioral Health Managed Care Organizations, under oversight of NCDHHS, work with the Department of Adult Correction (DAC) to develop reentry plans and care coordination for individuals with SMI (Serious Mental Illness) and specific convictions violent crime (murder, sex offenders, gender-based violence) up to 90 days pre-release.
- 49 Reentry Programs Statewide 43 tailored to Substance Use Disorder (SUD), six focus on Serious Mental Illness (SMI), 12 Local Health Departments overdose prevention activities, housing provider statewide.
- UNC FIT Wellness Clinic Delivers whole person health care, peer support care coordination, along with connections to community supports (e.g., housing, transportation, phones) to people released from prison with Serious Mental Illness (SMI) and a history of treatment non-compliance, reported aggression, or recent solitary confinement.
- Justice Reentry & Reintegration Initiative Intellectual and
 Developmental Disability/Traumatic Brain Injury (IDD/TBI) Pilot —
 Available in 14 of DAC's 56 correctional facilities, serves eight counties;
 provides Individual Reentry Plan (IRP) development and ongoing
 post reentry supports for individuals with I/DD and TBI including skill-building, assistance with basic needs (e.g. housing, transportation,
 employment); educates the DAC staff, reentry providers and justice
 system partners of needs of people with IDD/TBI.



Awareness and Sharing of Best Practices

	Accomplished	
+	Nov 2022:	White Paper — <u>Public Health Approach</u> .
+	Feb 2023:	NC Public Health Leaders Conference.
+	July 2023:	North Carolina Medical Journal Issue — DPS-DHHS commentary and Governor sidebar.
+	Sept 2023:	<u>Firearm Safety Conference</u> — 20th anniversary of Violent Death Reporting System.

National/Federal Engagement

Accomplished or	or Ongoing Engagements		
- 2023:	ASTHO (Association of State and Territorial Health Officers) multi-state Catalyst Center for Firearm Injury Prevention — Road map for Using a Public Health Approach to Prevent Firearm Injury.		
2023:	Participating in the development of a state targeted violence and terrorism prevention (TVTP) strategy with NC DPS and the Department of Homeland Security Center for Prevention Programs and Partnerships (CP3).		
Sept 2023:	The Health Alliance for Violence Intervention (HAVI), Annual Conference — <u>Building a Sustainable Future</u>		
Dec 2023:	American Medical Association Firearm Injury Prevention Task Force.		



Jan 2024: Visit with White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention and

D.C. Violence Interruption Programs.

Mar 2024: CDC Office of Injury Center — Science Officer and VDRS Site Visit

(and NC-VDRS Advisory Board Meeting).

Research



Convened a multi-partner research workgroup including NCDPS, NCDHHS, RTI, Duke University, UNC Injury Prevention Research Center, NC Central University (HBCU), Atrium Health Wake Forest Baptist to develop a Firearms Research Agenda.

First step - Conduct needs assessment and an evaluability assessment to determine how best to support CVIs programs in NC. Developing proposal for funding.

Funding



Federal

BIPARTISAN SAFER COMMUNITIES ACT

- \$7.6M to NC Governor's Crime Commission via the Bipartisan Safer Communities Act, Byrne State Crisis Intervention Program (Byrne SCIP). Uses:
 - \$2.5M for NC SAFE, DPS-led safe storage campaign. This funding is for the second part of the campaign initially launched in 2023 with state dollars. The program includes educational materials, safe storage equipment and public service advertising.
 - More funding for CVI/HVI in 2024.
- \$4M to NC Governor's Crime Commission via Office of Justice Programs' Community Based Violence Intervention and Prevention Initiative (CVIPI) competitive funding. Uses:
 - \$500K (Proposed) for OVP to hire a program manager in

