

M I L W A U K E E
H O M I C I D E
REVIEW COMMISSION

**Prevention Model, Accomplishments,
and Future Directions**



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Fall 2010

Letter from the Director

Dear Community,

As I thought about what to write in these first few sentences I felt odd writing, “it is with pleasure that we present two reports to the community, one that describes our work and the other an extensive data report on homicides over the past five years.” While I am extremely proud of the work that the Commission and its partners in the community are doing around homicide prevention, I am also conscious of the seriousness of the issue and those families, friends, and communities that have been impacted by one or even multiple homicides. At the Commission we have to work very hard balancing our confidence that we can prevent homicides from occurring, with a realism that it will take time, a lot of hard work, and the participation of government, public, and private agencies working hand in hand with residents and other community leaders to achieve that goal.



But we are more than hopeful that each day we are fulfilling our mission and reaching toward our vision of a violence-free Milwaukee. This year the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission is celebrating its 5th year. We have grown in so many ways— from working in just three police districts in 2005 to covering the entire city of Milwaukee. In addition to reviewing each homicide that occurs, we now hold separate reviews for domestic violence-related homicides and nonfatal shootings. Our National of Institute of Justice evaluation provided compelling evidence that our work has made important contributions and led to fewer homicides in Milwaukee. And above all, our partnerships continue to grow and strengthen.

This year we developed two reports to share with the community. The first details our unique approach to homicide prevention. The second provides updated information on the kinds of homicides that take place in Milwaukee. We hope you find both reports relevant and useful to your work.

As 2010 winds down and we gear up for 2011, our staff and partners are working on expanding the work of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission into a new center called the Center for Community Safety. The Center for Community Safety will strengthen Milwaukee’s capacity to reduce violence and violent crime. It will create a multi-level and multi-disciplinary decision-making hub responsible for planning, implementing, and evaluating comprehensive violence prevention initiatives. We are very excited about this effort and look forward to working with new and existing partners to make the Center a success. We are confident that the Center will play a major role in improving the quality of life for all residents in this community.

Sincerely,

Mallory O’Brien, Ph.D.

Founding Director, Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

Acknowledgements

There are hundreds of individuals and probably just as many agencies and organizations throughout Wisconsin and across the nation that we must thank for their ongoing support and partnership over the years.

The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission was funded, in part, by the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health's Wisconsin Partnership Program with academic guidance from Dr. Ron Cisler, Director of the Center for Urban Population Health and Associate Professor at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee. Additional support for the MHRC was provided by the Department of Justice's Project Safe Neighborhoods and STOP Violence Against Women Act (VAWA).

Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, Milwaukee Commissioner of Health Bevan Baker, and Milwaukee Police Chief Edward Flynn have been instrumental in the growth of the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission, and have provided leadership to some of our most ambitious prevention efforts such as the pilot Milwaukee County Offender Reentry Program (MCORP).

We would especially like to thank members of our executive committee and in particular Jim Koleas, Beth Bishop Perrigo, Joe Kubisiak, and Pete Pochowski for providing extensive edits and comments on the first drafts of this report. We are incredibly grateful for their time and assistance with ensuring the report is useful to a variety of stakeholders.

Front cover is “.38 Revolver with Hollowpoints” by Brian Lary (Madison, Wisconsin).

Reprints courtesy of the City of Milwaukee Health Department - Office of Violence Prevention.

The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission staff includes Director Mallory O'Brien Ph.D., Associate Researcher Nicole Robinson MPH/MSW, Police Officer Dena Klemstein, and Office Manager Robin Jones.

Mission Working to reduce violence through innovative interagency collaboration.

Vision A community where residents, community organizations, and law enforcement professionals are working together to decrease violence.

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About this Report

In just five years, the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission (MHRC) has become a critical component of crime and violence prevention in Milwaukee. MHRC builds on existing theory and uses cutting edge practices to create and implement effective cross-agency prevention approaches. Our goal is not only to improve community safety but to increase the quality of life of all residents. This report is the second report to the community and provides an in-depth description of our history, prevention model, key accomplishments, and future directions. A companion report detailing homicide and nonfatal shooting data is available on our website at www.milwaukee.gov/hrc.

“The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission is a vital partner in City efforts to reduce violence. Its multi-disciplinary and community reviews of homicides and other violent crimes have led to the implementation of successful intervention and prevention strategies. The work of this nationally recognized collaboration has made a significant contribution to the safety and well-being of Milwaukee residents.”

