

defunding could lead to less police violence and more social services.

During a recent interview, Cory Hunt, one of the group's facilitators, explained that the concept doesn't have to mean a total departmental dismantling: "When we say 'defund' we're talking about doing the same thing they've been doing to the education system for years," he said. "We're saying let's flip the switch there ... that maybe we've gone overboard on the police funding and now it's time to invest at least some of those resources back into the community."

"There's never going to be enough money for everything, but if things are going to keep falling short, it shouldn't be to support police budgets and huge pensions."

Interviewed by phone, CPD Interim Chief Matt Madden expressed concerns about defunding.

"I think people need to be cautious when they talk about those things if they don't have a total understanding of what the police budget does," he said. "On one hand we're hearing about more training, but training is expensive, so you have to be aware of all of the impacts. It's a slippery slope."

Madden pointed out that the economic recession has triggered a hiring freeze, including for eight vacant police officer positions.

"We're understaffed here and we have been since the Great Recession, so to start having conversations about diverting money to some other department or this and that makes me very concerned," he said.

Madden said he welcomes deeper community review of local police policies, and spoke glowingly of the department where he's spent 23 of his 28 years in law enforcement. He insisted the CPD is completely free of all forms of racism, touted its transparency and said the department's standards meet or exceed the most rigorous requirements.

"There's no better time to have these discussions and start building stronger relationships between the police and the community than now," he said. "Do I think we need to look at them and continue to evaluate [CPD policies]? Yes, I do."

"On the other hand, do I believe our polices and training currently align with state and federal laws and standards? The answer to that is also, 'Yes, I do.'" □

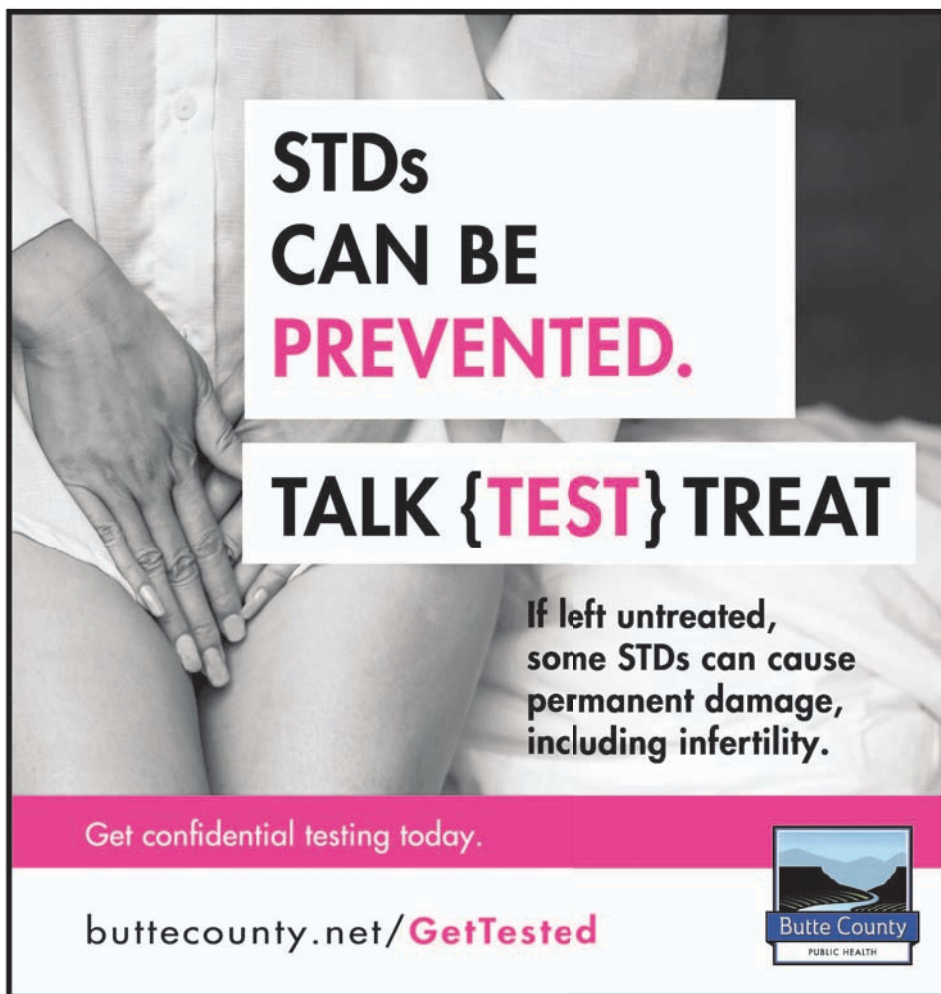
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