



NEWS

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Illinois Department of Public Health

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Illinois Violence Prevention Task Force to Meet to Discuss Strategies to Curb Youth Violence

CHICAGO – The Violence Prevention Task Force (VPTF) will hear presentations addressing gun violence from two community advocacy groups and discuss plans to host town hall meetings at its next committee meeting.

“We are all deeply saddened and concerned about the recent increase of violence in the City of Chicago, as well as other regions of the state,” said Illinois Department of Public Health Director and VPTF chair Dr. LaMar Hasbrouck. “Violence affects us all, and so we must work together to develop peaceful and productive alternatives to violence.”

The task force is pursuing strategies that can help put an end to the violence epidemic, and will hold its next open meeting on Tuesday, July 22 from 2 - 4 pm in the Director’s Conference Rooms (located at 69 W. Washington St., 35th Floor, in Chicago and at 535 W. Jefferson St., 5th floor, in Springfield). Individuals interested in attending this meeting should email DPH.ViolencePrevention@illinois.gov. Seating is limited.

Previous meetings have included presentations, informing the task force about statewide efforts, from various groups on their violence prevention initiatives, including:

- Using Geographic Information Services (GIS) to inform Violence
- Illinois Violence Death Reporting System (IVDRS)
- Illinois Criminal Justice Information Authority (ICJIA)
- Chicago Area Project
- Cure Violence/Cease Fire
- Strengthening Chicago’s Youth (SCY)

In August 2013, Governor Pat Quinn signed legislation creating the VPTF to stem the epidemic of violence impacting today’s youth. The legislation was sponsored by State Representative LaShawn Ford (D-Chicago) and State Senator Mattie Hunter (D-Chicago), both of whom are members of the task force. The other members include: State Senator Tim Bivins (R-Dixon), State Representative Brian Stewart (R-Freeport) and Pastor Corey B. Brooks, Sr. The VPTF also receives administrative and other support from the Illinois African American Family Commission and The Illinois Latino Family Commission.

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Following are some additional anti-violence initiatives being carried out by the Administration:

- *Choose Respect Program*: promotes healthy relationships among teens, prevents teen dating violence, and engages youths as leaders in teen relationship violence
- *Illinois Youth Recreation Corps*: offers summer employment opportunities for youth with local government and not-for-profit entities, working and instructing in programs that provide recreational and conservation opportunities
- *Redeploy Illinois*: assists youth at-risk of being sent to a correctional facility by offering assessment, case management, advocacy, education assistance, individual counseling, along with group, family, and substance abuse counseling/treatment, and home confinement
- *CeaseFire Program*: engages high-risk individuals in 19 communities throughout Illinois with a goal to establish peaceful coexistence among rival groups, decrease group tensions, develop alternative strategies to violence around common violence triggers, and provide resources that highest-risk individuals can use to attain life skills that assist with alternatives to violence

“I am deeply saddened by the violence that continues to happen in Chicago,” Senator Hunter stated. “Community leaders, lawmakers and citizens have come together in the past to reduce violence in the community. In light of recent events, we should continue working together to provide employment opportunities for our youth, protect social services and promote peace within the city. We need a comprehensive plan developed by community stakeholders immediately.”

The VPTF duties include preventing violence by raising awareness of job opportunities for at-risk youth, assisting religious and community groups and organizations whose mission is to curb violence, and coordinating with mental health providers to assure that they are present in communities that need them.

“Violence has posed a threat to our community for far too long,” said Representative Ford. “This year, we have already seen hundreds of murders. We must take immediate action to deal with the root cause, and prevent these tragedies from continuing. With 80 percent of Illinois’ mental health patients left without care, our continuing high unemployment rate, and other social problems, it’s important that this task force, lead by Dr. Hasbrouck, join other stakeholders to help bring peace to our city and State.”

IDPH continues to implement its Five Year Strategy 2014-2018 to maximize IDPH’s effectiveness, influence and value for promoting wellness, health equity, safety and improved health outcomes. Strategic plan priorities include developing and expanding partnerships; improving data utilization; reducing health disparities; improving regulatory compliance; and branding, marketing and communicating IDPH’s value. http://www.idph.state.il.us/about/StrategicPlan_Final_2014-2018.pdf

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