Tom Barrett
Mayor of Milwaukee

“The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission is a leader in the national movement to address violence from a public health perspective. With input from diverse sectors of our community, MHRC conducts comprehensive case reviews of violent incidents to better understand the risk and protective factors associated with each occurrence and to build the evidence base for prevention. The work of law enforcement, social service and health providers, neighborhood groups and policymakers has been greatly enhanced by the recommendations and actions of the MHRC team.”

Bevan K. Baker, FACHE
Commissioner of Health

“The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission has been a strong ally in reducing and preventing violent crime in the City of Milwaukee. The Police Department cannot succeed alone; the MHRC is able to unite community partners as well as local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies in determining causes and solutions regarding homicide and violent crime. Working together for solutions has put us on the path to sustaining civic life in our most troublesome neighborhoods, and elevating the quality of life for all Milwaukeeans.”

Edward A. Flynn
Chief of Police
Milwaukee Police Department

“From a public or population health perspective, homicides are preventable. Importantly, the MHRC has embraced a public health approach by including multiple disciplines and organizations in its charge to understand and reduce Milwaukee homicides. The MHRC is truly a unique framework for influencing systems change.”

Ron Cisler, PhD
Director of Center for Urban Population Health and Associate Professor at UW-Madison and UW-Milwaukee

MHRC History

Overview

In July 2004, Milwaukee Mayor Tom Barrett, then Milwaukee Police Chief Nannette Hagerty, and then Milwaukee County District Attorney E. Michael McCann assembled a working team of public health and criminal justice practitioners to address the issue of homicides in Milwaukee. The working team recommended the development of a homicide review process that would later become known as the Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission. Formally established in January of 2005, the MHRC has **three main objectives:**

1. **To gain a better understanding of homicide through strategic problem analysis**
2. **To develop innovative and effective responses and prevention strategies**
3. **To help focus available prevention and intervention resources**

During the past five years the work of the MHRC has expanded. Initially reviewing homicides in three of the seven police districts, we now review homicides in all police districts. In 2006, we began reviewing nonfatal shootings and created a “spin off” review focused on domestic violence (DV) homicides.

Funding and Oversight

MHRC has been entirely grant funded. Its annual budget is \$350,000. Funding sources have included two Department of Justice Project Safe Neighborhoods grants (2005-2007, 2008-2010), a Department of Justice, Office of Violence Against Women grant (2005-2006), two University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health, Wisconsin Partnership Program grants(2005-2011), and a grant from the Taskforce on Violent Crime Initiative (2008-2009). In 2010, the MHRC began diversifying its funding sources by providing contract consultations and third-party funded technical assistance projects.

An Executive Committee and Working Group are responsible for project oversight to the MHRC.

The *Executive Committee* is made up of 25-30 senior-level representatives of city and state agencies and community partner organizations. The committee is responsible for approving recommendations and providing resources to implement recommendations. The *Working Group* is made up of 10-15 mid-level representatives from many of the same organizations as the Executive Committee. The Working group answers the questions: When should a recommendation begin? Which agency or agencies should implement the recommendation? How do the recommendations individually and collectively interact with existing systems? Will the recommendation work? Both the Executive Committee and the Working Group meet regularly.

MHRC History Continued

Staffing

The MHRC has four paid staff:

Dr. Mallory O'Brien is the Founding Director. Dr. O'Brien is trained as an epidemiologist and has worked in the field of violent injury prevention for the over 15 years.

Nicole Robinson, MSW/MPH is an Associate Researcher with the Center for Urban Population Health. Ms. Robinson assists with homicide prevention strategies, engages community partners, and analyzes homicide data.

Police Officer Dena Klemstein is responsible for compiling homicide information and assisting with prevention recommendations pertaining to MPD.

Office Manager Robin Jones is responsible for maintaining two extensive databases as well as analyzing data for MPD.

"I applaud the leadership of Dr. O'Brien in bringing us all to the table. In our community we traditionally recognize heroes who have saved lives, but since we will never be able to link her to a single person saved, Dr. O'Brien will quietly continue her work, confident she has spared some Milwaukee mother the heartbreak of the death of a child. Her work must continue because there are many more mothers - and their children - to protect."

Peter Pochowski

National Association of School Safety
and Law Enforcement Officials
Retired Milwaukee Police Captain

Milestones

- Project Safe Neighborhoods awarded MHRC the **Outstanding Service by a Research Partner** award (2007).
- The Wisconsin Population Health Institute awarded MHRC the **Outstanding Population Health Practice Report** award (2007).
- MHRC supported a **Tavern Subcommittee** and a **Juvenile Justice Committee** (2006) to further develop and implement recommendations specific in these areas. These committees were responsible for two ordinances on nuisance properties, and for ensuring serious juvenile offender information is available to law enforcement officials.
- MHRC has provided **international technical assistance** to several central and south American countries and eastern European countries on developing similar homicide reduction programs.
- MHRC started a **gun violence policy work group** (in 2009) and continues to staff the ex-offender reentry project (begun in 2010) with the Milwaukee Police Department, Department of Corrections, the District Attorney, the Public Defender, and the Mayor of Milwaukee.

