



Pat Quinn, Governor
LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, Director

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**To: The Honorable Pat Quinn, Governor and
Members of the Illinois General Assembly**

**FROM: LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH
Director**

DATE: November 20, 2014

RE: Violence Prevention Task Force 2014 Report

Pursuant to Public Act 98-0194, enacted on August 7, 2013, I am presenting this report regarding the status of the Violence Prevention Task Force (VPTF) and its activities to date.

The purpose of the VPTF is:

- (1) to increase awareness of resources, jobs, and opportunities to prevent violence in this State;
- (2) to assist violence prevention groups, religious institutions, social lodges, community groups, block clubs, and other groups in providing safe havens for children, youth, young adults, and seniors;
- (3) to create, develop, and implement recreational, social, and educational initiatives for at-risk youth;
- (4) to organize community mental health providers in at-risk communities;
- (5) to provide State resources to public schools to assist with behavioral health; and
- (6) to assist in providing jobs, resources, and opportunities for at-risk youth so as to prevent them from committing crimes.

Members of the Task Force include:

- Rep. LaShawn K. Ford (Sponsor)
- Sen. Mattie Hunter (Sponsor)
- LaMar Hasbrouck, MD, MPH, Director of IDPH (Chair)
- Rep. Brian Stewart
- Sen. Tim Bivins
- Pastor Corey Brooks

In an effort to identify potential partners that are already participating in violence prevention efforts around the state, several organizations were invited to present to the Task Force. The meetings focused on learning more about these organizations, their programs and to address

how the Task Force can partner with them to achieve common goals: reducing and preventing violence throughout the state of Illinois.

Specifically, each presenter was asked to:

- Highlight their organization's approach to violence prevention
- Discuss successes
- Discuss challenges
- Provide an overview of their target audience and sources of funding
- Discuss next steps
- Answer questions

Bylaws were created and approved by the Task Force establishing that meetings are held on a bi-monthly basis. Meetings were convened meetings on the following dates:

- **January 23, 2014** – at this meeting
 - Bylaws were finalized;
 - an overview of violence in IL and;
 - public health approaches to violence prevention were presented.
- **March 13, 2014** – this meeting included presentations from
 - Dr. Marie Crandall of Northwestern University who created a report using Geographic Information Services (GIS) to inform Violence Prevention;
 - Dr. Maryann Mason and Rebecca Levin of Ann and Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago on the Illinois Violent Death Reporting System (IVDRS); and
 - Reshma Desai of the Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority on the many programs and funding opportunities for violence prevention.
- **May 2, 2014** - this meeting included presentations on the many programs and funding opportunities for violence prevention from
 - Howard Lathan and Kanu Iheukumere of the Chicago Area Project;
 - Jalon Arthur of Cure Violence/Cease Fire
 - Rebecca Levin of Strengthening Chicago's Youth
- **July 22, 2014** - this meeting included presentations on the advocacy programs of
 - Nina Vinik of Gun Violence Prevention Program
 - Colleen Daley of the Illinois Council Against Handgun Violence
- **September** – due to scheduling conflicts of the presenters, this meeting was cancelled
- **November** – due to scheduling conflicts surrounding Ebola preparedness in IL, this meeting was cancelled.

At our last meeting, we discussed next steps for the Task Force and talked about having "Community Conversations" which function similar to a town hall meeting. The idea is to have 6 across the state with two in Chicago where we would convene community members to discuss solutions to some of the issues, being deliberate in choosing what *they* feel are key

problems in their communities. To facilitate this discussion, a survey was drafted by a CDC epidemiologist and edited by the Task Force. A copy of the survey is attached.

The goal is to move into an assimilation phase, once the town hall meetings have completed, and figure out how we would design the blueprint and recommendations. We would like to produce a multi-sector report and leverage the document to make progress. With funding that had been secured by Rep. Ford, we plan to hire a consultant to assist with this process.

Additionally, a topic that we would like to address throughout this process is how violence is covered in the media. One of the ways we plan to address this is to convene a meeting with several media outlets to discuss solutions on how to better approach these issues.

Meetings for the 2015 calendar year have not yet been scheduled. Once the 99th General Assembly spring session calendar has been finalized, the Task Force will work together to finalize a meeting schedule and will post this on our website according to the Open Meetings Act.

As you can see, the Task Force has identified several partners with whom we can work to employ violence prevention measures across the state. Still, there are several other organizations that we've identified but have not yet had the chance to hear from. Part of our agenda for the first couple of meetings for 2015 is to invite these organizations to the table and learn more about their programs and how we can work collaboratively to prevent violence across the state.

On behalf of the Violence Prevention Task Force, thank you for the opportunity to address such an important issue that disproportionately affects several communities across the state and please accept this report on our activities to date.