

SHIFTING THE FOCUS:

Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Advance
Violence Prevention in California

ACCOMPLISHMENTS &
LESSONS LEARNED

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Prevention
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Putting prevention
at the center of community well-being

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This document was prepared by Prevention Institute.

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© August 2002

This report was made possible with funding from
California Department of Health Services, Department of
Alcohol and Drug Programs, Division of Prevention Services

Prevention Institute is a nonprofit, national center dedicated to improving community health and well-being by building momentum for effective primary prevention. Primary prevention means taking action to build resilience and to prevent problems before they occur. The Institute's work is characterized by a strong commitment to community participation and promotion of equitable health outcomes among all social and economic groups. Since its founding in 1997, the organization has focused on injury and violence prevention, traffic safety, health disparities, nutrition and physical activity, and youth development.

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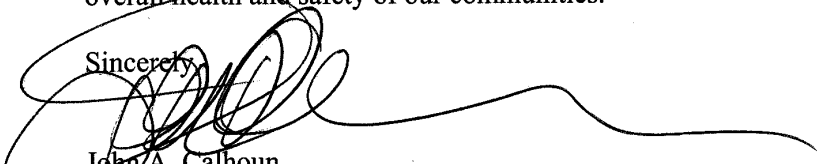
Dear Colleagues,

All too often our public policy process ignores the wisdom of prevention, funding repairs rather than maintenance, prisons rather than positive interventions, and restoration rather than prevention. To the extent that policy is a promise, we promise that if someone is bad, expensive and sometimes harsh solutions await. We need a companion promise that elicits the best from individuals and communities.

Since 1999, my passion, and a force behind an array of the work of the National Crime Prevention Council (NCPC), has been *Embedding Prevention in State Practice and Policy*. This initiative supports participating states as they work to institutionalize the prevention of crime, violence, and substance abuse as the policy and practice of choice. In developing the *Embedding* initiative, NCPC looked for six states to assume a leadership role in advancing prevention. NCPC partnered with California in recognition of its history of commitment to the prevention of violence. NCPC also recognized the work of California's *Shifting the Focus (STF)* and invited them to be one of the initial partners of the *Embedding* initiative.

The size and scope of California's state government dictates that collaboration among different sectors is both a challenge and an imperative. Therefore, in 1997, a group of state staff met to determine how California government could better serve its residents. This group formed *STF*, an interagency violence prevention partnership. The partnership recognized that embedding effective prevention into state government practices and policies would be hard work, but was essential to ensure safe and healthy communities across California. Local communities, where violence prevention strategies are actually implemented, would benefit from better-conceived and -coordinated state systems. Therefore, the group adopted the idea of "better service delivery" to communities as a central tenet. The *STF* approach, tools, and lessons learned strengthen the foundation of effective prevention. For example, the "Prevention Principles" developed by *STF* have the capacity to bring coherence to state policy and practice.

Those advancing violence prevention in state government deserve credit; this work is hard, often unnoticed and unrewarded, yet essential. Prevention must be recognized as a logical and nonpartisan option. Preventing violence is critical to the overall health and safety of our communities.

Sincerely,

 John A. Calhoun
 President and CEO

To enable people to create safer and more caring communities by addressing the causes of crime and violence and reducing opportunities for crime to occur.

LOCAL WISDOM

Participant comments from statewide hearings in Spring 2001.

“I have to look for funding every three years, so I spent most of the last year looking for more money, rather than on the work.”

— Redding participant

“One agency wants data on 13- to 15-year-olds; the other wants information on 14- to 16-year-olds. I spend all my time messing with the numbers rather than doing the work.”

— Redding participant

“Community coalitions are strongest when people come together because they like working with each other. They don’t work so well when the State sets up the group.”

— Oakland participant

“I never get any information about prevention activities or funding...and I’m a prevention officer!”

— Stockton participant

“...without the State’s support, the work just wouldn’t get done.”

— Los Angeles participant

“I know that data collection and evaluation should be integrated efforts, but I’m not trained in evaluation. I need the State’s help to figure out how best to do that.”

— Los Angeles participant

“[If] State agencies don’t collaborate, then how can we?”

— San Diego participant

“We have evidence that certain programs work; let’s fund them consistently.”

— San Diego participant

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The state of California's staff formed *Shifting the Focus* in the late nineties to strengthen and coordinate government violence prevention services. The initiative's name highlights the shift away from isolated efforts focusing on suppression and intervention, toward a collaborative prevention approach. *Shifting the Focus* members included representatives from more than 20 State agencies and departments, as well as State commissions and state and local organizations. It was facilitated by a national non-profit organization, Prevention Institute. Participants knew that this approach might not make their jobs easier, but that it would strengthen efforts at the State level and, in turn, bolster those at the local level. Through meeting regularly as a large group and in sub-committees, the collaborative focused on: 1) prioritizing prevention of violence-related injury and death through State policy and practice, and 2) promoting collaboration on State violence prevention efforts.

Changing government practices is an ongoing and difficult process. Since its inception, however, the group was able to achieve success despite many challenges faced by California, including an energy crisis and significant budget shortfalls. The work of *Shifting the Focus* improved State practices and policies by promoting prevention and collaboration.

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: CHANGING THE WAY GOVERNMENT DOES BUSINESS THROUGH LOCAL, STATE, AND NATIONAL EFFORTS

Shifting the Focus accomplishments spanned local, state, and national levels. A key tenet was building on effective and promising work. Rather than only creating new initiatives, this approach focused on strengthening existing State efforts and bringing them into alignment with one another. Sometimes, *Shifting the Focus* played a central implementation role, while at other times, it served as a catalyst or simply supported existing initiatives. These endeavors resulted in significant outcomes such as: learning from communities, impacting State practice and policy, and building national momentum.

Learning from Communities

Conducted Statewide Hearings

Shifting the Focus conducted a series of hearings across California to learn from local practitioners how State government could better support local violence prevention efforts. The hearings elicited detailed information about the barriers imposed by State government. At the same time, opportunities to strengthen violence prevention efforts through policy and administrative changes in Sacramento were also identified. In addition to

Shifting the Focus is an interagency violence prevention partnership designed to do business differently to ensure that California communities are well served.

EXCERPT FROM *SHIFTING THE FOCUS*
VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

focusing on program needs such as funding, data, training, and evaluation, violence prevention practitioners called for enhanced coordination of activities across State departments and agencies. A consistent theme was the need for increased prioritization of prevention in California. These findings shaped the subsequent strategy development process and activities.

Impacting State Practice and Policy

Advanced Strategy for Collaboration and Prevention

Shifting the Focus developed a strategy to advance California's violence prevention efforts, titled *From the Margins to the Middle: A Violence Prevention Strategy to Achieve Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities in California*. The strategy delineated four major objectives for the State: 1) support local efforts; 2) provide leadership and increased emphasis on prevention; 3) collaborate across departments and agencies; and 4) develop leadership and violence prevention skills among staff. Serving as a roadmap for the collaborative, the strategy's specific recommendations were prioritized and implemented.

Enhanced Prevention Practice

Shifting the Focus also developed a set of *Prevention Principles* to advance a consistent and effective approach across multiple State departments and agencies. The Principles set forth standards for effective approaches, funding, timelines, evaluation, and local requirements that could be applied to policy and program development, bill analysis, and budget change proposals. They were endorsed by the entire membership and adopted by several agencies.

