INDIANAPOLIS – Mayor Greg Ballard today launched the Youth Violence Reduction Team (YVRT), a partnership between the City of Indianapolis Department of Public Safety (DPS), Wishard Health Services’ Prescription for Hope program, Ten Point Coalition, Peace Learning Center and Juvenile Courts and Probation. The YVRT will focus on preventing youth from engaging in crime and protecting them from violence in four Indianapolis crime hot spots.

“This unique partnership is the first of its kind in the country and builds on Prescription for Hope’s successful model to reduce youth homicides, violence-related injuries, repeat criminal activity and arrests,” said Mayor Ballard. “The team will utilize established violence and crime prevention programs and real-time crime data to build neighborhood-level partnerships that will create safer environments for our youth.”

The YVRT brings a multi-disciplined approach to engender community involvement to reduce violence and will deliver coordinated and collaborative prevention, intervention, enforcement and re-entry strategies to specific high-crime neighborhoods. DPS is supporting the initiative with asset forfeiture funds, and the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department (IMPD) is committing five police officers. The crime hot spots were identified by Prescription for Hope and DPS’ Crime Analysis Unit. In addition to DPS and Prescription for Hope, YVRT partners will bring the following resources to the initiative:

- IMPD officers will coordinate community safety plans for Prescription for Hope participants and their families upon release from Wishard, coordinate Ten Point Coalition outreach worker responses, and work with IMPD district personnel to develop and implement appropriate enforcement activities in response to violent acts.
- Ten Point Coalition will provide pre-incident, incident, and post-incident street outreach in affected hot spots to lower levels of street tension and curb retaliation, a critical prevention component.
- The Peace Learning Center will provide training to Ten Point Coalition outreach workers and IMPD officers assigned to the YVRT as well as individual, family and neighborhood support services.
- Juvenile Court and Probation will work with the team to identify at-risk youth, conduct home visits, identify diversion opportunities, and connect youth to additional prevention, intervention, and re-entry resources.

The Prescription for Hope program was formed in 2009 by the IU/Wishard Level I Trauma Center as a partnership with Shepherd Community Center designed to address violence-related injuries associated with crime. Data through Feb. 9, 2011, shows 185 patients and family members have participated in the program. Only one of the program’s participants was re-admitted to the Trauma Center with a violent injury and no family member has experienced a first-time violent injury, as compared to a 31 percent trauma patient re-admittance rate prior to the start of the program.

“Since its inception, Prescription for Hope has focused on reducing repeat violent personal injury and criminal activity by helping patients and their families make life-changing and life-saving choices,” said City-County Councillor Benjamin Hunter, chairman of the Public Safety Committee. “This multi-disciplinary collaboration will expand Prescription for Hope’s model and direct important resources to our youth.”

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