MHRC Prevention Model

Overview

The MHRC is unique because it combines criminal justice crime incident reviews with public health death reviews into one comprehensive and collaborative process. Cities from across the country from California to Indiana have looked to the MHRC as a model review process. The most prominent theories and practices used in our work come from a variety of fields such as those described below.

Underlying Theories and Frameworks

Problem-oriented policing. Practiced by law Enforcement agencies, problem-oriented policing emphasizes *why* a problem exists and seeks to understand the complexity of the problem – how it is created and why it reoccurs. It also suggests that only tailored solutions directed at the underlying conditions that create the problem are effective and that the solutions must be data-driven.

Ecological systems models. Used in the social sciences, this model explores the relationship an individual has with their social environment. It puts emphasis on community-level factors that lead to violence and the protective factors that prevent violence or reduce its impact. It also assesses public policies that directly and indirectly affect crime and violence.

Life course acknowledges that prevention, intervention, and suppression strategies must occur across the life span of an individual, neighborhood, or system. Prevention efforts stop the problem from ever occurring. Intervention efforts stop the problem from occurring again and minimize the negative impacts of the first incident. Suppression, used by law enforcement, subdues individuals or activities where previous methods have failed.

Mainstreaming policy approaches. A popular global health strategy, asks each sector to assess how its own activities might facilitate criminal behavior or violent acts. It then asks each sector to develop a policy, program, or practice to reduce these effects. It also asks each sector to identify what it can do to support violence prevention in the community. An example would be if a business sponsored a youth safe night event, a cross-sector response.

"Many agencies talk about implementing information driven strategies. For the last five years the Homicide Review Commission has made that aspiration a reality for public safety partners in Milwaukee, resulting in saved lives and lower violent crime rates."

John Chisholm, District Attorney

"Proactive law enforcement depends on actionable intelligence information. The Homicide Review Commission is an invaluable venue for all levels of law enforcement to share information. The MHRC thus greatly improves our effort to target the most dangerous offenders and groups."

John Manning, Deputy U.S. Attorney

MHRC Prevention Model Continued

Core Tenets

The MHRC cares about the future of Milwaukee and its residents. Resident safety is a good indicator for how Milwaukee is doing as a community and it is a good predictor of where Milwaukee is headed. There are five core tenets that guide our work.

Homicide is preventable. The MHRC focuses on the root causes of violence and actively works on systemic change. It is through the homicide review process that we gain an in-depth understanding of the causes and risk factors for actual homicides and related violent acts in Milwaukee. By reviewing each homicide as it occurs, the MHRC and its partners can develop real time strategies.

Only a collaborative and well coordinated effort of community, nonprofit, business, government, academic, legal and medical partnerships will lead to lasting change. The problem of homicide and violent crimes is vast and it will take the work of every sector to form public policy and create programs and services that will actually work. No one sector alone can solve the problem of homicides. When we work in silos we duplicate efforts and are inefficient. We also miss opportunities for leveraging our finite resources to respond to a problem this complex it deserves the attention of the entire community.

Data-driven strategies are essential. The MHRC collects data that is generally not available without a collaborative information sharing process like homicide reviews. With this data over 200 prevention recommendations have been made. MHRC uses this data to assess if the homicide rate is going down and if its work is making a difference.

Multi-level responses help ensure meaningful and longer-term results. Prevention can occur at multiple levels and target specific individuals or types of individuals (e.g., drug dealers), behaviors and activities, geographic areas (e.g., zip codes, neighborhoods), and places (e.g., taverns, parks). As a result, the recommendations generated demonstrate how public policy, law enforcement, and social service systems can impact Milwaukee.

