States are using Medicaid to support violence prevention services

In 2021, President Biden announced that Medicaid can—and should—utilize the program to reimburse for community violence programs such as hospital-based violence intervention. Shortly thereafter, the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services outlined numerous pathways states could take to utilize this benefit. As of late 2023, seven states—Connecticut, Illinois, California, Oregon, Colorado, Maryland, and New York—have elected to use Medicaid to support CVI programming.

- **Connecticut** created a Community Violence Prevention Services benefit, allowing violence prevention professionals to receive reimbursement for frontline work with patients. (2021)
- **Illinois** developed a team-based model to support Violence Prevention Community Support Team Services. (2021)
- **California** integrated Medicaid violence prevention services with its community health worker program. (2022)
- **Oregon** amended its state Medicaid benefits to add coverage and reimbursement for community violence prevention services. (2023)
- **Colorado** passed legislation that allows for the coverage of violence prevention services for community health workers. (2023)
- **Maryland** passed legislation for Medicaid reimbursement of community violence prevention services. (2023)
- **New York** passed legislation to amend the state Medicaid plan to include coverage for community violence prevention services. (2023)

**Why does this matter?**

Medicaid is the largest public insurance program in the United States. [1] As of 2022, over 68 million Americans received their health benefits through the program.

- For violently injured patients, Medicaid is a lifeline. Research indicates that among victims of gunshot wounds, nearly 2 out of 3 patients are either on Medicaid or uninsured. [2] This coverage is critical as victims of violence face significant health care needs both during and after injury.
- While the physical wounds are most obvious after a violent injury, the psychological and psychosocial needs are just as great. Fortunately, Medicaid provides a comprehensive benefits package to meet those needs as well.
- Medicaid can support survivors of community violence by reimbursing the work of Violence Prevention Professionals (VPPs), who provide comprehensive wraparound services to victims of violent injury.
How can my state utilize Medicaid to support violence prevention efforts?

The Medicaid program acts as a partnership between the federal and state governments. As a result, states have flexibility in which benefits they can add. Because Medicaid violence prevention benefits are new, individual states must act to add the benefit.

- Many state Medicaid agencies can act without legislation to add coverage of VPP services by creating a state plan amendment (SPA). Advocates should meet with their state Medicaid office as a first step.
- Numerous states have passed laws to create their Medicaid benefits. Supportive lawmakers have crafted bills that have passed with strong bipartisan support.

Where can I learn more?

- The HAVI’s website offers issue papers, fact sheets, and other information to learn more about public funding for community violence intervention.
- The National Association of Medicaid Directors provides an easy-to-navigate directory to learn more about your state’s plan.
- For HAVI members, join the Policy Working Group for regular updates as well as opportunities for learning and advocacy.

[1] https://www.kff.org/other/state-indicator/total-population/?currentTimeframe=0&sortModel=%7B%22colId%22:%22Location%22,%22sort%22:%22asc%22%7D