

Gun Violence:

A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS

What we know. What we need to know. What to do.



Gun Violence Initiative: Timeline

2015

April

Gun Violence: A Public Health Crisis

The Institute for Public Health launches the Gun Violence Initiative. The event features Alan Leshner, PhD, CEO Emeritus of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and chair of the Institute of Medicine and National Research Council study committee.

May

A Coordinated Response to Gun Violence: Part 1

Led by Chancellor Emeritus Mark S. Wrighton, PhD, and Jason Q. Purnell, PhD, the Institute for Public Health convenes a meeting to highlight current trends in crime in the St. Louis region. Criminologist, Richard Rosenfeld, PhD, from the University of Missouri-St. Louis is the guest speaker.

July

Life Outside of Violence

Planning begins for the St. Louis Area Hospital-based Violence Intervention Program (STL-HVIP) to be known as Life Outside of Violence.

September

Guns in the Hands of Artists

The Sam Fox School of Design & Visual Arts presents *Guns in the Hands of Artists*, a pivotal exhibition that has started a national dialogue within the arts. A series of events accompanies the exhibition.

Dual Library Exhibits for Gun Violence Initiative

From September 21 to October 2, 2015, the Gun Violence Initiative showcases gun violence prevention research and resources through special, simultaneous exhibits at the John M. Olin Library on the Danforth Campus, and the Bernard Becker Medical Library on the Medical Campus.



Washington University in St. Louis
INSTITUTE FOR PUBLIC HEALTH

Connect Online:
Subscribe to Emails



publichealth.wustl.edu/gunviolence

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

A Coordinated Response to Gun Violence: Part 2

Chancellor Emeritus Mark Wrighton, PhD, and Jason Purnell, PhD, co-host this follow-up meeting to present the results of months of research on interventions being implemented in the St. Louis region to reduce gun violence death and injury. The goal of the meeting is to secure stakeholder commitment for a coordinated approach.

October

Blog Includes Series on Gun Violence

In October 2015, the institute publishes a series of blog posts from physicians, concerned citizens, and faculty exploring a variety of perspectives on issues surrounding gun violence and its impact.

November

Not another One: A Discussion

The St. Louis Story Stitchers' teens host a videotaped discussion to open communication and to identify commonality, greater understanding, and ways to cooperate and collaborate between city police and teen-age youth, as both groups work to lower St. Louis's high rates of gun violence. Washington University Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Arts; the Des Lee Gallery; the Institute for Public Health; and the Gun Violence Initiative sponsor the program.

Preventing Gun Violence: Evidence-based Optimism in a Realistic World

Co-sponsored by the Brown School and the Institute for Public Health, Harold Pollack, PhD, (University of Chicago professor and co-director of the Crime Lab) presents his socio-economic dimensions and approaches, school-based approaches, and how to organize to effectively implement gun violence prevention.

St. Louis International Film Festival (SLIFF)

The Institute for Public Health aids with the marketing for seven violence-centered movie screenings at SLIFF.

2016

January

St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission (STLVPC)

United Way of Greater St. Louis and Washington University join forces to form the St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Collaborative, later renamed the St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission (STLVPC). The commission works to reduce violent crime in the region by promoting and advocating for coordinated, well-resourced policies, support systems, and interventions among area governments, institutions, and agencies that serve individuals and families most at risk of violent crime.

February

Global Gun Violence

In partnership with the institute's Global Health Center, students host a panel discussion centering on global gun violence and countries' diverse reactions, in order to gain perspective on the different ways we can address gun violence in the United States.

Guns, Suicide and Safety

The Brown School and the Institute for Public Health host Michael Anestis, PhD, and Cathy Barber, MPA, for a conversation on gun suicides.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

Connection between For the Sake of All and Gun Violence

During Grand Rounds (weekly one-hour medical education seminar), the Department of Medicine hosts Jason Purnell, PhD, who discusses the link between **For the Sake of All** (currently named **Health Equity Works**) and gun violence.

Supporting Violence Prevention Research

The Institute for Public Health awards funding to Patricia Cavazos-Rehg, PhD, to support her research on substance use and violence prevention.