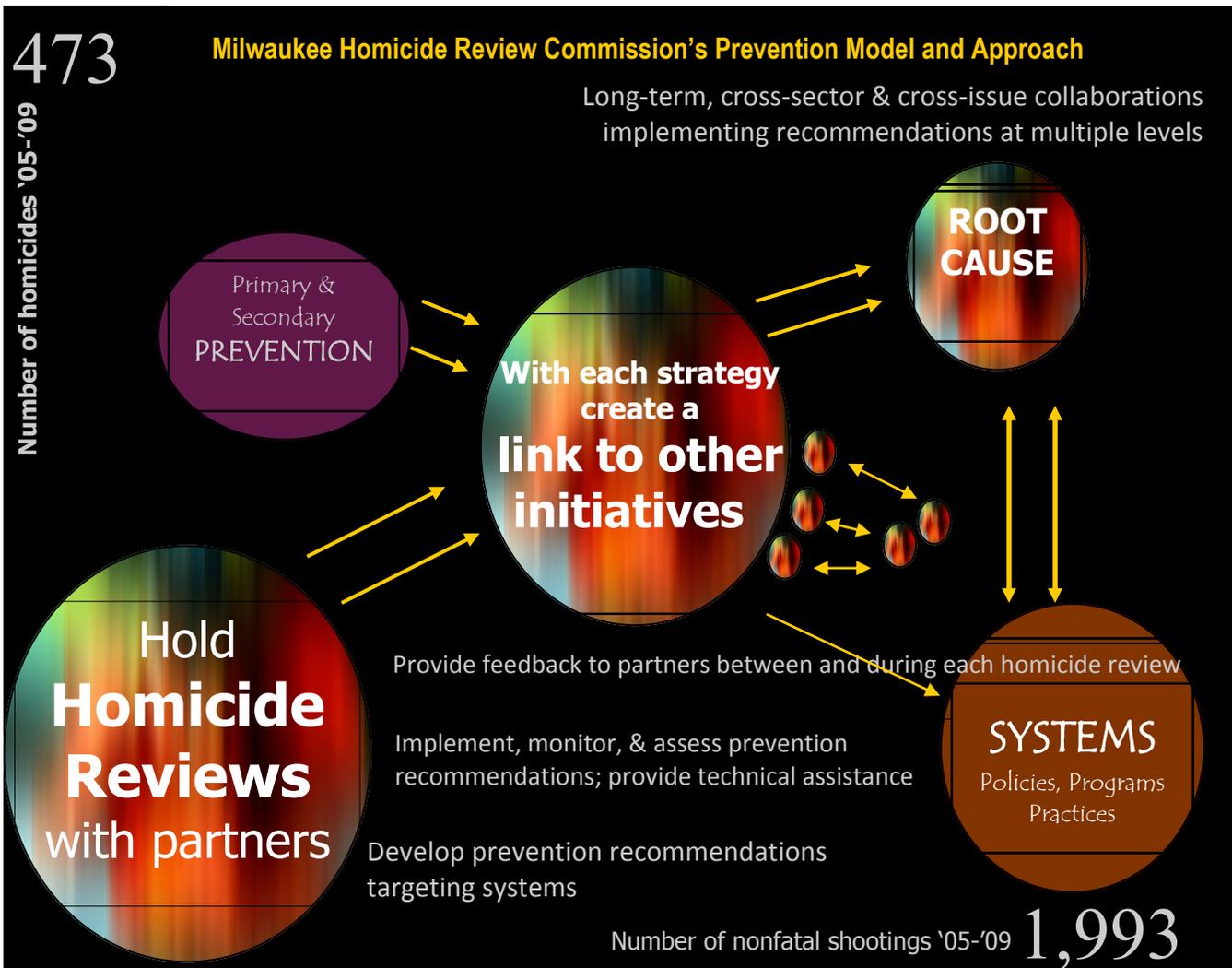
“The Homicide Review Commission has provided outstanding service to our community's efforts to reduce violence. The multi-disciplinary gathering of evidence and data, along with community input, provides valuable information to all units of government and non-profit agencies addressing the causes of violence. The MHRC has also made excellent and specific recommendations for improvements to our criminal justice system. We are very fortunate in Milwaukee to have such a valuable resource working on such critical issues.”

Justice Janine P. Geske (ret.)
Distinguished Professor of Law
Director of the MULS Restorative Justice Initiative, Marquette University Law School

MHRC Role

Overview

The MHRC 1) convenes **homicide reviews**, 2) supports the implementation and evaluation of the **recommendations** that come from those reviews, 3) maintains a comprehensive **database** on homicides, nonfatal shootings, and near fatal DV incidents (for the first six months of 2010 only), and 4) provides **technical assistance and capacity building** services to criminal justice and community service professionals. Note: MHRC supports the implementation of prevention recommendations; MHRC generally does not do the day-to-day work surrounding the recommendation. For example, MHRC helped revive the witness protection program in Milwaukee by calling attention to the homicides that could have been prevented if the program existed. MHRC staff met with the key groups to get the program started but did not design the final program nor did it fund or administer the program. **MHRC's approach reflects a cross-issue, cross-sector, multi-level prevention model as shown in the diagram below.**



MHRC Role Continued

Convene Homicide Reviews

One of the most important roles of the MHRC is to convene homicide reviews. The homicide review has become a critical forum for various stakeholders to work together to address violence in a way that balances short-term interventions with long-term solutions. Through the homicide review, criminal justice professionals, public officials, community service providers, and residents meet regularly to exchange information about a recent homicide; and to identify trends, gaps, and needs. The chart on the next page lists the different homicide reviews.