- Office of Violence Prevention to specifically provide training and technical assistance to local communities.
- Funding to Communities forthcoming.
- **\$1.4M** in FFY23 via NCDHHS Mental Health Block Grant. SAMHSA approved uses:
 - Update of the Division of Mental Health, Developmental Disabilities and Substance Use Services Disaster Preparedness, Response and Recovery Plan.
 - Training for Behavioral Health Response Team members and staff within emergency shelters.
 - Community Collaboratives training, technical assistance and resources to respond to traumatic events/disasters (DCFW portion).
 - Culturally and linguistically competent messaging, education and awareness campaign.
 - First Episode Psychosis: trauma training for staff and education/awareness materials to broaden outreach.
- \$29.3M to the NC Department of Public Instruction via the Student Support Block Grant. Uses:
 - Retain current school-based mental health professionals.
 - Increase the number of highly qualified and skilled school counselors, school social workers, and school mental health clinicians.
 - Train and re-specialize school-based mental health providers and provider candidates through tuition assistance, intensive training, stipends and school-based internships that lead to employment and licensure.
 - Partner with a minority-serving institution (UNCP) and two other institutions (NCSU, UNC-Charlotte) of higher education to recruit, train and re-specialize school-based mental health providers, provide travel stipends for internships in identified local educational agencies, and stipends for internship supervisors.

OTHER FEDERAL

- \$775,000 to the NC Department of Public Safety, Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (JJDP) via Office of Justice Programs (OJP), Office Juvenile Justice Delinquency Prevention (OJJDP) Second Chance Act funds. Uses:
 - Fund the Reentry to Resilience (R2R) Program serving youth returning from Youth Development Centers to the counties of Mecklenburg, Nash, Wilson, and Edgecombe.
 - Fund an intake coordinator for the R2R program.
 - Fund a process study and outcome evaluation of the program by RTI.

- \$746,000 to NC Department of Public Safety, JJDP via the OJJDP Second Chance Act funds. Uses:
 - Provide vocational training, employment assistance and intensive wraparound case management services to juveniles approaching transition age (17 and half years and older) reentering the community from Youth Development Centers.
 - JREP will serve the counties of Craven, Carteret, Pamlico, and Pitt in North Carolina.
- \$990,763 to NC Department of Public Safety, JJDP via the OJJDP Juvenile Reinvestment Funds. Uses:
 - Pilot Restorative Justice programming in juvenile facilities including a formative study by RTI.
 - Implementation and Validation studies of Youth Assessment and Screening Instrument.
 - Validation of the North Carolina Detention Assessment Tool.

VICTIMS OF CRIME ACT (VOCA) FUNDING

- \$750,000 from NC Governor's Crime Commission to expand hospital-based violence prevention and intervention programs.
 - Awarded to two hospital programs 10/23.

PROJECT SAFE NEIGHBORHOOD FUNDING VIA GCC AND US ATTORNEY OFFICES

- Wake County Sheriff \$25,000 Funds will increase D.A.R.E. programming at five schools and support gang violence intervention and prevention activities (including violent crime, firearm offenses, gun violence and drug and human trafficking) for high-risk communities.
- City of Fayetteville Police Department \$35,000 This grant will assist the Fayetteville Cumberland Reentry Council to continue to provide therapy services for their clients and the Police Activity League (PAL) program with camp enhancements. The PAL program helps mitigate gang violence.
- New Bern Police Department \$35,000 Part of the funds will focus on educating juveniles about gun violence and provide additional reentry resources.
- NC Community Outreach & Wellness Center, Inc \$20,000 ENC Street Keepers, a Community Violence Interruption Program, uses a public health approach with five employed local street keepers that operate within the community. This is a pilot program that will utilize credible messengers to interrupt violence and defuse immediate tensions.

MENTAL HEALTH BLOCK GRANT FUNDING

- Recurring 5% required set-aside for Crisis Funding. Uses:
 - Suicide prevention including the new Peer Warm Line.
 - Enhanced Mobile Crisis Teams for children and families.
- \$720,000 per year for reentry programs for people with serious mental illness and violent offenses. Uses:
 - Dedicated care coordinator and liaison in each behavioral health managed care organization to provide in-reach and reentry planning for individuals with serious mental illness and targeted convictions (violent offenses and sex offenses).
 - Ensure medication stability and clinically appropriate interventions and wrap around services post release to prevent re-offending.
 - Small population of high need/high risk individuals and planning is done jointly with Dept of Adult Corrections.
 - Funding does not include treatment costs, which are separately accounted for within the array of Medicaid/State funded services.

