

---

## 2022 OPERATING BUDGET BRIEFING NOTE

### Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs in Toronto

---

#### Issue/Background:

- At its meeting on February 7, 2022, Budget Committee requested the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration provide a Briefing Note outlining:
  - a. the importance of hospital-based violence intervention programs to the goals of SafeTO; and,
  - b. how short-term City support can enable expansion of the program to Scarborough and Etobicoke/York, and better integrate these programs into the SafeTO work while intergovernmental funding is being sought.
- At its meeting, July 14, 15, and 16, 2021, City Council unanimously adopted [SafeTO – Ten Year Community Safety and Well-Being Plan](#) to take a bold, comprehensive approach to community safety that focuses on creating a culture of prevention through collaboration with the community, other orders of government, community safety organizations, and other institutions, including hospitals.

#### Key Points:

- When there is a violent incident that results in hospitalization, there is a significant opportunity to intervene for the purposes of providing medical, psychological and social support to the impacted individuals (and sometimes family and community members). These interventions can both support the healing of the victims and communities, and, relatedly, address risk factors associated with involvement in violence.
- The impact of injury, and the need to attend to healing and recovery after a traumatic event extends beyond discharge from hospital. Patients often experience diminished mental health following their injuries, as well as increased pain levels, decreased functionality and a decreased quality of life. To both support these patients, and to maximize the impact of intervention, patients require specialized care outside of an acute care setting, with an emphasis on establishing and maintaining a continuum of care.
- In 2019, The Toronto Board of Health conducted an [Evidence Review of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs and Preliminary Assessment of their Feasibility in the Toronto Context \(July 2019\)](#). The preliminary analysis indicated that HVIPs appear to be relevant and feasible in the Toronto context.

### **Breaking the Cycle of Violence with Empathy (BRAVE) at Sunnybrook**

- In approving the 2020 Operating Budget for Social Development, Finance and Administration, Toronto City Council designated \$100,000 to pilot the hospital-based violence intervention program, Breaking the Cycle of Violence with Empathy (BRAVE), with Sunnybrook Hospital.
- The BRAVE Program uses a public health and trauma-informed approach to violence prevention to address risk factors and increase protective factors for violence amongst youth.
- The BRAVE Program increases both access to customized supports for patients, and the coordination of those wraparound services, with an emphasis establishing and maintaining a continuum of care.
- Between October 2020 and December 31, 2021, the BRAVE Program provided service to 67 victims (42 gunshot and 27 stabbing victims). These victims experienced a range of risk factors including lack of access to education, lack of access to employment, substance abuse, socioeconomic deprivation, and complex post-traumatic stress disorder. With an emphasis on increasing service access and coordination, the Program sought to address these risk factors through 475 patient interactions and 300 home visits.
- The City's initial investment in the BRAVE Program pilot has enabled the program to prove its concept and has demonstrated that early intervention by a qualified social worker in a hospital setting provides a meaningful opportunity to reduce risk by connecting victims to immediate supports, and developing relationships to ensure a continuum of care.

### **Hospital-Based Violence-Intervention Programs and Integration with SafeTO**

- SafeTO provides a roadmap for how the City and social systems that serve Torontonians, including community services, healthcare systems, education systems, justice systems, police and business, can work collaboratively across different sectors and across governments to support community safety and well-being.
- As part of the SafeTO Implementation Plan, Council has approved the development of the Toronto Office to Prevent Gun Violence. It will build on existing multi-sector efforts to reduce gun violence and will systemically coordinate gun violence prevention, intervention, and response/recovery efforts. Ongoing partnership with hospitals will increase the available tools and mandates required to reduce gun violence and ensure that there is a continuum of care for victims. Hospital-based violence intervention programs are helpful to this aim.
- Staff from Social Development, Finance and Administration Division have played a coordination and support role. Staff helped the development of the BRAVE program and established collaboration between BRAVE and related City programs – the Community Crisis Response Program and FOCUS Toronto – to leverage existing resources and services and ensure hospital, City and community-based support services work in a continuity of care to support victims. Work is underway to determine opportunities for the BRAVE Program to be integrated with TO Wards Peace.