Standardized Administrative Procedures

Shifting the Focus developed multiple tools to systematize and structure State programmatic and administrative efforts. These included: 1) a set of recommendations for common Requests for Proposals (RFP) to simplify funding application requirements for local practitioners; 2) *A Guide to Advancing a Strengths-based Approach in State Government*; 3) a memorandum of understanding template; 4) a web-based infrastructure for an inventory of State violence prevention and related programs; 5) a survey of State technical assistance and training resources on violence prevention and related issues across California; and 6) training materials on violence prevention and interdisciplinary collaboration.

Improved Government Effectiveness

When California's bi-partisan commission on government effectiveness conducted a study on youth crime and violence prevention, *Shifting the Focus* members provided testimony and advice. In its report, *Never too Early, Never Too Late to Prevent Youth Crime and Violence*, the Commission recom-

"(With) youth crime and violence prevention, the majority of the resources are state, not federal. We have no one but ourselves to blame for the stacks of paperwork, duplicative forms, and differing requirements...If we can't integrate the prevention programs that are entirely within the State's purview, we do not stand a chance of integrating more expensive 'downstream' programs."

MICHAEL E. ALPERT
Chair, Little Hoover Commission
Letter to the governor and Members of
the Legislature, June 12, 2001

mended several improvements in State structure and service, including institutionalization of the *Shifting the Focus* approach to ensure more effective delivery of violence prevention services.

Increased Coordination

Shifting the Focus created a diverse partnership of State staff as more departments and agencies joined over time. The collaborative also supported an increase in programs, policies, and other initiatives involving multiple agencies and departments. In addition to efforts undertaken by the entire membership, significant outcomes emerged from people working together in smaller teams. Collaborative efforts spanned program support and community participation, training and technical assistance, and data. For example, *Shifting the Focus* members partnered in:

- *Safe From the Start: Decreasing Children's Exposure to Violence*. Efforts included regional forums, toolkits, policy recommendations, and a joint legislative hearing with Assembly and Senate Public Safety, Health and Human Services, and Education committees.
- *Crime and Violence in California: From Evidence to Policy*. Several symposia highlighted the reasons for a decline in violence in the late nineties and resulted in policy recommendations to ensure similar future trends.
- *The Youth Development and Crime Prevention Initiative*. A model system of services for substance-abusing youth who are engaged in, or at high-risk of committing, juvenile crime was developed.
- Shared training and technical assistance efforts in various agencies and departments, including a database for training and technical assistance resource sharing;
- Jointly-sponsored conferences, such as the Youth VISTA Conference;
- Formal and informal collaboration and partnerships across agencies and departments, such as on the revision of the *Young Men as Fathers* curriculum.

Building National Momentum

Partnered Nationally

Many federal policies and procedures affect states and, in turn, local communities. Therefore, working to change national policies and practices represented an opportunity to achieve outcomes that would positively affect communities. Toward this goal, *Shifting the Focus* participated in a national initiative, *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice* with the National Crime Prevention Council. *Embedding Prevention* was an opportunity to inform federal policies in support of California's prevention goals and exchange information, ideas, and resources with other states.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS...

FROM:

TO:

Reliance on intervention, containment, and suppression



Emphasis on preventing violence before it starts

Independent and fragmented State efforts



Coordinated and streamlined State efforts that support local work

Predetermined procedures and requirements for local communities



State responsiveness to local needs

"Siloed" approaches to violence prevention



Approaches that address the interrelationship among different kinds of violence as well as other problems

Risk-only approaches to violence prevention



Incorporation of strengths-based approaches in violence prevention

ELEVEN LESSONS LEARNED: SHIFTING AND STAYING FOCUSED

The endeavor to change government practices has provided important lessons about forging interdisciplinary violence prevention efforts and promoting coherent prevention efforts. In addition to the value of working together to achieve prevention outcomes, *Shifting the Focus* efforts have demonstrated the following:

1. Prevention and collaboration must be central elements of staff and department responsibilities.
2. An emphasis on prevention must be maintained, even as resources diminish.
3. Systems-change requires leadership.
4. Collaborative work requires designated staffing.
5. Critical mass must be achieved for successful systems-change.
6. Trusting relationships between people in State government are vital.
7. Collaboration is hard work.
8. The landscape and players will change.
9. Outside facilitation maintains focus and neutrality.
10. Systems change is a long-term process and requires appropriate goal setting.
11. Successful efforts must be built upon.

NEXT STEPS: ENSURING ONGOING COLLABORATION AND PREVENTION IN SUPPORT OF CALIFORNIA'S COMMUNITIES

While *Shifting the Focus* made significant progress, building effective prevention policy and streamlining government services and programs is an ongoing process. In its initial framework, *Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Advancing Violence Prevention* (August 1997), and again in its mission statement, the collaborative called for a shift in current government practices through: 1) educating practitioners; 2) fostering coalitions and networks; 3) changing organizational practices; and 4) influencing policy and legislation. Following are the priorities in these areas as collaborative prevention efforts continue into the future:

1. Educating practitioners

- Increase training on effective prevention and collaboration for State staff.

2. Fostering coalitions and networks

- Maintain collaboration.
- Formalize state/community partnerships.

3. Changing organizational practices

- Implement the Prevention Principles to ensure effective policy and practice.
- Create a website to improve access to information on State violence prevention and related efforts.
- Concentrate government resources in selected communities and expand from there.
- Establish a system that is accountable for appropriate coordination and collaboration.

4. Influencing policy and legislation

- Mandate prevention through policy.

CONCLUSION: INSTITUTIONALIZATION IS CRITICAL

Shifting the Focus has always represented both a group of committed people and an approach to improve California's State government service regarding violence prevention. Since its inception, the membership focused on two major goals: 1) creating a methodology for prevention through tools and training and 2) increasing collaboration within State government to strengthen violence prevention outcomes. It has been successful in achieving these goals. The stage is now set for institutionalizing an interagency, collaborative approach. The State has an obligation to all Californians to offer the broadest service orientation in support of prevention efforts. Improvements in State practice will lead to improved local outcomes statewide: safe and thriving homes, schools, and communities for all Californians.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS PARTNERS

- California Board of Corrections: Corrections, Planning and Programs
- California Conservation Corps
- California Department of Education: Child, Youth, and Family Services; Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office
- California District Attorneys Association
- California Health and Human Services Agency
- California Highway Patrol
- California Victims of Crime Committee
- Commission on Peace Officer Standards and Training
- Community College Foundation
- County of Los Angeles, Department of Health Services
- Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs; Prevention Services Division
- Department of Corrections, Office of Substance Abuse Program
- Department of Health Services: Office of Women’s Health; Domestic Violence Section; Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control Branch
- Department of Mental Health
- Department of Rehabilitation
- Department of Social Services: Office of Child Abuse Prevention
- Department of the Youth Authority, Office of Prevention and Victims Services
- Little Hoover Commission
- Managed Risk Medical Insurance Board
- Mendocino County Youth Project
- Office of the Attorney General: Crime and Violence Prevention Center; Criminal Division
- Office of the Governor, Governor’s Office on Service (GOServ); Office of Criminal Justice Planning
- Office of Senator Dede Alpert, California State Senate
- Prevention Institute – facilitator

SHIFTING THE FOCUS: Interdisciplinary Collaboration to Advance Violence Prevention in California

INTRODUCTION: The Need for Collaboration in State Government

Over the past few decades, as public attention to violence in California increased, so did the State's efforts to respond to and prevent it. Numerous agencies and departments were responsible for addressing different forms of violence and related issues. State staff worked hard and achieved significant results. However, the system to address violence evolved sector by sector and was not cohesive. Each effort addressed a given problem in its own way, focused on a particular issue such as gangs, domestic violence, child abuse, alcohol and other drug abuse, or mental health treatment.

