

Advance Peace Legislative Testimony

Wednesday, February 28, 2024

DHHS Appropriations Sub-committee

Good morning, my name is Dr. Paul Elam and I serve as the Chief Strategy Officer at MPHI. MPHI is Michigan-Based, nationally engaged non-profit public health institute created by the Michigan Legislature to help advance health and well-being. I am doctorally prepared in criminal justice, urban studies and family and child ecology.

At MPHI, we believe that gun-violence is a costly threat to public health, therefore we are working with partners to End Gun Violence and Strengthen Our Local Communities. Gun violence is the leading cause of premature death in the United States and the American Public Health Association has identified it as a public health crisis.

The Cost of Gun Violence

The fact is taxpayers in Michigan are paying a high price for what happens after gunshots are fired. The National Institute for Criminal Justice Reform estimates that every time someone is shot it costs state and local government approximately \$1.2 million dollars and every time someone is murdered with a gun it costs state and local government approximately \$1.6 million dollars. Those costs include crime-scene investigations, hospital bills, court costs and prison costs. Other shooting-related costs include a prosecutor, public defender, courts, hospital costs, and victim support.

These costs don't quantify the costs of fear, of families devastated by the loss of a loved one, or the economic cost of businesses that choose to set up shop in places that are deemed safer.

I believe we can and should reduce these costs — through community violence intervention strategies Like Advance Peace that have proven effective in interrupting cycles of violence.

To address this concern, in 2021, MPHI partnered with Advance Peace and the Ingham County Health Department to establish the Advance Peace Lansing Peacemaker Fellowship in response to increasing firearm violence in Lansing.

Advance Peace is a model for evidence-based intervention to end cyclical and retaliatory gun violence. Advance Peace Lansing's goal is a 40% reduction in cyclical and retaliatory gun violence by 2025.

Advance Peace Lansing is a part of an ecosystem of organizations working to address gun violence by providing transformational opportunities to individuals involved in lethal firearm offenses and placing them in a high-touch, personalized fellowship—the Peacemaker Fellowship. In July 2022, we hired and began training our first group of street outreach staff, and in October 2022, we launched the first peacemaker fellowship in Lansing. Four neighborhood change agents, who have had previous experience with gun violence, are supporting 15 Advance Peace fellows, young people who have been involved in gun violence themselves. The results in Lansing and other communities are promising. Almost all the Advance Peace fellows have stayed away from gun violence.

The peacemaker fellowship uses the evidence-based practices of street outreach, mentoring, intensive case management, life skills training, cognitive behavioral therapy, and subsidized employment to engage those at the center of gun violence.

Community violence intervention programs like Advance Peace are bringing about meaningful change. They make us safer. They save federal, state, and local tax dollars that are spent at the back end of shootings. Preventing just one fatal shooting can save \$1.6 million or more.

A Few Statistics

Since Advance Peace Lansing's launch, from October 2022 to September 2023:

- We successfully recruited and enrolled 15 individuals who were actively involved in gun violence into the Peacemaker Fellowship, 11 of them remain actively involved and are no longer engaged in gun violence.
- Lansing's southwest sector gun fatalities where we are targeting our fellowship efforts dropped by 9% (23-21).

- Lansing's city-wide gun fatalities dropped by 65% (17 to 6).
- Incidents with evidence of shots being fired are down by 3.5%.
- Calls to 9-1-1 or police about shots fired are down 4%.
- Advance Peace Lansing's Street team spent over 1500 hours engaging in Lansing's neighborhoods, focusing first on southwest Lansing.

Based on These Results We Have Plans to Expand our Efforts

- Advance Peace Lansing is one part of a much larger ecosystem that needs to grow in effort, approach, and investment holistically to make long-term impacts.
- Advance Peace Lansing is growing its presence in the southwest corridors of Lansing and initiating a new presence in the southeast neighborhoods of Lansing.
- In partnership with the City of East Lansing's council and leadership, Advance Peace is expanding into East Lansing.
- Advance Peace Lansing is launching a partnership with the Lansing School District to place Peacemakers in Lansing's Eastern, Everett and Sexton High Schools.
- Advance Peace Lansing is growing its Peacemaker Fellowship from 15 to 60 Fellows by the end of 2024.
- By the end of 2025 Advance Peace Lansing will be operating at scale, able to have a presence and intervene anywhere data shows hot spots in Lansing and Ingham County

Research and Evaluation

A formal evaluation report will be released this summer by our evaluation partner, the Center for Global Healthy Cities at the University of California Berkeley.

Funding Partners

MPHI has secured \$5.7 million dollars to support the planning and implementation of the Peacemaker Fellowship. The Fellowship is currently funded by the US Department of Justice, the Michigan Department of Health and Human Services, the Ingham County Health Department, and the City of Lansing. We are also partnering with the School of Criminal Justice at Michigan State University to gather insights from community members to learn more about their perspectives on gun violence and Advance Peace.

To Learn More

If you would like to learn more about advance peace Lansing, please visit advancepeace Lansingingham.org. There you can view our plan for expansion, our first 12-month data report, our local action plan, and the cost of gun violence report from the National Institute for Criminal Justice Report.

This Saturday, March 2 there will be a gun violence prevention and community safety forum from 11-2pm at the tabernacle of David church to share more details about the advance peace strategy and for our community violence intervention partners who are also about of the ecosystem to share the work that is being done to address gun violence in the Lansing Region.