“The loss of one life is too much for our community to bear. Every domestic violence homicide further isolates victims in our community because it reinforces that idea that victims are alone. We must do all we can to understand how to prevent this terrible crime from happening. The Homicide Review Commission gives us the forum for working together and partnering to make change happen in our community.”

Carmen Pitre
Co-Executive Director
Sojourner Family Peace Center

Support Recommendations

The MHRC and its partners have made over 200 data-informed prevention recommendations, and a good portion have been fully implemented. Proposed recommendations are based on real time data, are likely to *reduce* violence in the short term, and are expected to *prevent* violence in the long term.

Maintain a Comprehensive Database on Homicides & Shootings

The MHRC has the most comprehensive and “real time” homicide and nonfatal shootings database in Wisconsin. The MHRC dataset includes information collected from the courts, police, and nonprofit community; as well as the “precipitating” circumstances that led to the homicide. This information is coded into a database modeled after the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention’s (CDC) National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS), which allows the data to be compared over time. The database includes family history, employment, social service utilization, criminal history and community corrections supervision status for the victim, suspect, and witness. It also includes gun trace data, and historical information about the location or geographic area of the homicide incident.

Provide Technical Assistance & Capacity Building

The MHRC has provided technical assistance and capacity building services to a variety of agencies including the Milwaukee Police Department, Department of Corrections, District Attorney’s Office, and a multitude of community service providers. Such assistance includes creating and interpreting homicide and violent crime trends and statistics, formulating action plans based on the data and recommendations developed during the homicide review process, and staffing work groups created to carry out violence prevention recommendations.

Types of Homicide Reviews

Name	Description
<i>Initial Review</i>	Immediately after a homicide occurs, MPD investigates who was responsible for it. At the same time, the MHRC sends an alert to Project Ujima, which provides victim services to surviving witnesses, family members, and other associates of the homicide victim. MHRC is the only entity that alerts Project Ujima for each homicide.
<i>Criminal Justice Review</i>	The criminal justice review occurs monthly and focuses on open and closed homicide cases that took place in the prior month. Participants share what they know about the specific individuals, locations, and factors involved.
<i>Domestic Violence Review</i>	The DV reviews occur bimonthly with law enforcement personnel, domestic violence (DV) providers, and other entities addressing women’s health. DV reviews include child homicide victims.
<i>Community Service Provider Review</i>	The community service provider reviews occur bimonthly with members of nonprofit community organizations, social service agencies, and community organizers that work on crime and violence prevention (e.g., block watch captains). This group only reviews closed cases (cases where an individual has been arrested or an arrest warrant has been issued for the suspect).
<i>Community Member Review</i>	Community members meet to provide feedback on the recommendations implemented during the year and to provide additional prevention recommendations. Community reviews occur annually.

"The Homicide Review Commission has been instrumental in fostering greater collaboration between the Division of Community Corrections, the Milwaukee Police Department, and the Milwaukee District Attorney's Office. As result of the Commission's efforts, information sharing, communication and problem solving between the referenced agencies has increased substantially."

Roberta Gaither
Regional Chief Milwaukee County
Division of Community Corrections

"Safe & Sound has both contributed to and benefitted from the MHRC reviews since its inception. During this time, we have learned how to more effectively target our resources by using MHRC data analysis and discussions to identify and target neighborhoods, populations, and strategies for our anti-violence efforts."

Joseph Kubisiak, Director
Community Partners
Safe & Sound

How Information Sharing Leads to Action

The homicide review process creates a platform for MHRC partners to identify primary and secondary prevention strategies using information gained from the initial police investigation and background information provided by other partners about the individuals, neighborhoods, social systems and social issues relevant to the case. As a result of this process, policy, program, and resource allocation decisions are based on a broader set of information and cross-agency discussions. MHRC staff work with partners to implement and assess each recommendation.