Although segmentation of different violence prevention efforts ensured both expertise on each issue and widespread attention to violence across State government, there were other unintended consequences. These included some overlapping programmatic and administrative efforts, fragmentation of services to local constituencies, and lost opportunities to build synergy. Addressing these consequences through effective collaboration was not simple. While this challenge was not unique to California, it was intensified by the sheer size of the State. California's residents represent 10 percent of the U.S. population and its economy is one of the largest in the world. Correspondingly, the government infrastructure is large and diverse. Advancing violence prevention in California required deliberate and ongoing attention to achieve the necessary levels of collaboration within State government.

By the mid 1990's, those working in California government had started to collaborate informally. However, a group of State staff recognized the need for collaboration to take place more intentionally, to maximize effectiveness. Preventing violence was too important to assume that the appropriate efforts would happen; too many people were dying and suffering. In 1997, this group formed a coalition called *Shifting the Focus*, an interagency violence prevention partnership within California government. The initiative was named to highlight the shift from a focus primarily on suppression and intervention to a focus on the prevention of violence, and from isolated efforts to collaborative work. *Shifting the Focus* members included representatives from more than 20 State agencies and departments, as well as State commissions and state and local organizations. Participants knew that this

SHIFTING THE FOCUS GUIDING BELIEFS

- *Communities can and must be built from within. State government serves in a supporting role.*
- *Primary prevention is emphasized while working at all levels of prevention.*
- *Violence is a complex problem and its prevention requires a comprehensive solution.*
- *Collaboration and sharing of resources are fundamental to success.*
- *State efforts are designed to maximize violence prevention outcomes at the local level through supporting locally owned, locally controlled efforts.*
- *Local successes inform state government practices.*

approach would not make their jobs easier, but that it would strengthen efforts at the State level and, in turn, bolster those at the local level. *Shifting the Focus* set out to:

1. Prioritize the prevention of violence related injury and death through State policy and practice, and,
2. Promote collaboration on State violence prevention efforts.

The collaborative worked for three years without funding or support staff. In July 2000, the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs within the California Health and Human Services Agency provided funding for Prevention Institute, an initial convener of the collaborative, to facilitate *Shifting the Focus*. By fall 2000, the Institute received some additional funding from the National Crime Prevention Council's *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice* initiative.

Since its inception, *Shifting the Focus* has achieved success and faced many challenges. It increased both emphasis to prevention within State government and collaboration among State agencies and departments. However, this success was tempered by the challenges of advancing such an effort. Changing government is a long and difficult process. Further, several major changes in the State and national political landscape made the process even more difficult, including an energy crisis, terrorist attacks (with a corresponding focus on security and drops in tourism), and large budget deficits. Despite the challenges, the work of *Shifting the Focus* continued to impact State practices and policies by promoting prevention and collaboration.

SHIFTING THE FOCUS TO PREVENTION & COLLABORATION

Shifting the Focus to prevention

Historically, intervention and suppression have been the primary approaches to address violence. While these approaches are ultimately necessary, *Shifting the Focus* members promoted an emphasis on prevention. A number of State policies and programs were developed with the goal of preventing violence *before* it occurred. Emphasis was on reducing underlying risk factors such as alcohol and drug abuse, poverty, and mental illness while also fostering strengths and assets such as youth development and workforce investment.

Shifting the Focus to collaboration

From the beginning, *Shifting the Focus* members understood that effective violence prevention must be multidisciplinary and emphasized moving State government away from isolated approaches, towards more coordinated efforts. *Shifting the Focus* members examined how best to work with each other to improve State policies, programs, and services to local communities.

In March 1997, a two-day forum entitled Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Violence Prevention Approach for California was held in California. It was so named because community organizations were often asked to collaborate on violence prevention; the government agencies represented recognized that collaborative endeavors in government are important as well. The retreat grew out of a national violence prevention training conducted by Deborah Prothrow-Stith of the Harvard School of Public Health and Larry Cohen, currently of Prevention Institute, in which participating State of California staff and community practitioners underscored the need for strengthening governmental collaboration. The meeting was designed as a springboard for joint work among the disciplines of education, criminal justice, and health, including women's health, mental health, and alcohol and drug abuse. Shifting the Focus aimed to clarify how governmental agencies and organizations with different mandates and perspectives could work together more effectively. The goal of this retreat was to develop a shared framework for governmental organizations from which effective, interdisciplinary collaborations could be generated. Participants generated a methodology to shift current government practices through educating practitioners, fostering coalitions and networks, changing organizational practices, and influencing policy and legislation in order to enable and facilitate local solutions to violence.

Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Advancing Violence Prevention, July 1997

ACCOMPLISHMENTS: Changing the Way Government Does Business through Local, State, and National Efforts

Shifting the Focus accomplishments spanned local, state, and national levels. A key tenet was building on effective and promising work. Rather than only creating new initiatives, this approach focused on strengthening existing State efforts and bringing them into alignment with one another. Sometimes, *Shifting the Focus* played a central implementation role, while at other times, it served as a catalyst or simply supported existing initiatives. These endeavors resulted in significant outcomes such as: learning from communities, impacting State practice and policy, and building national momentum.

LEARNING FROM COMMUNITIES

Conducted Statewide Hearings

To learn from local practitioners about their needs and experiences with State government, *Shifting the Focus* conducted a series of hearings across California between November 2000 and April 2001. The hearings were crafted to hear from local practitioners about how government could improve its services. The hearings were conducted in ten communities (Fort Bragg, Los Angeles, Oakland, Redding, Sacramento, Salinas, San Diego, San Mateo, Santa Clara, and Stockton) and were attended by diverse participants, including representatives from health, social services, education, law enforcement, probation, courts, corrections, community-based organizations, and local government. The hearings elicited detailed information about the barriers imposed by State government. At the same time, opportunities to strengthen violence prevention efforts through policy and administrative changes in Sacramento were also identified. Topics ranged from funding, evaluation, and technical assistance, to prevention leadership and vision from State officials.

The hearings confirmed what State staff inherently knew: local practitioners were relying on State government for information, assistance, guidelines, and financial support to actively maintain and promote their local violence prevention work. State activities influenced their ability to conduct their work and achieve success. These findings provided the basis for *Shifting the Focus* strategy development and established a mandate for prevention and collaboration at the State level. The overall findings from the hearings follows.

“Crime is not prevented and children are not educated and nurtured at the state level. If a single crime is prevented two blocks from the state capital, it will be the work of parents and neighbors, community members and civic leaders, local law enforcement and teachers.”

MICHAEL E. ALPERT

Chair, Little Hoover Commission

Letter to the governor and Members of the Legislature, June 12, 2001

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM COMMUNITY HEARINGS

More than 200 local practitioners and government officials attended the hearings and 75 additional surveys were returned. A variety of counties were represented, both rural and urban, from Northern and Southern California. Responses clustered into ten categories, and within each category, several themes emerged.

