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Bill Analysis

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Primary Sponsor: Rep. Brewer

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SUMMARY

- Establishes the Office of Violence Prevention in the Ohio Department of Health.
- Tasks the Office of Violence Prevention with enumerated duties regarding community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to annually identify the top 15 Ohio counties with the highest incidence of firearm-related violence.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to encourage coordination between community violence intervention programs, hospital violence intervention programs, and local law enforcement agencies to improve public safety, information sharing, and worker safety.
- Authorizes the Office of Violence Prevention to convene an advisory group to assist with funding grants to support community violence intervention programs operating in the 15 identified counties.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to develop a statewide data system to track referrals, service engagement, and outcomes for individuals served through community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to consult with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to identify and pursue opportunities to receive Medicaid reimbursement for community violence intervention and hospital violence intervention services.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to annually publish a report on ODH's website including statewide firearm-related injury and death trends and the impact of violence intervention programs, along with the fiscal impact of firearm-related violence on state and local systems.

- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to publish every four years a statewide violence prevention plan that includes enumerated information.
- Establishes the Violence Prevention Fund in the state treasury to fund the Office of Violence Prevention's activities.
- Requires the Office of Violence Prevention to establish regional community violence intervention coordination hubs to link hospitals, community violence intervention programs, local health departments, and victim services providers.
- Requires a representative of the Office of Violence Prevention to appear before the standing committees in the House of Representatives and Senate that have jurisdiction over public health and public safety by December 30, 2030, to present specified information.
- Makes an appropriation of $30 million to fund operations of the Office of Violence Prevention, award grants to support community violence intervention programs, and support hospital violence intervention programs.

DETAILED ANALYSIS

Office of Violence Prevention

The bill establishes the Office of Violence Prevention in the Ohio Department of Health (ODH). The purpose of the Office is to coordinate, support, and fund community violence intervention strategies and hospital violence intervention strategies that reduce firearm-related injury and death through evidence-based approaches aligned with public health.[1]

Duties regarding community violence intervention programs

The Office of Violence Prevention must do the following regarding community violence intervention programs:

- With the assistance of ODH, annually identify the top 15 Ohio counties with the highest incidence of firearm-related violence and publish the methodology used to determine the rankings;
- Develop and administer competitive grants to support community violence intervention programs operating in those 15 counties, prioritizing funding for programs that utilize evidence-based strategies. Programs include (1) street outreach and credible messenger programs, (2) group violence reduction strategies, (3) trauma recovery and wraparound supports, and (4) community-led conflict mediation and prevention initiatives. As part of this duty, the Office may reserve up to 5% of grant funds for communities not in the identified 15 counties that demonstrate a significant or emerging burden of firearm-related violence.

[1] R.C. 3701.147(A).

- Support the development and sustainability of the community violence intervention workforce by (1) providing or funding training, certification and professional development for relevant personnel, (2) supporting organizational capacity building for community-based organizations, including fiscal management, data collection, and compliance, (3) promoting worker wellness and safety practices, and (4) offering training, capacity building, and technical assistance to local governments, nonprofits, and community-based partners;
- Enter into agreements with public universities or research institutions to evaluate the programs funded under the bill, including impacts on shootings, homicides, and other relevant outcomes.[2]

Duties regarding hospital violence intervention programs

Additionally, the Office of Violence Prevention has two duties regarding hospital violence intervention programs. First, the Office must establish a statewide hospital violence intervention program initiative to ensure that all Level I and Level II trauma centers in Ohio implement evidence-based or evidence-informed bedside intervention and referral practices for victims of firearm-related injury. This initiative must include protocols regarding:

- Bedside engagement by trained intervention specialists;
- Warm handoffs to community violence intervention programs;
- Capacity for on-call responses 24 hours a day, seven days a week;
- Follow-up case management and trauma recovery services.

Second, the Office must provide funding, technical assistance, and training to hospitals to support the implementation of hospital violence intervention programs.[3]

Coordination

The Office of Violence Prevention must encourage coordination between community violence intervention programs, hospital violence intervention programs, and local law enforcement agencies to improve public safety, information sharing, and worker safety. The bill clarifies that it should not be construed to mandate operational integration between community violence intervention programs, hospital violence programs, and law enforcement, or to modify the authority of law enforcement agencies.[4]

Advisory group

The bill permits the Office of Violence Prevention to convene an advisory group to assist with funding community violence intervention programs as described above by providing

[2] R.C. 3701.147(B).