The initial police investigation revealed: At 11:00 pm Thursday night, Eric Johnson, a 25-year old Black male, was shot and killed at a north side gas station. He was seen at a downtown bar two hours before arguing with a Marcus Jones (Black, male, 30 years old) and two other unknown associates. A friend of Eric's was interviewed at 1:00 am Friday morning and stated that Eric was buying a gun from Marcus and that Eric had already paid for the gun and ammunition (\$500) and was going to use it in a robbery. Marcus stated he never received the money, after which a fight ensued. The friend stated that Eric planned to warn the target, a liquor store owner on the north side, and believes Marcus and two other associates killed Eric. Police interviewed Marcus and got the name of the two associates. All three provided alibis that cannot be verified. Marcus was eventually charged with 1st degree intentional homicide.

Fictional Homicide Case

Through the homicide review process, MHRC partners shared the following information:

- Marcus and Eric were arrested in another robbery three years ago. Eric was convicted and Marcus was never charged. Eric's probation officer said the two ran different crews, which fought often.
- Eric's mother had been deemed unfit due to her drug abuse; his father was in prison for most of his early childhood. Eric lived with relatives until he was 18 years old.
- Marcus was physically abused by his grandparents. The Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare (BMCW) put him in a foster care home in the suburbs of Milwaukee. He ran away often, was frequently suspended and eventually expelled from school in the 10th grade.
- Eric worked as an industrial painter until going to prison for 3 years when he was 22. In addition to a robbery charge, he has a conviction for possession of marijuana .
- The gas station has had fights before but the neighborhood is otherwise quiet. There are some abandoned houses in the area.
- The gun was recovered and determined stolen in a burglary in 2001 on the south side of Milwaukee.

Collaborative Information Sharing

From the discussion, MHRC partners identified several immediate and longer-term violence prevention action steps:

- Police officers, with the support of community organizers in the area, will contact the target of the robbery to help the owner enhance surveillance and carry out other crime prevention activities.
- Community organizers will work with the owner to develop ongoing ways to reduce violence in the area surrounding the liquor store.
- HIDTA will focus on Marcus and Eric's robbery crews.
- MPS will develop a coordinated response plan for all students in BMCW custody, so that these children are provided additional services during the school day.
- Several agencies will develop a social marketing campaign to prevent marijuana use and will work with Department of Corrections to develop an intervention program for individuals on supervision for marijuana -related offenses.

Recommendations

MHRC Key Accomplishments

Overview

The MHRC is a proven model for reducing homicides that can be replicated nationally. The National Institute of Justice (NIJ) evaluation concluded that “MHRC data were far more comprehensive and accurate than data previously available, that the MHRC had strengthened public-community-academic partnerships, had improved the analytic capacity and information sharing between agencies, and reduced Milwaukee’s homicide rates.” The evaluation also found “that the MHRC was associated with a statistically significant reduction in homicides in Milwaukee. Specifically, where the MHRC was involved (i.e., the intervention sites), homicides reduced 52% compared to 9.2% in the control sites.”

Maurice Pulley Jr. Witness Protection Program

The MHRC recommended Milwaukee revive its witness protection program, a program that had been cut from the Milwaukee County budget several years before. This recommendation was one of the first made by the MHRC and continued to surface as an issue for the next two years. In 2007, Maurice Pulley Jr. was murdered because he witnessed a homicide and agreed to testify against the suspect. After his tragic death, and further discussions with the MHRC Executive Committee, the Attorney General and the Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance provided support to re-establish a witness protection program and address victim and witness intimidation. The County fully funded the program in January of 2009 after a pilot program was implemented in May of 2008. The program now funds five full time staff. Between 2008-2009, the Milwaukee County District Attorney’s office investigated approximately 2,400 cases of witness/victim intimidation. In 2008, there were 134 cases of active protection by the District Attorney and between January and October of 2009 there were 125 cases of active protection. Milwaukee’s revived witness protection program has increased the safety of individuals willing to testify in criminal trials.

Target Teams

In 2005, the MHRC recommended the Milwaukee Police Department, Department of Corrections, and the District Attorney’s Office meet regularly to coordinate their efforts. The result of this recommendation was the formation of *Target Teams*. Each Target Team is led by a community prosecutor, a district-based prosecutor, a district-based Department of Corrections agent and district personnel from the Milwaukee Police Department. Some teams even include a domestic violence advocate. Target teams meet bi-weekly to develop a coordinated plan to prevent illegal activities and discuss the most significant threats to community safety (i.e. drug houses). Target Teams have led to regular sharing of information, and prevention practices that are more uniform across districts.

