



**Hartford Foundation for Public Giving testimony in support of  
House Bill 5677, An Act Concerning Medicaid Violence Preventative Services  
Human Services Committee**

**March 17, 2021**

Good afternoon Senator Moore, Representative Abercrombie, Senator Berthel, Representative Case and distinguished members of the Human Services Committee. The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is grateful for this opportunity to submit written testimony in support of **House Bill 5677, An Act Concerning Medicaid Violence Preventative Services.**

The Hartford Foundation for Public Giving is the community foundation for the 29-town Greater Hartford region. As a community foundation, we manage approximately \$1 billion in assets, in 2020, the Foundation distributed a record-breaking \$52 million in grants to promote equitable opportunity for all residents in our region. Made possible by the gifts of generous individuals, families and organizations, the Foundation has awarded grants of more than \$837 million since its founding in 1925.

As part of our work to dismantle structural racism and improve social and economic mobility for Black and Latinx residents of Greater Hartford, the Hartford Foundation seeks to increase the number of Hartford residents living in higher opportunity neighborhoods in and outside the city. Higher opportunity neighborhoods are defined by a variety of factors, including low unemployment, better performing schools, lower crime and greater availability of quality, affordable housing stock.

As part of these efforts, the Foundation supports organizations engaged in work to increase social cohesion and create a greater perception of community safety in Hartford. According to DataHaven's Greater Hartford Well-Being Index, only 46 percent of Hartford residents say they feel safe walking around their neighborhood at night. In the inner ring suburbs, that number is 69 percent, and in the outer ring suburbs, it's 81 percent.

**House Bill 5677, An Act Concerning the Availability of Violence Prevention Services Under Medicaid** would use Medicaid funds to reimburse Violence Prevention Professionals for their services treating victims of violence in the community. Under the proposed bill, Violence Prevention Professionals (VPPs) will need to complete a nationally accredited certification program as well as have been in their position at least six months in order to be eligible for reimbursement.

The Foundation supports several efforts to interrupt gun-related violence in the City of Hartford. We provide resources to individual nonprofits that provide violence prevention, intervention, trauma informed care and youth development and engagement. Since November 2018, the Foundation has supported several Hartford nonprofit agencies that formed the Hartford Community Safety Coalition (CSC), a collaborative effort to create healthy communities through a reduction of violence and trauma in Hartford. We know that studies have found that hospital based violence intervention programs are

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effective in reducing violent crime. Several of the organizations in the CSC provide hands-on, neighborhood-based violence prevention and intervenor services to address the public health crisis of neighborhood violence. Although based in sites within the community, these services, when provided by trained and certified staff, should also be eligible for Medicaid funding.

The Foundation looks forward to continuing its work with policymakers, nonprofits and residents to develop effective long-term policies to ensure that all Connecticut families live in safe, healthy, and strong neighborhoods. Thank you for the opportunity to provide testimony.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact our staff at [policy@hfpg.org](mailto:policy@hfpg.org) or 860-548-1888.