COVID SUPPLEMENTAL FUNDING

• 5% set-aside for crisis-related projects, including suicide prevention.

SAMHSA COOPERATIVE AGREEMENTS

- \$5,252,972 (2022-2024) and \$13,492,492 (2023-2026) for 988. Uses:
 - Expansion of the call center to respond to 24/7 calls/chats/ texts and meet 90% in state answer rates.
 - Integration with 911/Public-Safety Answering Points (PSAPs) and Mobile Crisis Response for individuals needing that level of care. PSAPs are call centers where the public's telephone calls for first responders (such as police, fire department, or emergency medical services/ambulance) are received and handled.
 - Ensure effectiveness in working with Tribal and Latinx communities who reach out to the 988-call center through assessment of current training and practices, conduct training for crisis counselors and technical assistance while educating the community and building trust.
 - In-state communications/marketing of 988.

CDC

- \$4.35M (2020-2025) Comprehensive Suicide Prevention Grant and \$792,640 (2022-2024) COVID-19 Health Equity Grant to DHHS Division of Public Health for Suicide Prevention. Uses:
 - Creation of state action plan and state-wide suicide prevention Advisory Board (CSPAC)
 - Safe storage efforts: CALM (Counseling on Access to Lethal Means) training and train-the-trainer events, creating of FST (Firearm Safety Teams).

- Funding for local community suicide prevention teams with deliverables of gatekeeper training, CALM training, and creation of FST team.
- Training and Technical support, including Gatekeeper training: Faith Leaders for Life, Start With Veterans, ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training) and train-thetrainer events, Injury Free Academy focused on suicide prevention and youth suicide prevention, specific to LGBTQ+: How to Be An Ally.

Federal/State - Medicaid

 Medicaid 1115 waiver <u>Healthy Opportunity Pilots Fee Schedule</u> — to help fund Violence Intervention Services. Medicaid expansion as of December 2023.

Local/County/City

 Multiple local municipalities have provided funding for community violence intervention programs (e.g., New Hanover County/ Wilmington — Port City United, Mecklenburg County/Charlotte — Office of Violence Prevention, Durham County/Bull City United).

Philanthropy

- Hospital foundations funding start-up of Hospital Violence Interruption Programs (e.g., Novant Health).
- Potential future philanthropy funds award for research proposal.





NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Member Name	Title	Organization
David Johnson	Program Manager	Bull City United
Uzuri Holder	Program Manager	Duke Violence Recovery Program
Willa Robinson	Program Manager	Firearm Injury Prevention Partners
Patrice Andrews	Chief of Police	Durham Police Department
Andrae Banks	Assistant Professor, Department of Social Work	North Carolina Central University
Ingram Bell	Program Director	Gate City Coalition
Latisha McNeil	Office of Community Safety Division Manager	City of Greensboro
Tracie Campbell	Director, Office Violence Prevention	Mecklenburg County Health Department
Liz Star	President and Founder	HopeStar Foundation
David Jacobs	Trauma Surgeon	Atrium Health
Rashad Gattison	Director	Port City United
Beth Moracco	Associate Director	UNC Injury Prevention Research Center
Stella Patterson	Chief of Police	City of Raleigh
Kerwin Pittman	Progam/Policy Manager	Emancipate NC
Becky Ceartas	Executive Director	NC Against Gun Violence
Martin D. Avery	Trauma Surgeon	Wake Forest Baptist Hospital/Atrium Health
Becca Palmer	Assistant Professor, Department of Pediatrics	Wake Forest University School of Medicine
Sue Anne Pilgreen	Manager	Eastern Carolina Injury Prevention Program
Nicole Elliott	Chair and Founder	The Marcus Jackson Project
Doris Stith	Executive Director	Community Enrichment Organization

NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY OFFICE OF VIOLENCE PREVENTION ADVISORY BOARD MEMBERS

Ronny Bell Director Division of Pharmaceutical Outcomes

and Policy, UNC School of Pharmacy

Clarence Birkhead Sheriff County of Durham

William Baxter Community Safety and Violence Buncombe County

Prevention Coordinator

Curtis Brame Sheriff County of Vance

Krystal Harris Director The Community Intervention and

Support Services (CISS) Department