I. FUNDING

- a. Community practitioners supported funding for violence prevention efforts.
- b. Local practitioners cited competitive funding as a barrier to local violence prevention success.
- c. Participants supported increased local flexibility with State funding and cited categorical funding as a barrier.
- d. Participants cited lack of sustainable funding as an obstacle in their local work.
- e. Practitioners cited complicated RFPs, systems of invoicing and reimbursement, and funding cycles as barriers in their efforts.

II. ACCESS TO INFORMATION

- a. Local practitioners cited the need for better systems of information sharing regarding available funding, training opportunities, data, and technical assistance.
- b. Participants cited a need for information on best practices for different populations and locales.

III. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE

- a. Local practitioners reported that State technical assistance providers are knowledgeable and that State-sponsored technical assistance is of high quality.
- b. Local practitioners cited the need for technical assistance related to best practices.
- c. Local practitioners supported expanding the content of State-sponsored technical assistance programs.

IV. TRAINING

- a. Participants cited State-sponsored conferences as excellent training opportunities.
- b. Practitioners expressed the need for State-sponsored training that addresses specific local needs.
- c. Participants cited the lack of funding or restrictions on funding for training as a barrier.

V. DATA

- a. Practitioners reported that the Department of Health Services data system is useful and easy to use.
- b. Practitioners cited non-integrated data reporting and operating systems as an obstacle in local work.
- c. Local practitioners cited the difficulty of accessing locally relevant data as a barrier.

VI. EVALUATION

- a. Practitioners cited the need for enhanced resources (e.g., funding, staff, and training) to support evaluation.
- b. Local practitioners stated that evaluation requirements are often unrelated to local measures or indicators.

VII. LOCAL NEEDS AND COMMUNITY OWNERSHIP

- a. Local violence prevention practitioners appreciated the hearing process; asking local practitioners about their experiences is valuable.
- b. Participants called for State programs and policies to be increasingly attentive to local needs.
- c. Local practitioners stressed the value of community ownership in local violence prevention efforts.

VIII. PRIMARY PREVENTION

- a. Local violence prevention practitioners stressed the need for increased leadership to support and advance prevention.
- b. Participants expressed a desire for increased prioritization of primary prevention.

IX. CULTURAL COMPETENCE

- a. Participants expressed the need to enhance cultural competence at the State level to address community differences such as race, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, and practitioner training and experience.
- b. Participants expressed the need for flexibility to adopt multiple approaches to serve local populations.

X. COLLABORATION

- a. Practitioners affirmed that State level partnerships support local violence prevention efforts.
- b. Participants supported models that promote community-based collaborations and cited State-mandated collaborations as a barrier in their local efforts.
- c. Local practitioners cited a lack of funding to support coalition activities as a barrier in their work.

A complete report on the findings can be found: *A Local Call to State Action: Findings from Community Hearings in California*. (Available at www.preventioninstitute.org)

IMPACTING STATE PRACTICE AND POLICY

Advanced Strategy for Collaboration and Prevention

Building on the findings from the local hearings, *Shifting the Focus* developed a strategy titled, *From the Margins to the Middle: A Violence Prevention Strategy to Achieve Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities in California*. In addition to being responsive to the local hearings, the strategy was grounded in several years of ongoing work by the collaborative and individual members, several State violence prevention initiatives, and the Little Hoover Commission's study on youth crime and violence. To advance California's violence prevention efforts, the strategy delineated four major objectives, along with recommendations to accomplish those objectives.

Objectives and selected recommendations delineated below were first written in the strategy, *From the Margins to the Middle: A Violence Prevention Strategy to Achieve Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities in California*. The strategy established a roadmap to guide the collaborative in its future work.

Objective 1: Supporting Local Efforts

Better support local violence prevention efforts to achieve improved outcomes. Recommendations include:

- a) Develop common Request for Proposals (RFPs) for funding violence prevention and related efforts.
- b) Develop an integrated 'first-stop' website to serve as a gateway to key violence prevention information for local constituencies.
- c) Develop action steps to improve local access to State data and to modify data reporting requirements.
- d) Include local constituencies as participants in shaping State violence prevention strategy and programs.

Objective 2: Prevention Leadership

Demonstrate increased leadership and more emphasis on the prevention of violence. Recommendations include:

- a) Develop a set of Common Prevention Principles for adoption by *Shifting the Focus*.
- b) Provide State policymakers current information about the value of prevention and effective prevention strategies.
- c) Advance a strengths-based approach to violence prevention.
- d) Support local access to the State legislature and encourage local constituencies to communicate with elected officials.

I believe if we want to ensure that crime rates don't return to their record highs in years past, we must focus more energy and resources on long-term prevention efforts.

BILL LOCKYER
California Attorney General

Objective 3: Coordination

Achieve strategic collaboration and coordination on violence prevention within and across departments and agencies. Recommendations include:

- a) Determine the linkages needed between State departments to ensure service coordination.
- b) Ensure ongoing linkages and cross-membership among multidisciplinary State efforts.
- c) Engage designated leadership in advancing a collaborative and coordinated approach.

Objective 4: Skill Development

Develop leadership and violence prevention skills. Recommendations include:

- a) Launch a comprehensive and cross-disciplinary training effort for state staff on effective violence prevention practice.
- b) Exchange training, conference outreach, and mailing lists to increase opportunities for interdisciplinary training.
- c) Establish a Violence Prevention Leadership Institute for State staff.

Enhanced Prevention Practice

As recommended in the strategic plan, *Shifting the Focus* developed a set of *Prevention Principles* to advance a consistent and effective approach across multiple State departments and agencies. These *Principles* guided such an approach and promote strategic collaboration, non-categorical approaches, adequate funding and timeframes, and appropriate evaluation methods. The *Principles* also help reduce replication and promote coherent policy to strengthen existing efforts within California's government.

The *Prevention Principles* were ratified by member departments and adopted by the California Office of the Attorney General and the California Department of Education. They were in the process of being adopted by the California Health and Human Services Agency as of August 2002.

The *Principles* provided guidance on a variety of activities including policy development, legislative analysis, budget modifications, strategic development, advocacy, grant making, and training. Moreover, the *Prevention Principles* had a wide scope of application, including violence prevention, youth development, community building, early childhood development, nutrition and physical activity promotion, and other prevention-oriented fields. The *Prevention Principles* are delineated on page 7.

PREVENTION IN PRACTICE

Adoption of the Prevention Principles

The adoption of the Prevention Principles at the agency level promoted standards for prevention efforts and improved State service delivery to locales. Staff members in the Department of Education and the Department of Justice were trained on the Prevention Principles and are currently using them in budget analysis, legislative development, program design, and construction of Request for Proposals (RFPs).