MHRC Key Accomplishments Continued

Taverns

In 2008, the MHRC worked with representatives of the City Attorney's office, the Department of Neighborhood Services, and members of the Milwaukee Common Council to pass two significant ordinances:

- **Nuisance properties:** The first ordinance improves surveillance at retail properties that are considered "nuisance properties" (i.e., a property that has three or more calls for police service in one year) by requiring them to install video surveillance systems. The goal of this law is to identify and target crime hot spots in the city.
- **Taverns:** The second ordinance allows law enforcement to target the owners of problem establishments. For example, if a bar receives a high volume of police calls for service, the bar owner can be held financially responsible for the costs associated with those calls. This is an important amendment to existing legislation that permitted law enforcement to target the property tenant but

"The State of Wisconsin was pleased to support this important effort to improve the response of Milwaukee. It was clear that many agencies play a role in an effective response. Our funding to develop electronic information sharing between these agencies will provide a valuable model for justice information sharing throughout the State."

David Steingraber
Executive Director
Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance

Child Exposure to Violence

One of the trends identified during the domestic violence homicide review process was the frequent presence of child witnesses at homicide scenes and the lack of services available to these children. MHRC and partners from the Domestic Violence Review decided early on that this was a significant concern, given the relevant literature surrounding children's exposure to violence and subsequent participation (either as a victim or a suspect) in violent crime. The resulting project, called *Children Witnessing Domestic Violence: Examining Strengths, Needs, and Gaps in Services in Milwaukee*, combines a literature review, analysis of local data, and key informant interviews with a scan of the services currently offered to children who witness violence in Milwaukee. The project has adopted the perspective that children's experiences with violence are not confined to the home, and that the witnessing of and involvement in violence in other settings has a critical impact on children.

"I've found The Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission to be an effective data-driven means to work across jurisdictions and agencies to analyze, understand, address and reduce violent crime in Milwaukee. The Commission emphasizes communication and cooperation amongst its members to defeat the means that lead to violent crime while encouraging community safety."

J.B. Van Hollen
Attorney General

MHRC Key Accomplishments Continued

More Examples

- **Sojourner Family Peace Center (SFPC)** began internal homicide reviews on all homicide cases to refine internal practices and procedures. The reviews are used to develop a timeline of services accessed by the client and a timeline of DV incidents. As a result of this work, SFPC is revising its advocacy approach to include a stronger emphasis on lethality factors and a separate lethality assessment tool is being considered for systems-based advocacy programs. SFPC also instituted a case analysis process on complicated cases, which permits SFPC to share a concise record of all public information with systems partners. In 2011, SFPC will institute a quarterly analysis of offender services to quickly identify offenders with multiple restraining order requests by the same or multiple victims. This information will be available to systems partners.
- **The Department of Corrections, along with the District Attorney's Office, Public Defender, Milwaukee City Attorney, Milwaukee Police Department, and the Office of the Mayor** created a Milwaukee County Offender Reentry Program (MCORP) aimed at decreasing the number of absconders and increasing the number of ex-offenders that successfully re-enter Milwaukee. Each agency dedicated staff to the project and reorganized staff work schedules so that cross-agency teams could be formed, which has substantially changed the day-to-day interactions among these agencies.
- **Milwaukee Police Department (MPD)** started internal "shootings reviews" to prevent retaliation shootings. The reviews examine 2-3 selected weekend shootings to determine if the victims or their associates plan to retaliate. The review process is similar to the one used by the MHRC. To increase the number of solved nonfatal shooting cases, MPD is also assessing its internal policy procedures for nonfatal shooting cases to identify areas for improvement. The assessment (in progress) includes a review of case files to determine if the file is complete and has a sufficient amount of detail for the District Attorney to use and to determine how quickly evidence is recovered and processed for use in the ongoing criminal investigation.
- **The City of Milwaukee's Office of Violence Prevention entered into a partnership with Safe & Sound to develop a campaign to reduce and prevent straw purchases.** The campaign included two community events aimed at youth and adults to raise awareness of how guns are trafficked into the city and to highlight the number of young gun possessors and female straw purchasers. MHRC's analysis of gun trace data showed a need to educate would-be straw purchasers. Safe & Sound also uses MHRC data to develop neighborhood-level anti-crime prevention programs.
- **The District Attorney's Office** now has a mechanism to ensure results from the crime lab are shared immediately with the appropriate staff at MPD and at the District Attorney's office.
- **Project Ujima** provides targeted outreach to the child homicide witnesses and takes "special cases" based on MHRC referrals. Project Ujima provides services to children and their families and sometimes they will take individuals that are older than 18. For example, a young man was shot once at age 18 and then again four months later at age 19. Project Ujima reached out to this individual to provide services.
- **The City's Office of Violence Prevention, District Attorney, Milwaukee Police Department, Milwaukee City Attorney, Bureau of Alcohol, Firearm, Tobacco, and Explosives (ATF), and West Milwaukee Police Department** are working together to decrease the number of crime guns purchased from an identified federal firearm licensed dealer. This work has led to installing cameras in the firing range, greater penalties for felons firing guns in the firing range, and follow up on denied purchasers.

