

Promising Practices

Gun Violence Prevention Programming: Philadelphia's Temple University Hospital

Hospital-based gun violence intervention programs can be extremely effective in reducing further harm for victims of gunshot injuries and their families. These kinds of programs vary in their services and structure but typically focus on stabilization, support and reducing the likelihood of retaliation and/or re-injury. Temple University Hospital in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania treats gunshot wounds daily and employs a myriad of innovative gun violence prevention and intervention programming.

In 2005, the hospital began developing violence prevention initiatives due to the kinds of cases Dr. Amy Goldberg was seeing in the emergency room at Temple University. In 2006, Goldberg and Temple Trauma Outreach Manager Scott Charles led the hospital's launch of [Cradle to Grave](#). This hospital-based education program uses real-life stories from real victims of gun violence to teach participants about what happens when someone is shot. The program is designed for at-risk youth in high-risk neighborhoods in the city. Over 15,000 students, including public school students and adjudicated youth, have participated in the program. The two-hour training, taught in various locations throughout the hospital, including in a trauma bay, stresses the medical realities of firearm injury and showcases both the damage of gunshot wounds as well as the tools trauma surgeons use to repair damage.

Additional Programs and Supports

In addition to Cradle to Grave, the hospital has a team of [trauma victim support advocates](#) who provide support to patients in the emergency department 24 hours a day, seven days a week. These advocates provide grief support, link survivors to victims' services and offer emotional, physical and personal support during and after the patient's stay.

Furthermore, the hospital created [Fighting Chance](#), a community outreach program to train Philadelphia residents on how to provide trauma-related bystander aid. Borrowing from combat medicine, and with input from the community and the Philadelphia Police Department, Fighting Chance is a free two-hour training facilitated by volunteer doctors and nurses that uses a mix of instruction and hands-on learning to teach residents how to

provide life-saving aid to victims of gunshot injuries. The training teaches participants to identify how to evaluate a scene, locate key pressure points, stop bleeding and move the injured individual away from further harm.

Finally, Temple University Hospital created the [Safe Bet](#) program in 2016 to supplement the prevention and support programs. Safe Bet distributes free gun locks to families with small children and firearms, no questions asked. The program focuses on preventing firearm shootings and deaths among children. Since its inception, Safe Bet has distributed over 10,000 gun locks—individuals can request them online and have them shipped directly to homes or picked up at the hospital.



Doing What Works



Hospital-based programs specifically combatting gun violence are still a relatively new type of intervention, but Temple University Hospital has remained at the forefront of innovative prevention programming. Using a validated assessment called the Attitudes Toward Guns and Violence Questionnaire, the Cradle to Grave program has been [shown to have an impact on the attitudes of adolescents](#) toward guns and gun violence, with the most pronounced attitudinal shifts occurring for youth at the highest risk for engaging in gun violence.

Temple University Hospital is committed to reducing violence through a public health approach. In addition to the programs mentioned above, the university has a wide variety of other violence reduction programs such as Philadelphia CeaseFire, a trauma-informed care pilot program for healthcare staff as well as [other programs](#).

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