PREVENTION PRINCIPLES

1. ADVANCE A COMPREHENSIVE APPROACH.
 - 1.1. Encourage use of comprehensive approaches as opposed to narrower approaches.
 - 1.2. Foster the development of healthy children, youth, families, and communities.
2. SHIFT TOWARD A STRENGTHS-BASED APPROACH.
 - 2.1. Encourage asset- or strengths-based strategies for use in primary prevention and intervention strategies.
 - 2.2. Acknowledge and address underlying risk factors.
3. SUPPORT APPROPRIATE EVALUATION.
 - 3.1. Promote a tiered evaluation system that requires rigorous evaluation of untested strategies and evaluation for financial accountability, implementation and management for programs shown by research to be effective.
 - 3.2. Use consistent and promising evaluation tools and measures.
 - 3.3. Include outcome/results measures.
 - 3.4. Support pilot programs only if they have adequate resources for evaluation.
 - 3.5. Support programs with adequate resources for management evaluation.
 - 3.6. Include financial assessments where appropriate, including social return on investments and cost avoidance measures (prevention may cost now but will save dollars later).
 - 3.7. Assess effectiveness of State programs through positive local response and the achievement of results.
 - 3.8. Ensure that evaluation is used as a tool for continuous quality improvement of programs.
4. FUNDING SHOULD BE DESIGNED TO ACHIEVE DESIRED OUTCOMES.
 - 4.1. Support longer funding terms (5+ yrs).
 - 4.2. Support consolidation, and when appropriate, integration of funding streams.
 - 4.3. Encourage one-time funding for immediate needs only, not for prevention and intervention programs or pilots.
 - 4.4. Support expansion of promising or research-based effective approaches.
 - 4.5. Provide adequate levels of ongoing support for effective programs.
 - 4.6. Eliminate ongoing programs that are ineffective or are too small to offset administrative costs.
 - 4.7. Support funding for program sites to act as mentors or models.
 - 4.8. Encourage flexible funding whenever possible.
 - 4.9. Encourage reinvestment of savings from prevention into additional resources for prevention.
 - 4.10. Direct some resources to all communities and additional resources to communities with the greatest needs.
5. STRENGTHEN AND EMPOWER COMMUNITY-BASED INITIATIVES.
 - 5.1. Encourage local partnerships without specifying local partners.
 - 5.2. Support use of existing collaboratives.
 - 5.3. Acknowledge and build on local capacity.
 - 5.4. Promote training and skill development.
 - 5.5. Allow local flexibility on service delivery.
 - 5.6. Encourage initiatives to examine local policy issues to increase support for prevention.
6. SUPPORT STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AMONG STATE AGENCIES AND DEPARTMENTS.
 - 6.1. Encourage state-level coordination and, where appropriate, integration.
 - 6.2. Support integration of programs designed to achieve similar ends.
 - 6.3. Designate appropriate partnerships among State agencies and departments for all new prevention legislation, funding, and programs.
 - 6.4. Build on existing programs that can be expanded or modified to meet objectives as opposed to starting new ones.
 - 6.5. Recognize that many prevention approaches (e.g., youth development) have positive impacts across risk areas (e.g., drug use, violence, etc.)
 - 6.6. Work to consolidate categorical programs, when appropriate.
 - 6.7. Design funding sources to be compatible with funding from other departments and agencies whenever possible.

Standardized Administrative Procedures

As with the *Prevention Principles*, developing a set of tools offered a systematic way to structure and implement State efforts by guiding programmatic and administrative work. In response to needs expressed by both community practitioners and State staff, *Shifting the Focus* utilized a set of tools to advance prevention at the State level and improve service delivery to communities.

One example of a *Shifting the Focus* tool was a set of recommendations for common Request for Proposal (RFP) development. Local practitioners asked for simplified applications to reduce administrative time associated with receiving State funding. The Common RFP Recommendations promoted a standard approach to developing individual and joint RFPs which would result in saved time, decreased frustration, and increased focus on content work rather than on multiple and inconsistent applications. For State staff, there would be reductions in administrative time associated with RFP development using common RFP criteria.

Improved Government Effectiveness

The Little Hoover Commission, a bi-partisan State commission charged with overseeing government effectiveness in California, issued a report on youth crime and violence prevention in June 2001 entitled, *Never Too Early, Never Too Late to Prevent Youth Crime and Violence*. The report analyzed the State's systems that address violence and recommended ways to improve State structure and service. During its study, the Commission heard testimony, convened an advisory board, and, along with *Shifting the Focus*, conducted community hearings for input. Because of their significant violence prevention expertise, *Shifting the Focus* members were invited to provide input to the Commission in both a testimonial and an advisory capacity. The Commission's final report recommended that the *Shifting the Focus* approach be institutionalized to promote more effective delivery of violence prevention services. The bi-partisan nature of the Commission ensured that its conclusions truly represented "best practice" for California.

Increased Coordination

Effective State prevention efforts must incorporate comprehensive strategies and partnership across other agencies and departments. *Shifting the Focus* created a diverse partnership of State staff as more departments and agencies joined the collaborative over time. The program also supported an increase in programs, policies, and other initiatives involving multiple agencies and departments. In addition to efforts undertaken by the entire membership, significant outcomes emerged from people working together in

SHIFTING THE FOCUS TOOLS

- Prevention Principles
- *Advancing a strengths-based approach to violence prevention in State government*
- *Common Request for Proposal (RFP) Recommendations*
- *A Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) template*
- *A web-based infrastructure for an inventory of State violence prevention and related programs.*
- *A survey of State technical assistance and training resources on violence and violence prevention for a state-wide database*
- *Training materials on violence prevention and collaboration*

smaller groups. *Shifting the Focus* collaborative efforts included: 1) program support and community participation; 2) training and technical assistance; and 3) data.

1) Program Support and Community Participation

State staff strengthened programs by drawing on the expertise of staff from other departments as well as community representatives. Examples include:

- The Governor's Mentoring Partnership (GMP), which includes the Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, the California Department of Education, and several legislators' offices. GMP worked with community-based organizations to support mentoring and promote statewide standards for mentoring programs.
- Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Department of Mental Health, and Department of Employment Development/Workforce Investment collaborated on the *Youth Development and Crime Prevention* initiative to develop a model system of services for substance-abusing youth.
- The California Youth Authority (CYA) and the Department of Parks and Recreation (DPR) partnered on a series of DPR- funded/CYA-run youth centers.
- The Office of Criminal Justice Planning and the Department of Health Services collaborated on a Violence Against Women grant from the California Department of Corrections.
- Within the Department of Health Services, the Epidemiology and Prevention for Injury Control branch and the Office of Refugee Health developed a set of domestic violence informational materials.
- The Attorney General and the Secretary of Health and Human Services partnered on *Violence and Crime in California: From Evidence to Policy*. The symposia, supported by The California Wellness Foundation, examined the reasons for the decrease in youth crime and violence in the 1990's and the various policy options that would support the re-emergence of this trend.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

Youth VISTA conference

The Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs, Employment Development Department, California Department of Education, and the Department of Mental Health co-sponsored an annual conference on youth development for community practitioners on effective and comprehensive youth development strategies. The inter-disciplinary nature of the Youth VISTA conference offered several advantages for both attendees and State agencies. Sponsoring departments were able to reach a wider audience, promoted more diverse efforts, saved on administrative costs, and maximized dollars for training and conference events. For attendees, the conference created opportunities for innovative collaborations and networking across issues and disciplines.

2) Training and Technical Assistance

State staff reached wider audiences, maximized resources, and drew on broader expertise by working in collaboration with other agencies and departments. Examples include:

- The Department of Justice and the Health and Human Services Agency partnered with the California Children and Families Commission, Cities, Counties, Schools (CCS) Partnership, and Court TV on *Safe From The Start: Reducing Children's Exposure to Violence*. The initiative promoted local partnerships between health, social service, law enforcement, and education agencies to protect children from violence and to minimize the effects of violence on young children. A set of policy recommendations and joint legislative hearings resulted from this initiative.
- The Office of Child Abuse Prevention and Office of Criminal Justice Planning provided training and technical assistance to community organizations on child abuse prevention.
- The Office of Criminal Justice Planning, Drug Enforcement Branch developed training on domestic violence, gang violence, and terrorism with the District Attorney's Association and the Public Defenders Association.

