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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Independent Evaluation Supports Violence Prevention Effort

BALTIMORE, MD (January 13, 2009) — The Baltimore City Health Department is releasing an independent interim evaluation of the violence prevention program Safe Streets by Dr. Daniel Webster and his colleagues at the Center for the Prevention of Youth Violence at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Safe Streets is modeled on the program Ceasefire Chicago.

Key findings relate to:

- **Implementation.** The program was well implemented in McElderry Park “where there was extensive outreach to high risk ‘clients,’ hundreds of monthly contacts with clients, and 53 mediations of potentially-lethal disputes over 15 months of implementation.
- **Attitudes about violence.** Young men in the neighborhood where Safe Streets was implemented “were much less likely than in two neighborhoods that had not implemented the program to hold attitudes supportive of using guns to resolve disputes.”
- **Homicides.** Despite a prediction of 4 homicides in McElderry Park over the period of the intervention, there was not a single homicide during the time studied. In addition, “Safe Streets implementation was associated with significant reductions in homicides of victims under 30 years-old in McElderry Park and in the police posts bordering Ellwood Park.
- **Nonfatal shootings.** Safe Streets was associated with reduced nonfatal shootings in Ellwood Park but an increase in nonfatal shootings in McElderry Park, compared to non-intervention comparison areas.

The analysis had several limitations, including that it could not adjust for other local initiatives that could increase or decrease gun violence.

In a letter to Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health summarizing the evaluation, Dr. Webster concluded: “The costs of gun violence to Baltimore are substantial. Given the compelling evidence of Chicago’s CeaseFire’s effectiveness in reducing gun violence, along

with the encouraging findings from this interim evaluation of Safe Streets, it seems wise to continue the program while looking for ways to increase its effectiveness.”

The Health Department is also releasing a letter from Dr. Gary Slutkin, founder of Ceasefire Chicago, about the results of the independent evaluation. Dr. Slutkin writes, “From the beginning, our team has felt confident about Safe Streets’ implementation in Baltimore. This strong interim evaluation should boost your efforts to sustain, improve, and expand Safe Streets.”

“Violence represents a major public health challenge in Baltimore,” said Dr. Joshua M. Sharfstein, Commissioner of Health. “This independent interim evaluation supports the Safe Streets program as an important component of our public health response.”

Safe Streets is now implemented by the Living Classrooms Foundation in three areas of East Baltimore and by Family Health Centers in Cherry Hill.

Safe Streets is supported by city funding, federal funding, and contributions from the Greater Baltimore Committee, the Abell Foundation, the Goldseker Foundation, the Annie E. Casey Foundation, the Kreiger Fund, the Crane Family Foundation, the Leidy Foundation, the T. Rowe Price Foundation, the Thalheimer Foundation and more than 15 private citizens of Baltimore.

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