

## Firearms in our community

Storing firearms locked and unloaded, with ammunition locked separately, can reduce the risk of injuries and deaths involving children and teens and prevent firearm theft.

### Did you know...?

- **In the United States, 36,247 people died in 2015 as a result of firearms.** Of these firearm deaths, 61% of were suicides (22,111 died) and 36% (13,049 died) were homicides.  
*CDC WONDER (Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research), Accessed June 2017*
- **In Washington State, 39 children (age 17 or younger) died as a result of firearms in 2015.** This is the equivalent of a child or teen being killed by gunfire every 9 days. An additional 30 children were hospitalized statewide. **In King County, 6 children died as a result of guns in 2015,** and 9 other children were hospitalized in King County during this period.  
*WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificate data & Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System, June 2017*
- In 2015, an estimated **150,000 adults in King County reported keeping a firearm unlocked.**  
*WA State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2015*

### Children, youth and firearms

- **During the 2015-2016 school year, the WA State Superintendent of Public Instruction reported 130 incidents involving a firearm on school premises, transportation systems, or school facilities.** These incidents resulted in 62 suspensions and 36 expulsions. Of these, 21 suspensions and 15 expulsions were in school districts located in King County.  
*WA Superintendent of Public Instruction, Weapons in Schools Report*
- In 2016, 11% of 8th grade students, 16% of 10th grade students, and 23% of 12th grade students in King County reported that they would not be caught if they carried a handgun without parental permission.  
*WA State Healthy Youth Survey, 2016*
- In 2016, 4% of King County 10th and 12<sup>th</sup> grade students reported having carried a gun on at least 1 day during the last 30 days.  
*WA State Healthy Youth Survey, 2016*
- Parent perceptions of children's behavior with firearms do not predict actual behavior. One study revealed that boys estimated to have "low interest" in playing with a real handgun were as likely to play with or pull the trigger as children perceived to have "moderate to high interest."<sup>1</sup> Another study revealed that parents living in homes with guns who reported their children had never handled a gun in their homes were contradicted by their child's self-report.<sup>2</sup>  
*American Academy of Pediatrics 2001; Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med. 2006*

### Firearm suicides and total state firearm deaths

- **Firearm suicides (534 died) are 75% of all firearm deaths (714 total deaths) and accounted for 47% of all suicides in Washington State in 2015.** *WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificate data, June 2017*
- Between 2013 and 2015, 118 youth (age 17 or younger) died by suicide in Washington; 47 of these youth (40%) died from firearm suicide. During the same period, 25 youth died by suicide in King County; 7 youth (28%) used firearms.  
*WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificate data, June 2017*
- Adolescents with access to firearms are 2.6 times as likely to die by suicide as adolescents without access to firearms.<sup>3</sup>  
*Annals of Internal Medicine 2014*
- A study of adolescent suicides by firearm found that over half were carried out with guns from the adolescent's home. More than 75% of firearms used in suicide attempts and unintentional injuries were stored in the residence of the victim, a relative, or friend.<sup>4,5</sup>  
*Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med. 1999; Journal of Adolescent Health 2008*

### Gun violence, homicides and crime

- In 2015, 62% of homicides in Washington State were committed with firearms.  
*WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs, Crime in WA, 2015 Annual Report*
- In 2015, 28 homicides occurred among youth (ages 17 and under) in Washington State; 17 (61%) of these youth died as a result of firearm homicides.  
*WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificates, June 2017*

- 17 youth (under the age of 18) were hospitalized for firearm assault injuries in Washington in 2015; King County youth accounted for 47% of these nonfatal injury hospitalizations (8 youth).  
WA State Department of Health, Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System, June 2017
- **According to the WA Association of Sheriffs and Police Chiefs, the total value of firearms reported stolen in Washington in 2016 was \$3,312,794.** Approximately \$2,569,600 worth of these firearms were reported stolen in King County.  
WA Association of Sheriffs & Police Chiefs, June 2017

### Guns in Washington State and King County

- An estimated 34% of **Washington adults** (1,825,000 people) 18 years and older reported having a firearm in or around their home in 2015. Just under half of these adults (**46% or 839,000 people**) reported having an unlocked firearm. Access to firearms, including storage practices, are a known risk factor for firearm suicide – especially among youth.<sup>6</sup> WA State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance, System, 2015, 2013
- In 2015, approximately 21% of **King County adults** (340,000 people) reported firearms present in or around their homes. Among these adults, an estimated 31% (105,000 people) stored firearms loaded and **an estimated 43% (150,000 people) stored firearms unlocked.** Approximately 15% (51,000 people) of firearm owners reported storing them loaded and unlocked.  
WA State Department of Health, Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, 2015
- 308 Washington State residents were hospitalized for nonfatal gun injuries in 2015, including 30 children under 18.  
WA State Department of Health, Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System I, June 2017
- In 2015, 714 Washington State residents died from a firearm injury, including 39 children under the age of 18.  
WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificates, June 2017
- **In 2015, in the King County area firearm fatalities cost almost \$200 million in medical costs and lost productivity.**  
CDC WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System), June 2017
- 95 King County residents were hospitalized for nonfatal gun injuries in 2015, including 9 children ages 17 and younger.  
WA State Department of Health, Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System, June 2017
- 146 King County residents died from a gun injury in 2015, including 6 children ages 17 and younger.  
WA State Department of Health, Center for Health Statistics Death Certificates, June 2017

### Data Methods

National fatality data were obtained from CDC WONDER™ (Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research). Washington State data on firearm ownership and storage comes from the Washington State Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System. Washington State injury and fatality records come from the WA State Department of Health. Data on high school student access to guns comes from the Washington State Healthy Youth Survey for 2016.

Final Oct. 10, 2017- For more information, please contact: Karyn Brownson at 206-477-7755. For electronic fact sheet, please visit:  
<http://www.kingcounty.gov/healthservices/health/injury/lokutup/FirearmFacts.aspx>.

### References

- <sup>1</sup> Jackman GA, Farah MM, Kellerman AL, Simon HK. Seeing is Believing: What do Boys Do When They Find a Real Gun? *Pediatrics*. 2001; 107(6): 1247-1250; DOI: 10.1542/peds.107.6.1247. <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/cgi/content/abstract/107/6/1247>
- <sup>2</sup> Baxley F, Miller M. Parental Misperceptions About Children and Firearms. *Arch Pediatric Adolescent Med*. 2006; 160(5):542-547. doi:10.1001/archpedi.160.5.542. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=204929>
- <sup>3</sup> Anglemeyer A, Horvath T, Rutherford G. The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members. *Annals of Internal Medicine*. 160(2):101-110
- <sup>4</sup> Grossman DC, Reay DT, Baker SA. Self-inflicted and Unintentional Firearm Injuries Among Children and Adolescents: The Source of the Firearm. *Arch Pediatr Adolesc Med*. 1999;153(8):875-878. doi:10.1001/archpedi.153.8.875. <http://archpedi.jamanetwork.com/article.aspx?articleid=347593>
- <sup>5</sup> Wright MA, Wintennute GJ, Claire BE. Gun Suicide by Young People in California: Descriptive epidemiology and Gun Ownership. *Journal of Adolescent Health*. 2008. 43(6):619-622
- <sup>6</sup> Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide and Unintentional Firearm Injuries. *JAMA*. 2005. 23(6):707-714