Our Public Health Approach to Firearm Injury Prevention

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Firearm-related injury is a public health issue

• In an average year:

  155 King County residents die from firearm-related injuries (68% suicide, 25% homicide)

  149 hospitalizations for nonfatal firearm injuries in King County (46% unintentional, 40% assault)

• Injury and psychological trauma from being shot can contribute to lifelong experiences of mental and physical illness and harmful community trauma.

• Firearm-related injury and death are predictable and preventable.
The public health approach to firearm tragedy prevention

1. Gather / analyze data to understand the problem & its impact on population health

2. Identify known risk & protective factors

3. Work with those most affected to design, implement, & evaluate appropriate interventions
1. Understanding the problem using data

Public Health – Seattle & King County’s firearm injury data and data from the community

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Firearm Deaths</th>
<th>Hospitalizations for Nonfatal Firearm Injury</th>
<th>Firearm Storage Practices</th>
<th>SPOTLIGHT ON CHILDREN</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>155 King County residents died from firearms per year from 2013-2017</td>
<td>149 hospitalizations per year for non-fatal firearm injuries in King County from 2016-2017</td>
<td>20% of King County adults with children in or around their home own firearms</td>
<td>98 children and youth under age 10 died by firearms in King County between 1990-2017</td>
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<tr>
<td>68% of King County firearm deaths from 2013-2017 were due to firearm suicide</td>
<td>46% of firearm injury hospitalizations were unintentional</td>
<td>31% of King County firearm owners with children around their homes keep their firearms loaded (less safe)</td>
<td>75% of firearms used in child suicides were stored unlocked</td>
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<td>48% of firearm deaths were among South King County residents</td>
<td>55% of hospitalizations for non-fatal firearm injuries were among South King County residents</td>
<td>41% of all King County gun owners use the safest storage method (locked and unloaded)</td>
<td>36% of children who died by firearm homicides were shot by a friend or acquaintance</td>
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www.kingcounty.gov/firearms
2. Identifying known risk and protective factors

• What are risk factors for perpetrating firearm violence?
  • Research carried out as part of the Shots Fired project

• What are risk factors for firearm theft or misuse?
Firearm Perpetration Study

• Several risk factors are identified in literature, but no research specific to King County

• Approach
  • Identify the strongest risk factors by comparing people who committed violent crimes with and without firearms
  • Select 208 firearm assault perpetrator cases and 738 non-firearm assault perpetrators, ages 18-29, convicted between 2006 and 2016
  • Extract data on history and system engagement from Electronic Court Records, public health data, court system data

2016-2018 Shots Fired grant (internal study)
What we found (quantitative research)

What do we know so far from studying approx. 1000 convicted cases?

**Education (Middle School)**

7.5 times more likely to drop out of middle school*

**Previous Convictions**

Ranges from 1.4 times to 10 times more likely to have criminal convictions*

**Previous Firearm and Assault Injuries**

Firearm perpetrators are 2.5 times more likely to have sustained gun shot wound (GSW)*, 1.4 times more for assault wound*

**Drugs and Alcohol**

2.5 times more likely to have used opioids and 3.4 times more likely to have used stimulants (48 hours prior to indexed firearm perpetration)*

*(compared to non-firearm perpetrators)
Washington State firearm ownership & storage issues

• 63% of firearm-owning households report at least one unsafely stored firearm

• Over **250,000 children** in WA State live in a household with at least 1 unsafely stored firearm

• Among older adults living in a firearm owning household, **one quarter** have at least one firearm stored unlocked and loaded

Sources cited on hand-out.
A key protective factor: storing firearms locked up

• Unintentional injury prevention

• Suicide prevention (especially for young people)

• Prevents firearms being misused by a household member in crisis

• Theft prevention (keeping firearms from being trafficked and used in violence or crime)
3. Work with those most affected to design, implement, & evaluate appropriate interventions

- Safe storage promotion
- Law enforcement partnerships
- Youth engagement
Some of our stakeholders

• Firearm owners and users

• Youth and families affected by firearm violence

• Firearm retailers

• Medical systems

• Law enforcement and prosecutors

• Policymakers
The Lock It Up program promotes voluntary safe storage of firearms.

- **Partnerships with firearm and safe storage device retailers**
  Give a discount on storage devices to customers who mention the program; share information

- **Partnerships with law enforcement**
  Share information with Concealed Pistol License applicants

- **Public education**
  Health fairs, website, presentations, data dissemination

- **Community partnerships**
  We are a resource and convener across the spectrum of gun violence prevention work

For more information: [www.kingcounty.gov/lockitup](http://www.kingcounty.gov/lockitup)
Listening to youth voice:
The Youth & Young Adult Firearm Violence Report

• Engaging with youth and young adults affected by gun violence and their families and communities

• Empowering those with lived experience of gun violence and listening to community voices

• Gathering information and making recommendations for collaborative problem-solving

• Ultimately, addressing firearm violence with community-informed strategies that work

For more information:

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