March

Gun Violence and Childhood Trauma

The Brown School and Institute host James Garbarino, PhD, director of the Center for the Human Rights of Children at Loyola University, Chicago, who speak on the links between childhood and gun violence.

Gun Safety

During Grand Rounds, the Department of Pediatrics host Jane Garbutt, MD, and Bo Kennedy, MD, discuss gun safety.

Airway Management in Penetrating Neck Trauma: Guns and Knives

The Department of Anesthesiology Grand Rounds features Albert Varon, MD, Professor and Vice Chair for Education, Chief of Anesthesiology, Ryder Trauma Center, Miami, Florida.

April

Research, Reflection, and Responses

The Institute for Public Health celebrates the Gun Violence Initiative's first anniversary with a symposium featuring experts in the field of gun violence including Deborah Prothrow-Stith, MD, Stephen Hargarten, MD, and Daniel Webster, ScD. The Gun Violence Initiative team shares key learnings; outlines the progress and partnerships made in the past year; connects this to the insights of national experts; and, discusses next steps.

The Second Amendment and Gun Control

As part of the School of Law's Public Interest Law and Policy Speakers Series, and the University's Assembly Series, The Honorable Justice, John Paul Stevens, who retired from the Supreme Court in 2010 after serving 35 years, visits the university to offer this talk.

May

Under the Gun Documentary Screening and Panel Discussion

Moms Demand Action and the Institute for Public Health partner for special advance screening of Katie Couric's documentary *Under the Gun*, which addresses gun legislation in the aftermath of the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting.

July

Changing Systems Student Summit

The Brown School's Social System Design Lab and the Institute for Public Health host the Changing Systems Student Summit. St. Louis high school students train in system dynamics to analyze cycles that perpetrate gun violence and to identify ways to restructure them.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

August

The university offers its first classes with a gun violence focus.

Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue: The School of Medicine offers the first-ever class to first-year medical students.

Capstone in Design: The Sam Fox School of Design and Visual Art offers a data visualization skill lab in which students form interdisciplinary teams to explore two years of City of St. Louis crime data.

Public Health Application of Geographic Information Systems (GIS): During the third section of this University College course, students using crime data, design a series of time-enabled web maps.

September

Gun Violence Public Health Challenge

In partnership with the Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Institute for Public Health hosts a three-day immersive **Gun Violence Public Health Challenge** where teams of Washington University students develop social and entrepreneurial concepts to reduce gun violence in St. Louis.

Service Providers Summit: Assessing our Region's Response to Violence

The St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission and the Institute for Public Health convene local agencies to share information about the benefit of the **Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Simulation Tool**. The tool helps stakeholders determine the quality and capacity of St. Louis services related to gun violence.

October

Children's Firearm Safety Alliance

The Institute for Public Health hosts the launch of the Children's Firearm Safety Alliance.

November

Youth and Gun Violence: NOW Is the Time for Action

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors a discussion between the **St. Louis Story Stitchers teens**, local leaders, and other high schoolers to identify problems, find solutions and make a plan for peace for youth and families affected by gun violence.

2017

January

Emergency Medicine Grand Round: Hospital-based Violence Intervention Programs

Kristen Mueller, MD, lectures on the benefits of HVIPs including promoting positive alternatives to violence in order to reduce retaliation, criminal involvement, re-injury and death.

Emergency Medicine Grand Round: ER, Guns and Suicide

Kristen Mueller, MD, lectures on gun suicide and the role of staff at the Emergency Department.

Evaluating Interventions to Global Gun Violence

Undergraduate students plan an event as part of the **Global Health Conversations** series, an exciting monthly forum for trainees, faculty and staff to engage in topics of interest to the global community. **The Global Health Student Advisory Committee** organizes the new event and former intern Allie Liss writes a **reflection**.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

Collaborate to Change St. Louis (C2C)

In partnership with **MedX** and the Skandalaris Center for Interdisciplinary Innovation and Entrepreneurship, the Institute for Public Health sponsors the case competition where high school students develop solutions to public health issues including community violence.

February

Division of Plastic and Reconstructive Surgery Grand Round: Firearm Injury and Death as a Public Health Issue and the Role of Physicians in Advocacy and Patient Care

Ilana Rosman, MD, gives an overview of firearm injury and death as a public health issue and the role of physicians in advocacy and patient care.