3) Data

State staff strengthened and streamlined data collection systems to provide the necessary information to both community practitioners and State policymakers. Examples include:

- The Department of Health Services and the Department of Justice collaborated on the *Epidemiology of Self-Inflicted and Unintentional Gunshot Wounds* project by collecting information on all self-inflicted and unintentional gunshot wounds to people under age 19 for use in policy development.
- The Departments of Health Services, Social Services, and Justice, and the Office of Criminal Justice Planning collaborated on the State Child Death Review Council to maintain the directory of child death review teams, implement a statewide data system for tracking fatal child abuse and neglect, and provide information and training to local teams.
- The Department of Social Services, CalLearn, and the Department of Health Services, Adolescent Family Life Program, partnered on a data management system.
- The Department of Justice convened the Domestic Violence Death Review Team, which included the Department of Health Services, the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, and two major statewide domestic violence coalitions.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

Young Men as Fathers Curriculum

The Department of Health Services/EPIC branch and the California Youth Authority (CYA)/Prevention and Victims Services branch revised the Young Men as Fathers curriculum, a training and educational component in CYA detention centers. The CYA/DHS partnership developed from the recognition of mutual needs and skills, with CYA providing the foundation and funding for the project and DHS providing staffing and expertise on certain critical issues, such as domestic/dating violence and childcare. The joint effort resulted in an improved product and savings for both agencies. Perhaps most important is that young men incarcerated in CYA facilities will receive critical training on the life skills that they will need after release.

The partnership between CYA and DHS highlights the effectiveness of a collaborative approach. While CYA had an existing curriculum, it was not being implemented because the content had become outdated. CYA had an existing need and funding to fill that need, but needed assistance to improve and expand the scope of the training. DHS possessed the expertise, but lacked the funding to develop such a project.

- Within the Department of Health Services, the Office of Family Planning and the Adolescent Family Life Program shared data to map teen services statewide.

BUILDING NATIONAL MOMENTUM

Partnered Nationally

There are many federal policies and procedures that affect states and, in turn, local communities. Therefore, working to change national policies and practices represented an opportunity to achieve outcomes that will impact communities. Toward this end, *Shifting the Focus* participated in a national initiative, *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice*. This partnership with the National Crime Prevention Council and five other states — Oregon, Arizona, Iowa, Kentucky, and Connecticut — has provided California the opportunity to be a part of a national movement to promote violence prevention. As the lead organization, the National Crime Prevention Council has supported state efforts by providing financial and technical support and bringing national attention to state efforts in local and national media outlets. These activities were designed to increase each state's capacity to promote and implement policies and practices that focus on violence, crime, and substance abuse prevention.

The *Embedding Prevention* initiative was an opportunity to inform federal policies in support of California's prevention goals. The *Embedding Prevention* initiative also allowed California to test its tools and methodologies through peer review, inform others about its work, and learn the 'state of the art' knowledge on prevention policies and practices from other states and national experts.

The promise to the next generation is clear. If you're in trouble, we are waiting here for you, ready to spend \$20,000-\$30,000 a year on prison. We need a companion promise: we will address problems before they get out of control and we will make every effort to ensure prevention strategies for children.

JACK CALHOUN
President and CEO,
National Crime Prevention Council

ELEVEN LESSONS LEARNED: Shifting and Staying Focused

The work to change government practices has provided important lessons about forging interdisciplinary violence prevention efforts and promoting coherent prevention efforts within State government. One overarching lesson is that violence prevention must be comprehensive. As Dr. Deborah Prothrow-Stith of the Harvard School of Public Health and Dr. Howard Spivak of Tufts University have asserted, “We all have a part, we are all responsible.” In an article (Boston Globe op ed article; July 5, 2002) they wrote on Boston’s success in violence prevention, they highlighted that people understood that “violence was preventable” and that “everyone had a role” in its prevention. Similarly, ensuring that California residents and communities are safe and thriving is everyone’s job and cannot be done effectively in isolation. In addition to the importance of working together to achieve prevention outcomes, *Shifting the Focus* efforts have demonstrated the following:

1. PREVENTION AND COLLABORATION MUST BE CENTRAL ELEMENTS OF STAFF AND DEPARTMENT RESPONSIBILITIES.

To significantly improve local service delivery, coordination among violence prevention programs must become the *modus operandi* within State government. Those who work in State government want to do the right thing and support local work the best they can. Working collaboratively can create the right environment to foster prevention successes. But often, State staff has too much to do and not enough time to do it. Collaboration is seen as ‘one more meeting’; and people lose interest, time, and energy to follow through. For interdepartmental collaboration to have the maximum impact on advancing prevention outcomes, it must take place around central mandates and expectations for which staff is accountable. Collaborative prevention efforts must be an integral part of individual staff work and departmental priorities.

2. AN EMPHASIS ON PREVENTION MUST BE MAINTAINED, EVEN AS RESOURCES DIMINISH.

Shifting the Focus members acknowledged the importance of remaining focused on advancing prevention, especially as resources moved away from prevention-oriented activities. Even when government is not under financial constraint, advocates lament the lack of resources and attention given to prevention. When resources are scarce, ‘prevention’ funding is the first to go. However, such times are an opportunity to establish the importance of prevention and build resources for future prevention work. Advocates can

Back end policies are expensive. In many states expenditures for corrections exceed those of higher education. New voices are calling for a new kind of work. Mayors, governors, and corrections commissions advocate aggressive, intentional, up-front prevention work that would avoid expensive down-the-line solutions.

JACK CALHOUN
President and CEO,
National Crime Prevention Council

make explicit the link between prevention and the damage and expense of waiting until after people have been injured or killed. Legislation can be developed that commits resources to prevention *when there is a surplus*. Collaborative efforts in support of violence prevention can and should be billed as opportunities to minimize *after the fact* spending and achieve administrative savings.

3. SYSTEMS CHANGE REQUIRES LEADERSHIP.

Leadership is vital in making any kind of large-scale policy or systems change. Although the involvement of State staff drove the work of *Shifting the Focus*, some members had limited ability to implement large-scale changes in State government. Agency leaders and policymakers, including legislators, must be involved; their leadership provides the vision, mandate, and inspiration to promote effective change. Success requires support from both formal and informal leadership. Political and bureaucratic leaders provide the decision-making power at higher levels, and mid-level managers oversee daily decisions and resource allocation. Support from State leaders also provides direction for accomplishing visible results that can be held up as markers for change. Tangible support, not simply nominal support, from both levels of leadership provides significant momentum in promoting collaborative prevention outcomes.

4. COLLABORATIVE WORK REQUIRES DESIGNATED STAFFING.

Shifting the Focus maintained its work and energy by building on the dedication of its members. However, the most significant outcomes were achieved when departmental staff was assigned to advance the collaborative's work. This lesson was reinforced through participation in the National Crime Prevention Council's *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice* in which other states had similar experiences. According to the Association for the Study and Development of Community, the evaluator of State initiatives, the most important resource for achieving systems change in government is staff time; however, it is rarely specifically and adequately allocated for collaborative prevention-oriented work.

5. CRITICAL MASS MUST BE ACHIEVED FOR SUCCESSFUL SYSTEMS CHANGE.

Just as changing State practice and policy requires the support of State leaders, changing the mindset within government requires *critical mass*. *Critical mass* refers to gathering a sufficient number of people to positively effect change. Reaching *critical mass* ensures that a focus on prevention, appropriate coordination, and supporting local efforts becomes embedded within the culture of State government and is not seen as something done

“(W)e must collaborate in the delivery of services to communities...”