[3] R.C. 3701.147(C).

[4] R.C. 3701.147(E)

recommendations on program design, funding priorities, and program evaluation. The advisory group is to be composed of:

- Individuals with lived experience of community violence;
- Individuals representing community-based organizations, local governments, hospitals, and victim services providers.[5]

Statewide data system

The bill requires the Office of Violence Prevention to develop a statewide data system to track referrals, service engagement, and outcomes for individuals served through community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs. Programs that receive funds under the bill must participate in the statewide data system.[6]

Consultation with the Department of Medicaid

As part of its duties, the Office of Violence Prevention must consult with the Ohio Department of Medicaid to identify and pursue opportunities to receive Medicaid reimbursement for the provision of community violence intervention and hospital violence intervention services, including care coordination, case management, and trauma recovery supports.[7]

Data reporting

The Office of Violence Prevention must collect and make public certain data required under the bill. Beginning one year after the bill's effective date and annually thereafter, the Office must publish a report on ODH's website, including:

- Statewide firearm-related injury and death trends;
- The impact of community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs;
- The estimated fiscal impact of firearm-related violence on state and local systems including health care, emergency response services, and criminal justice and the extent to which community violence intervention programs may reduce such costs.

Additionally, beginning one year after the bill's effective date and every four years thereafter with interim updates as needed, the Office must publish a report on ODH's website detailing a four-year statewide violence prevention plan including:

- An analysis of statewide and local trends in firearm-related injury and death;
- Measurable goals and benchmarks for reducing community violence;

[5] R.C. 3701.147(D).

[6] R.C. 3701.147(F).

[7] R.C. 3701.147(G).

- Strategies to coordinate public health, public safety, victim services, and trauma services;
- Identification of gaps in community violence intervention services and capacity limits for service provision in communities with a high burden of violence.[8]

Violence Prevention Fund

The bill establishes the Violence Prevention Fund in the state treasury, consisting of funds appropriated by the General Assembly. The Office of Violence Prevention is permitted to use the funds only for:

- Personnel, operations, and administration of the Office of Violence Prevention;
- Fulfillment of the bill's requirements;
- The provision of victim services and the operation of trauma recovery programs.[9]

Rulemaking

The Director of Health must adopt rules as necessary to implement the bill's requirements, including rules regarding eligibility for grants, reporting requirements for grant recipients, and standards for the Office to use when evaluating grant recipients.[10]

Regional community violence intervention coordination hubs

The bill requires the Office of Violence Prevention to establish regional community violence intervention coordination hubs to link hospitals, community violence intervention programs, local health departments, and victim services providers. Each hub must have a regional coordinator responsible for:

- Overseeing referral pathways;
- Supporting data collection and reporting;
- Facilitating cross-system collaboration;
- Providing technical assistance to local partners.[11]

Appearance before committees

By December 31, 2030, a representative of the Office of Violence Prevention must appear before the standing committees in the House of Representatives and the Senate that have jurisdiction over public health and public safety. The representative must present:

- The results of evaluations of community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs funded under the bill;

[8] R.C. 3701.147(H).

[9] R.C. 3701.147(I).

[10] R.C. 3701.147(J).

[11] R.C. 3701.148.

- The fiscal impact of community violence intervention programs and hospital violence intervention programs;
- Recommendations regarding future appropriations to the Office of Violence Prevention.[12]

Appropriation

The bill appropriates $30 million to fund operations of the Office, award grants to support community violence intervention programs, and to support hospital violence intervention programs. By July 1, 2026, or as soon as possible thereafter, the Director of Budget and Management must request that the Director of Commerce transfer to the Violence Prevention Fund $30 million of unclaimed funds. The Office must distribute at least 80% of the funds to community violence intervention programs operating in the 15 counties identified with the highest incidence of firearm-related violence.[13]

HISTORY

Action	Date
Introduced	05-12-26

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[12] Section 2.

[13] Sections 3, 4, and 5.