Future Directions

Center for Community Safety

The next phase of development for the MHRC is a **Center for Community Safety**. The role of the center will be to engage communities in using research to strategically shape action and response to community safety issues and to ensure that our communities are safe places to live, work, learn and play. The Center will serve as a hub for decision-making on violence prevention in the City of Milwaukee and as a clearinghouse for best practices and violent crime-related data. The Center will provide technical assistance in identifying, designing, implementing, and evaluating violence prevention programs in the Milwaukee area.

“The MHRC is a national model of effectiveness for interagency collaboration in understanding the underlying factors necessary to reduce violent crime. The Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission, as a partner in this groundbreaking effort, has seen the results of this multi-agency collaboration demonstrated by an unprecedented decrease in annual homicides from 122 to 72 since the inception of the MHRC program.”

Michael G. Tobin

Executive Director, Milwaukee Fire and Police Commission

Quick Facts

Milwaukee Homicides

- Homicide is the leading cause of death among 15-24 year old males in Milwaukee and firearm homicide is the leading cause of the death among black males of the same age.
- Over the last five years, Milwaukee has had an average of 95 homicides and nearly 500 nonfatal shooting victims.
- Firearms are the primary weapon used in almost 80% of homicide cases between 2005-2009.
- Nearly 13% of all homicides are intimate partner-related and/or involve the violent death of an infant or child.
- Nearly 60% of homicides are precipitated by another crime, usually robbery and drugs.

See the **2005-2009 Homicide and Nonfatal Shootings Data Report** at www.milwaukee.gov/hrc

List of Partners

Asha Family Services
Bay View Neighborhood Center
Bureau of Alcohol and Tobacco and Firearms and Explosives
Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare
Center for Urban Population Health
Children’s Hospital of Wisconsin
City of Milwaukee City Attorney’s Office
City of Milwaukee Health Department - Commission on Domestic Violence and Sexual Assault
Mayors against Illegal Guns
Office of Violence Prevention
City of Milwaukee, Office of Community Block Grant
Crime Victim’s Services, Department of Justice Crisis Response Unit
Department of Corrections
Department of Economic Development
Department of Neighborhood Services
Fire and Police Commission
High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA)
Harambee
Hope House
Howard Fuller Education Foundation
Journey House
Legal Action of Wisconsin, Inc.
Mayor of Milwaukee
Milwaukee Child Welfare Partnership Council
Medical College of Wisconsin— Emergency Medicine Department
Violence Prevention Initiative
Metcalf Park Neighborhood Services
Milwaukee County District Attorney’s Office
Milwaukee County Medical Examiner
Milwaukee County Sheriff’s Department
Milwaukee Housing Authority
Milwaukee Police Department
Milwaukee Public Schools
Milwaukee Urban League
National Association for School Safety and Law Enforcement Officials (NASSLEO)
Office of the Chief Judge
Pathfinders
Project Ujima
Running Rebels
Safe and Sound Community Partners
Safe Streets Initiative-Marquette Law School
Sherman Park Community Association
Sojourner Family Peace Center
Southside Organizing Committee
The Alma Center
Truancy and Burglary Suppression
United Community Center
United Migrant Opportunity Services
US Attorney’s Office
Urban Underground
US Drug Enforcement Administration
US Federal Bureau of Investigation
US Immigration and Customs Enforcement
US Marshal Service
Wisconsin Anti-Violence Effort
Wisconsin Community Services
Wisconsin Department of Criminal Investigations
Wisconsin Legal Action
Wisconsin Office of Justice Assistance
Wisconsin School Safety Coordinators (WSSCA)
Wisconsin Women’s Business Initiative Corporation
YMCA

Acronyms

ATF	Bureau of Alcohol, Firearm, Tobacco, and Explosives
BMCW	Bureau of Milwaukee Child Welfare
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
DV	Domestic Violence
HIDTA	High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area
NIJ	National Institute of Justice
NVDRS	National Violent Death Reporting System
MCROP	Milwaukee County Offender Reentry Program
MHRC (HRC)	Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission
MPD	Milwaukee Police Department

Milwaukee Homicide Review Commission

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www.milwaukee.gov/hrc