- Staff have also been supporting St. Michael's Hospital to develop their hospital-based violence intervention program, THRIVE, a similar model to BRAVE. The THRIVE program will work from the emergency department and trauma ward at St. Michael's Hospital to provide immediate support to victims while they are in hospital and continue to work with victims and their families when they are discharged by providing wraparound care in partnership with City services and community supports.
- Beyond THRIVE, there is an opportunity to build on the success of the BRAVE Program by expanding the service to other priority areas of the city to expand this continuity of care approach.
- Discussions are underway with Sunnybrook, St. Michael's Hospital and other trauma centres, including the Scarborough Health Network, the Humber River Hospital and the South Central Ontario Regional Trauma Network to develop a vision and plan for a network of hospital-based violence intervention programs. This preliminary work can be coordinated by City staff within existing resources.

### **Investment in the Expansion of Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Programs**

- Given the success of the BRAVE Program pilot, City Council requested the Province of Ontario to provide funding for the continued operation of the BRAVE Program. The Ministry of Health acknowledged the importance of BRAVE and other hospital-based violence intervention programs but indicated dedicated funding will not be made available at this time despite four programs that are ready for implementation in 2022.
- The funding of hospital-based violence intervention programs is the responsibility of the Province of Ontario.
- The lack of provincial funding of these programs within their jurisdiction that are having positive local impact is projecting the responsibilities of other orders of government onto the City of Toronto.

#### **BRAVE**

- In 2020, as part of its one-time investment to seed the BRAVE program, the City provided \$80,000 to Sunnybrook, and the remaining \$20,000 in 2021. This initial investment funded one social worker, hospital oversight and evaluation.
- Sunnybrook's BRAVE Program is ready to expand starting in April 2022 to 1.5 social work FTEs in 2022 and 2023 to better provide service coverage in the evenings and on weekends and increase the number of people served by an estimated 30%.

#### **THRIVE**

- An investment in 2022 and 2023 into the newly developed St. Michael's THRIVE program would enable this program to launch, and fund two support workers to establish a continuum of care for victims.

#### **Scarborough and Etobicoke York**

- There is a need and interest to expand hospital-based violence intervention programs to Scarborough and Etobicoke/York regions. Scarborough Health Network and Humber Valley have both expressed an interest in bringing this

service to their catchment areas. Sunnybrook and Social Development, Finance and Administration have started conversations with them to develop their respective models for Q3 2022 launch.

### Short-term Funding

- An ongoing funding commitment from the Province would enable these hospital-based violence intervention programs to build solid programs as part of a Comprehensive Multi-sector Gun Violence Strategy. Social Development, Finance and Administration is working with hospital partners to continue intergovernmental advocacy for funding these vital health programs, and explores opportunities to access philanthropic sources.
- The following table summarizes the short-term investment required from the Province to expand the hospital-based violence intervention, totaling \$0.3 million in 2022 and \$0.5 to 0.6 million in 2023. Funding for the programs has not been included through the 2022 Budget process.
- Once program expansion is complete in 2023, an ongoing annual investment that will be determined during the 2022-2023 period would be required from the Province to maintain the program in 2024 and beyond.

<b>Program</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>
BRAVE Program (Sunnybrook Hospital)	\$100,000	\$ 150,000
THRIVE Program (St. Michael's Hospital)	\$100,000	\$150,000
Scarborough Health Network	\$50,000	\$100,000 - 150,000
Etobicoke/York (Humber River Hospital)	\$50,000	\$100,000 - 150,000
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$300,000</b>	<b>\$500,000 - \$600,000</b>

---

#### Prepared by & For Further Information:

Scott McKean, Manager, Community Safety and Well-being / Justice Centres, Social Development, Finance and Administration, [scott.mckean@toronto.ca](mailto:scott.mckean@toronto.ca)

Denise Andrea Campbell, Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, [DeniseAndrea.Campbell@toronto.ca](mailto:DeniseAndrea.Campbell@toronto.ca)

Date: February 9, 2022