March

Pediatric Firearm Injury and Safety Symposium: Keeping Our Kids Safe

In celebration of the Gun Violence Initiative's third anniversary, the Institute for Public Health co-hosts a symposium with the Department of Pediatrics at the School of Medicine, and St. Louis Children's Hospital. Ted Miller, PhD, a leading economist, highlights the societal and emotional costs of pediatric firearm-related injuries and deaths.

Not another One! A Discussion on Gun Violence

As part of the March 2017 "**Kids and Violence**" series of the Institute for Public Health's blog, the institute collaborates to promote the St. Louis Story Stitchers Artists Collective's book. The Gun Violence Initiative's staff helps the Stitchers with coordination and connection to community leaders involved in gun violence prevention. Former mentor of the Gun Violence Initiative, Jason Purnell, PhD, writes the foreword for the book.

April

General Surgery Ethics Session: Gun Violence Prevention

Led by LJ Punch, MD, the Gun Violence Initiative staff aid and moderate a session on gun violence ethics for general surgery residents. Residents review cases in small groups using medical ethical principles and engage in discussion.

Emergency Medicine Klippel Lecture: Crime, Social Justice and Gun Violence

The Division of Emergency Medicine partners with the Gun Violence Initiative to host a half-day symposium surrounding crime, social justice and violence in our region, with the goal to give physicians a better sense of what patients deal with, what barriers they face, and how providers can support them.

Movies That Move You: Screening of *13th*

The Gun Violence Initiative joins with the National Council of Jewish Women and Women's Voices Raised for Social Justice to host a screening of this social justice-related documentary film series.

Meet the Leaders Interactive Discussion Series - Gun Violence: Prevention & Advocacy

Meet the Leaders is an ongoing program of the Women's Club designed to provide members with greater exposure to timely topics featuring guests from the faculty, community and student body. This year, programming focuses on Gun Violence Prevention initiatives at Washington University; highlighting the impact of gun violence on public health, organizations focused on reduction, and calls to action available to the community. Staff from the Gun Violence Initiative moderate the session. Gephardt Institute for Civic and Community Engagement, the Women's Club of Washington University, and the Office of the Provost sponsor the session.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

Myths and Realities about Crime and Gun Violence in St. Louis: A Conversation with Richard Rosenfeld

Organized by students, the Gun Violence Initiative invites the university community to a roundtable gathering with Richard Rosenfeld, PhD, a criminologist from University of Missouri - St. Louis. The discussion centers on crime and gun violence in St. Louis.

May

University City High School's Gun Violence Prevention Youth Summit

Gun Violence Initiative Intern, Allie Liss, provides support for the Gun Violence Prevention Youth Summit at University City High School, which features the work of a variety of local individuals tied to gun violence prevention.

August

What Is the Capacity of the St. Louis Region to Respond to Violence?

The STLVPC reconvenes stakeholders and community partners to learn from Faye Taxman, PhD, and colleagues, about the results of the St. Louis Risk-Need-Responsivity (RNR) Simulation Tool, highlighting programs and services that aim to reduce violence, identifying the needs of individuals in this region, and pinpointing gaps in services to allow for a more efficient and effective allocation of regional resources.

Crime and Safety Talk at St. Francis Community Services

The Gun Violence Initiative supports St. Francis with two events aimed at providing information to a group of Vietnamese elders interested in learning about crime and safety in their neighborhoods. Topics include: 1) crime affecting their neighborhood; 2) how to support family members affected by drugs and/or crime; and, 3) crime and safety tips.

September

Proposal for STL-HVIP Submitted

The Institute for Public Health submits a proposal to Missouri Foundation for Health for the St. Louis Area Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program, known as [Life Outside of Violence \(LOV\)](#).

October

The Impact of Gun Violence on Families and Communities

The Gun Violence Initiative hosts Lois Schaffer, author of *The Unthinkable*, to speak on her mission to reduce gun violence.

Gun Violence and Mental Health: A Response to the Las Vegas Shooting

William Powderly, MD, the Larry J. Shapiro Director of the Institute for Public Health, speaks about connections between gun violence and mental health.