GRANTLAND JOHNSON,
Secretary of Health and Human Services,
Presentation at Safe from the Start,
Los Angeles, CA, May 17, 2000

by “someone else, over there.” When collaboration and prevention are reinforced in multiple settings, they become core tenets of governmental practice. Moreover, attention to these priorities does not become overshadowed or outweighed by political agendas or election cycles. Rather, they become the accepted norms for how government does business.

6. TRUSTING RELATIONSHIPS WITHIN STATE GOVERNMENT ARE VITAL.

“It’s (almost) all about relationships.” That was the conclusion of the Association for the Study and Development of Community in its year-one report on the *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice* initiative. *Shifting the Focus* provided a forum for participants to build key relationships and consequently served as a catalyst for working together. Dialogue among members led to joint projects and other more informal means of support. *Shifting the Focus* members emphasized the importance of creating and maintaining opportunities for people in State government to develop working relationships.

7. COLLABORATION IS HARD WORK.

Shifting the Focus members recognized that although developing collaborative projects and working in coordination would be difficult, it would improve State support of local communities. Collaboration requires members to come to the table with their resources (financial and otherwise) and go beyond individual agendas and perspectives to forge a common vision. Time spent on collaboration does not immediately reduce other responsibilities that members have.

8. THE LANDSCAPE AND PLAYERS WILL CHANGE.

Over the life of the *Shifting the Focus* initiative, there were several major events that affected the priorities and work of State staff. Since 1997, California experienced a gubernatorial change, an energy crisis, a loss of revenue due to changes in the technology sector, a drop in tourism due to the September 11th terrorist attacks, and significant budget reductions for State programs. Events such as these shifted priorities for people working in State government. It is necessary to plan time to work around such events.

Changing external priorities may also result in internal changes; State staff may change positions or shift responsibilities. A collaborative must be prepared to address its ongoing needs including: recruiting and orienting new members, balancing emerging priorities based on the perspectives of new members, and fostering relationships between all members. Sometimes job changes may result in members being promoted to positions that have an enormous capacity to elevate the goals of the group. While this can

There’s no substitute for face-to-face discussions that can get right to the heart of the matter, but you can only do that when you already have a relationship with the person and you know what they’re going through.

ALEX KELTER, M.D.

Chief, Epidemiology and Prevention for
Injury Control Branch,
California Department of Health Services

strengthen the capacity of the collaborative, it is also critical to ensure that all members are committed to the group's goals and are playing valuable roles.

9. OUTSIDE FACILITATION MAINTAINS FOCUS AND NEUTRALITY.

Part of the success of *Shifting the Focus* has been attributed to the involvement of an outside facilitator. *Shifting the Focus* members noted that the neutrality associated with “being an outsider” allowed the coalition to span different administrations and incorporate different perspectives without concern that one viewpoint would be under- or un-represented. An outside facilitator can maintain a vision for the collaborative's work that is not subject to short-term political concerns. Moreover, an outside facilitator is able to maintain long-term focus even when immediate government priorities shift to activities such as budget reduction drills or emergency response. This finding is supported through work in a national context; the Association for the Study and Development of Community found that the lead organization's credibility, capacity, and relations were seen as critical elements for positive outcomes among all states participating in *Embedding Prevention in State Policy and Practice*. The efforts of an outside facilitator, however, cannot substitute for attention and efforts from government staff, or high-level directives and priority setting. Finally, *Shifting the Focus* members emphasized that financial funding for outside facilitation matters. Until 2000, staffing for *Shifting the Focus* was not funded and consequently, progress was slow and sporadic. Funding enabled the collaborative to make more significant and consistent progress.

10. SYSTEMS CHANGE IS A LONG-TERM PROCESS AND REQUIRES APPROPRIATE GOAL SETTING.

Changing systems within any large organization requires a significant amount of time. Attitudes and behaviors must gradually change over the course of years, and leaders must adopt new policies and priorities. Progress may feel slow or even nonexistent. Consequently, it can be difficult to maintain traction over time if participants do not see any visible signs of success, especially in a political environment that measures success one election and one administration at a time. It is critical therefore, to delineate specific and achievable goals that, over both the short and long term, give participants and observers a sense of accomplishment. While systems-change is a process-oriented endeavor, it is also important to establish product outcomes associated with desired change. Such tangible outcomes provide markers of progress and can be held out as evidence of achievement.

Reengineer state government away from isolated efforts to a broader service-orientation — this won't make it easier for government officials but it will improve service available to communities.

EXCERPT FROM *SHIFTING THE FOCUS*
VISION/MISSION STATEMENT

11. SUCCESSFUL EFFORTS MUST BE BUILT UPON.

Building on existing work, strengthening, and aligning efforts are all valuable. Supporting existing efforts and working behind the scenes may not have the flair of being in the spotlight. Thus, it is often devalued and becomes seen as optional or unnecessary. Yet, the value is in promoting coherent and consistent efforts among multiple State agencies and departments. Effective government practice builds on what is working and fortifies those efforts, rather than creating new initiatives. State efforts benefit from sharing resources and information; in addition to improved use of State monies, coordination of multiple efforts results in a set of mutually reinforcing strategies, which promises to be more effective than any one approach or strategy alone. This reduces the likelihood that different State efforts will negate each other, or even worse, further exacerbate community problems. Bringing numerous violence prevention efforts in line with each other will result in improved local outcomes in terms of decreased death and injury from violence.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

Office of the Attorney General, Crime and Violence Prevention Center (CVPC)

The Crime and Violence Prevention Center in the Attorney General's Office adopted "collaboration" as status quo. The Center works with a diverse set of partners such as the Department of Education, the Health and Human Services Agency, Department of Health Services, Department of Social Services, and Department of Alcohol and Drug Programs. Its collaborative programs and projects include the Statewide Child Death Review Teams, the School Law Enforcement Partnership, the Survey of Drug and Alcohol Use Among Students, Violence and Crime in California: From Evidence to Policy, and Safe From the Start. CVPV's emphasis on collaboration strengthened outcomes by addressing crime and violence prevention from multiple perspectives, using comprehensive strategies, and participating in information and data sharing with its partners.

NEXT STEPS: Ensuring Ongoing Collaboration and Prevention in Support of California's Communities

The progress of *Shifting the Focus* in building a foundation for effective prevention policy and streamlining government services and programs requires ongoing attention. In its mission statement, the collaborative called for: 1) educating practitioners; 2) fostering coalitions and networks; 3) changing organizational practices; and 4) influencing policy and legislation. The following are priorities in these areas as collaborative prevention efforts continue into the future.

1. EDUCATING PRACTITIONERS

Increase training for State staff on effective collaboration and prevention.

The State should ensure that its staff is trained to participate in, and lead collaborative prevention efforts. As more State staff members increase their violence prevention skills, they will be better equipped to design and implement programs, understand how their programs fit with or can build on other efforts, and design and deliver better training and technical assistance to local constituencies.

2. FOSTERING COALITIONS AND NETWORKS

Maintain collaboration.

Utilizing the existing framework developed by *Shifting the Focus*, the State should move towards strategic collaboration, including deliberate coordination, braiding (e.g., joint funding strategies), integration, and decision-making. Effective collaboration and coordination requires consistent attention by agency and department leaders, as well as staff. Such attention may be more likely when the focus is on specific issues, such as family violence prevention or youth development, rather than on the broader and less tangible goal of reengineering State government. When leaders and staff are engaged in advancing major priorities, a valuable opportunity exists to examine systems-level procedures, programs, and policies that can be realigned.

Formalize state/community partnerships.

Partnerships must be strengthened to ensure that State efforts continuously meet local needs. Making systemic changes in State operations requires that stakeholders build a strong local constituency to support those changes. Further, youth and other groups that have historically been ignored should be included in the process.

PREVENTION IN PRACTICE

OCJP training on Prevention Principles

Shifting the Focus representatives conducted a training for the Office of Criminal Justice Planning, Juvenile Justice state advisory board on the Prevention Principles. The training served as introduction to the Principles and instruction on their use at both the State and local levels.

Advisory board members discussed how the Principles could be applied to local settings and committed to sharing the Principles throughout their organizations and communities. Training events such as this contribute to shared understanding and effective, coherent approach.

3. CHANGING ORGANIZATIONAL PRACTICES

Implement the *Prevention Principles* to ensure effective policy and practice.

Agency and department directors should commit to integrating the *Prevention Principles* in programming, policy development, legislative analysis, and budget review and revisions. Staff should also develop a plan for implementation of the *Principles* and report to department and agency leaders on their implementation.

Create a website portal to improve access to information on State violence prevention and related efforts.

A website portal would serve as a starting point for all State violence prevention and related information and should build on current e-government efforts. It should include links to all State funding, legislation, data, training, technical assistance, and evaluation methods.

Concentrate government resources in selected communities and expand from there.

Memorandums of understanding between State players, shared requests for proposals, integrated data, and other approaches should be implemented in selected locales and evaluated for effectiveness, local utility, and administrative savings.

Once effective models for addressing local needs have been established, government resources should be applied in this manner across the State to ensure that local violence prevention and related activities are well supported.

Establish a system that is accountable for appropriate coordination and collaboration.

The tools and methodology to support collaborative prevention outcomes have been developed; what is needed is an infrastructure supported by appropriate resources. It is critical for this effort to reside within the system to ensure its long-term viability and accountability. Different mechanisms can be implemented to achieve this goal. For example, a coordinating council made up of relevant agency directors could be established that would be accountable to the governor or legislature.

COLLABORATION IN PRACTICE

Developing a statewide training/technical assistance database

A Shifting the Focus subcommittee developed the infrastructure to collect information on existing State training and technical assistance resources on violence prevention. Key departments involved in development of the survey include the Department of Health Services/EPIC, the Department of Social Services/OCAP, the Office of the Attorney General/CVPC, and the California Department of Education/Safe Schools and Violence Prevention Office. The intent was to support local efforts by increasing access to qualified and available training and technical assistance. For example, grantees could scan a database to find the most appropriate services on violence prevention and program management.

The group originally convened in response to the need to support technical assistance efforts under Safe From The Start in the Attorney General's office and then expanded its scope to encompass all State training and technical assistance efforts on violence prevention. The survey addressed both content issues, such as childhood development, substance abuse, domestic violence, and youth development, and administrative/management issues, such as budget development, grant writing, and program management.

4. INFLUENCING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Mandate prevention through policy.

Strengthening and expanding prevention legislation, regulations, and guidelines is critical to the State's violence prevention efforts. Possibilities for prevention policies include:

- **RESOURCE ALLOCATION:** Correspond violence prevention spending to other spending (e.g., incarceration). Ensure that as more resources become available, the ratio is improved.
- **REINVESTMENT INTO PREVENTION:** Develop procedures to measure the cost-savings from prevention and streamlined administrative procedures. Reinvest any savings into prevention.
- **LEADERSHIP AND ACCOUNTABILITY:** Form a high-level violence prevention coordinating council that represents multiple agencies and is accountable for ensuring that government services are well coordinated and effective.
- **STREAMLINED RESOURCES:** Combine related violence prevention funding sources for local communities. Document both the effectiveness of this approach and the resulting administrative savings.
- **EVALUATION:** Ensure that violence prevention programs receive appropriate resources for appropriate levels of evaluation.
- **SUPPORT FOR PREVENTION:** Develop language that asserts the legislature's support for strengthening the State's violence prevention efforts and outcomes.
- **CONSISTENT PREVENTION POLICY:** Adopt the *Prevention Principles* as criteria for developing or reviewing all violence prevention and related legislation.
- **EFFECTIVE PREVENTION PRACTICES:** Expand what is already effective and in place rather than developing new programs. Bring effective pilot programs to scale.

PREVENTION IN PRACTICE

State Prevention Legislation

In 1999, the Oregon legislature passed SB555, which codified a comprehensive, statewide approach to crime prevention. In response, Oregon has developed common planning principles and mechanisms to coordinate data collection and analysis and to merge reporting processes. The State has also developed an early childhood inter-agency team and a juvenile crime prevention-screening tool. All counties in the state have identified their communities' strengths, gaps and barriers to services. The next step is the community planning strategy where Oregon will integrate five separate planning processes into one comprehensive process.

Iowa has decategorized its child welfare funding to establish a system for health and human service delivery at the county level that is based on human need rather than how funding streams are organized. The purpose of decategorization is to redirect child welfare funding away from restrictive approaches towards more preventive, family-, and community-centered strategies.

The decategorization legislation in Iowa at the State level has a direct and significant effect on local work. Further, it represents a strong commitment to prevention

CONCLUSION: Institutionalization is Critical

Shifting the Focus has always represented a group of dedicated people committed to improving California's State government service to ensure improved violence prevention outcomes. Since its inception, the membership focused on two major goals: 1) creating a methodology for prevention through tools and training and 2) increasing collaboration within State government to strengthen violence prevention outcomes. Now that the collaborative has achieved these goals, the stage is set for institutionalizing the work of *Shifting the Focus*. This will require embedding prevention and collaboration within State government culture. The effort must move beyond the individual members of the partnership, and the departments and agencies they represent, to the entire State government. The *Shifting the Focus* approach provides a roadmap for the changes that must happen within California government to improve State and local violence prevention outcomes. It is incumbent upon State leaders and their staffs to follow the path provided, regardless of higher profile issues, elections or budget constraints.

Institutionalization of this effort is critical. The State has an obligation to all Californians to demonstrate true leadership in support of prevention efforts. A well-coordinated and consistent State approach is essential to support local initiatives. Improvements in State practice will lead to improved local outcomes statewide: safe and thriving homes, schools, and communities for all Californians.

[Violence] is not the problem of one neighborhood or group, and the response and solutions are not the responsibility of one sector of the community or one agency, professional group, or business. Coming together and owning this problem and the solutions are central to preventing...the deaths of young people....

DR. DEBORAH PROTHROW-STITH
Professor of Public Health Practice and
Associate Dean for Faculty Development,
Harvard School of Public Health

Shifting the Focus and related materials available at www.preventioninstitute.org:

1. *Shifting the Focus: Prevention Principles*
2. *From the Margins to the Middle: A Violence Prevention Strategy To Achieve Safe, Healthy, Sustainable Communities in California*
3. *A Local Call to State Action: Findings from Community Hearings*
4. *Shifting the Focus: An Interdisciplinary Framework for Advancing Violence Prevention in California*
5. *The Spectrum of Prevention: Developing a Comprehensive Approach to Injury Prevention*
6. *Developing Effective Coalitions: An Eight Step Guide*