November

Gun Violence and Human Rights Project

The Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute at Washington University School of Law launches their gun violence and human rights project to examine U.S. government responses to gun violence in light of U.S. obligations under international human rights law.

2018

January

Launch of STL-HVIP or Life Outside of Violence

Missouri Foundation for Health provides a \$1.6M grant to launch the St. Louis Area Hospital-Based Violence Intervention Program, Life Outside of Violence (LOV). The initiative involves four Level 1 Trauma Centers (Barnes-Jewish Hospital, SSM Health Saint Louis University Hospital, St. Louis Children's Hospital and SSM Health Cardinal Glennon Hospital) and three research universities (Washington University, Saint Louis University, University of Missouri - St. Louis).

April

Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM) Suicide Prevention Intervention Pilot

Led by Kristen Mueller, MD, the Institute for Public Health supports Barnes-Jewish Emergency Department to pilot a suicide prevention intervention known as **Counseling on Access to Lethal Means (CALM)** for providers in the emergency department.

Reports on Fatal Interactions with Police

With support of 2015 Public Health Cubed (PH3) funding, Odis Johnson, PhD, Faculty Scholar at the Institute for Public Health, publishes a series of articles on fatal interactions with police.

August

Second Annual Larry Lewis Health Policy Symposium: A Health Policy Approach to Firearm Injury Prevention

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors the symposium that features several talks on gun violence including suicide prevention strategies, firearm injuries among children, and gun violence as a human rights issue. Megan Ranney, MD, from Brown University, a leading expert in suicide prevention, is the keynote speaker.

September

First Annual Suicide Prevention Summit

As a founding member of the **St. Louis Suicide Prevention Coalition**, the Institute for Public Health supports the coalition's first annual summit, hosted as part of their observance of National Suicide Prevention Month.

Healing Hearts Trauma Support Conference

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors this community conference that promotes physical and mental wellness and awareness to those afflicted by gun violence. The conference engages participants who are dealing with loss and community violence in grief-coping skills workshops.

November

The U.S. Gun Violence Crisis: An Interdisciplinary & Human Rights Approach

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors and helps organize this conference hosted by the Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute at the Law School. Centered on conversations that address the human rights of gun violence victims, this conference highlights U.S. obligations under international human rights instruments and the disproportionate ways in which communities of color are affected by this crisis. The keynote speakers include Mike McLively, senior staff attorney and director, Giffords Law Center's Urban Gun Violence Initiative; Lee Epstein, the Ethan A.H. Shepley Distinguished University Professor at Washington University in St. Louis; and, Philip Alpers, adjunct associate professor, University of Sydney and founding director of GunPolicy.org.

2019

January

Commentary: Our Lane Needs All of Us

Kristen Mueller, MD, co-authors a commentary entitled “#ThisIsOurLane, but Our Lane Needs All of Us: EM Physician Speaks Out on Gun Violence” in response to the National Rifle Association’s rebuttal of a paper published by the American College of Physicians called “[Reducing Firearm Injuries and Deaths in the United States.](#)”

STLVPC Committees

With infrastructure support from the Institute for Public Health (Gun Violence Initiative and Public Health Data and Training Center), the St. Louis Area Violence Prevention Commission (STLVPC) establishes six committees focused on: 1) community engagement; 2) service and delivery; 3) policy and systems change; 4) racial equity; 5) youth violence prevention; and, 6) evaluation.

May

Crime Trends: How Funding and Collaboration Can Address Violence: Lessons from the Past

A community-academic partnership formed in 2018 investigates how programming, funding and relationships might have contributed to a drop in homicides in the early 2000s. The [key takeaways](#) from this partnership are: 1) leadership is a vital component for sustainable outcomes and real impact; 2) willingness to cooperate among and within agencies, and to share responsibility, information and resources, is necessary to achieve results; and, 3) funding that aids collaboration and programs provides the infrastructure for continued collaboration and sustained funding. Partners include researchers and thought leaders from the [St. Louis Mental Health Board](#); the [Department of Criminology and Criminal Justice at the University of Missouri-St. Louis](#); and, the Institute for Public Health (IPH), the [Brown School](#), and the [Social System Design Lab](#) at Washington University in St. Louis.

July

Cultural Crafts & Conversation - Community Gun Violence Prevention

The St. Louis Public Library Schlafly Branch hosts a community event where community members make wind chimes and learn about the work local activists and educators are doing to stop gun violence in St. Louis. Gun Violence Initiative and Life Outside of Violence staff present “The Village Comes Together: The Public Health Response to Violence.”

August

Anatomy of Gun Violence Course

LJ Punch, MD, leads a course for medical students at Washington University School of Medicine. Students learn about the impact of violence from a cellular, physiological, and psychological viewpoint to a social and global perspective while simultaneously approaching it as a public health issue.

September

CommUNITY Arts Festival STL 2019

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors this free, family- friendly gathering of the Saint Louis community, unified against the violence in our streets.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

Difficult Conversations: Older Patients, Lethal Means and Suicide

This **Issues in Aging** seminar focuses on the relationship between lethal means and suicide among older populations. The session features lectures from Poli Rijos, MSW, of the Gun Violence Initiative and Kate Ellison, MA, of Safer Homes Collaborative. The Institute for Public Health in partnership with the Friedman Center for Aging, and the Division of Geriatrics and Nutritional Science at the School of Medicine sponsor the event.

Suicide Prevention Summit: Harnessing the Power within Our Community

The Institute for Public Health co-sponsors the second Suicide Prevention Summit of the St. Louis Suicide Prevention Coalition. Presentations feature updated and contextualized local data and connect attendees with opportunities to bring change to suicide statistics.

Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) Joint Stakeholder Support Submitted

Washington University's Harris Institute and the Institute for Public Health submit to the United Nations Human Rights Council a joint stakeholder report on gun violence and human rights. The submission is part of the Third Universal Periodic Review of the U.S. government's human rights record.

LJ Punch's Deposition at the U.S. House of Representatives

LJ Punch, MD, gives a deposition at the U.S. House of Representatives' Ways and Means Oversight Subcommittee Hearing entitled, "The Public Health Consequences and Costs of Gun Violence."

October

Tree of Life: Commemorate and Educate

Gun Violence Initiative Intern, Sawyer Franklin, helps plan and participates in a vigil and panel discussion on gun violence to commemorate the eleven people who died last year in the shooting at Tree of Life Synagogue in Pittsburgh.

November

Inter-American Commission on Human Rights (IACHR) Gun Violence Testimony

As part of a special hearing focused on the impact of gun violence on survivors, families and the communities of victims, the Harris Institute presents testimony, written with support of the Gun Violence Initiative, to the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights.

2020

January

Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Commemoration Week

The weeklong set of events highlight violence prevention initiatives at the School of Medicine in partnership with the regional community. Events feature a panel on **regional approaches to reducing gun violence**, a violence prevention **resource fair**, and a Stop the Bleed class from **Stop the Bleed STL**. The Office of Diversity, Equity and Inclusion hosts the events with support from Life Outside of Violence (LOV), the Gun Violence Initiative, the Division of Biology and Biomedical Sciences, and School of Medicine students and colleagues.

April

Gun Violence Initiative Celebrates Fifth Anniversary

The Gun Violence Initiative celebrates its fifth anniversary on April 21 with blog posts and news items featuring highlights from the past five years.

The Gun Violence Initiative at the Institute for Public Health

OHCHR Stakeholder Submission Summary Published

The U.N. Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights releases its Summary of Stakeholders' Submissions on the United States of America. The [joint stakeholder report](#) by the Institute for Public Health and the Whitney R. Harris World Law Institute at Washington University School of Law is one of only eleven submissions cited in relation to issues of gun violence, and Washington University submissions are the most cited reports related to gun violence in the Summary.

June

Lex Lata, Lex Ferenda (the law as it is, the law as it should be) Blog Series

In recognition of National Gun Violence Awareness Day, the Harris Institute's Blog Series in June is dedicated to the [Gun Violence and Human Rights Initiative](#) and the Institute for Public Health's [Gun Violence Initiative](#). A new [collaborative blog series](#) highlights campus, community and regional work around gun violence.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day

The Institute for Public Health unveils both a video and five-year report showcasing its work.