Colorado Gun Shop Project
Prevention Through Partnership
Sarah Brummett & Martha Graf
Suicide in Colorado

In 2014, there were:
52 HIV deaths
172 Homicides
486 Motor vehicle deaths
553 Breast cancer deaths
668 Influenza & Pneumonia deaths
826 Diabetes deaths
1,058 deaths by Suicide

Suicide is the 7th Leading cause of death in CO for all ages
Suicide is the 2nd cause of death for those ages 10-24

Source: Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
## CO Suicide deaths and age adjusted rates, 2009-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>n</th>
<th>Age-adjusted Rate*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2009</td>
<td>940</td>
<td>18.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>867</td>
<td>16.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>910</td>
<td>17.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>1,053</td>
<td>19.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>1,004</td>
<td>18.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>1,058</td>
<td>19.4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*per 100,000 population

Source: Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Suicide deaths by age and gender, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Age Group (years)</th>
<th>Males</th>
<th>Females</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>0-14</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15-24</td>
<td>128</td>
<td>484</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25-34</td>
<td>185</td>
<td>614</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>35-44</td>
<td>177</td>
<td>656</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45-54</td>
<td>202</td>
<td>792</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>55-64</td>
<td>291</td>
<td>629</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>65-74</td>
<td>88</td>
<td>279</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75-84</td>
<td>31</td>
<td>178</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>80</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Vital Statistics Program, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Suicide Methods by Age Group, Colorado Residents (2009-2013)

Source: Violent Death Reporting System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Methods of suicide deaths for males and females, Colorado residents (2009-2013)

Males, n=3,553:
- Poisoning: 56.0%
- Hanging: 14.0%
- Firearms: 23.9%
- Other: 6.2%

Females, n=1,101:
- Poisoning: 6.4%
- Hanging: 26.3%
- Firearms: 23.9%
- Other: 43.3%

Source: Violent Death Reporting System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
Firearm Deaths in Colorado, 2005-2013

For every 1 unintentional firearm death, there were 14 firearm homicides and 59 firearm suicides.

Source: Violent Death Reporting System, Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment
## Firearm Suicide Rates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2010</td>
<td>420</td>
<td>8.09</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>433</td>
<td>8.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>517</td>
<td>9.57</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>473</td>
<td>8.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>519</td>
<td>9.48</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Firearm Suicide Rate by Urban/Rural Designation 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>County Type</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Age-Adjusted Rate</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>2,362</td>
<td>8.83</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Frontier</td>
<td>92</td>
<td>13.49</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>348</td>
<td>11.54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban</td>
<td>1,922</td>
<td>8.34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Circumstances Preceding Death</td>
<td>Firearm Suicides</td>
<td>Non-Firearm Suicides</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------</td>
<td>----------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current mental health problem</td>
<td>829</td>
<td>39.67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis of depression</td>
<td>637</td>
<td>30.48</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Current mental health treatment</td>
<td>530</td>
<td>25.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of previous suicide attempts</td>
<td>393</td>
<td>18.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>History of suicidal thoughts or plans</td>
<td>342</td>
<td>16.36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem with other substance</td>
<td>245</td>
<td>11.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contributing criminal legal problem</td>
<td>249</td>
<td>11.91</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diagnosis of Bipolar Disorder</td>
<td>109</td>
<td>5.22</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Toxicology Data: 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Toxicology results</th>
<th>All Suicides</th>
<th>Firearm Suicides</th>
<th>Non-Firearm Suicides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>N</td>
<td>% with known toxicology</td>
<td>N</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Toxicology Available</td>
<td>4,201</td>
<td>87.34</td>
<td>2,011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alcohol Present</td>
<td>1,376</td>
<td>32.75</td>
<td>688</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opioid Present</td>
<td>652</td>
<td>15.52</td>
<td>203</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antidepressant Present</td>
<td>589</td>
<td>14.02</td>
<td>161</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marijuana Present</td>
<td>440</td>
<td>10.47</td>
<td>184</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benzodiazepine Present</td>
<td>383</td>
<td>9.12</td>
<td>126</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Amphetamine Present</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cocaine Present</td>
<td>107</td>
<td>2.55</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Antipsychotic Present</td>
<td>80</td>
<td>1.9</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Veteran Suicides and Firearm Suicides: Colorado Residents, 2010-2014

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Status</th>
<th>All Suicides</th>
<th>Firearm Suicides</th>
<th>Non-Firearm Suicides</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Non-Veteran</td>
<td>3,920</td>
<td>1,747</td>
<td>2,173</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Veteran</td>
<td>881</td>
<td>610</td>
<td>271</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Why?
Why Means Matter-

• Many suicide attempts occur with little planning during a short-term crisis.

• Intent isn’t all that determines whether someone lives or dies; means also matter.

• 90% of those who survive an attempt do NOT go on to die by suicide later.

• Access to firearms is a risk factor for suicide.

• Firearms used in youth suicide usually belong to a parent.

• Reducing access to lethal means saves lives.
Means of Suicide by Data Source and Sex, Colorado Residents, 2011

ED visits of males: 50%
ED visits of females: 61%
Hospitalizations of males: 62%
Hospitalizations of females: 75%
Deaths of males: 56%
Deaths of females: 46%

- Firearms
- Hanging/Suffocation
- Drug overdose/poisoning
- Cut/pierce
- Other
How?
Partner with gun shop retailers, range owners, and firearm safety course instructors to promote suicide prevention awareness, recognize suicidal behavior, and limit the sale/rental of firearms to any customer that may be suicidal.
“HOLD ON TO THEIR GUNS — Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun may save a life. — For other ways to help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK [8255].”

- SUICIDES IN NH far outnumber homicides
- FIREARMS ARE THE LEADING METHOD
- ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN ARE MORE DEADLY than attempts with other methods
What the Gun Shop Project is Not

• Not engaging in polarizing political debate

• Not asking retailers and ranges to become mental health experts

• Not restriction on firearm ownership

✓ This is partnering along shared values: No one matter your political stance, we can all agree that no one wants individuals to use a firearm to complete suicide.
Putting time and distance in between a suicidal person and a gun helps keep them safe.
*To become fully informed about making a temporary gun transfer, review Colorado gun laws, including C.R.S. §18-12-112, or consult an attorney.

Over the past several years, unintentional firearm deaths in Colorado have averaged less than 10 per year, thanks largely to increased awareness of gun safety. Unfortunately, Colorado still has a tragically high number of suicide deaths by firearms - approximately 480 per year.

The first step to reduce these numbers is to follow the 11 commandments of gun safety. The latest addition addresses suicide prevention. Firearms are the leading method of suicide in Colorado, contributing to about half of all suicides.

If a family member is going through a difficult period (like depression, a relationship break-up, or drug problem), make sure they can’t get to your guns. To learn ways to get help for them, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline: 1-800-273-TALK (8255).
CONCERNED ABOUT A FAMILY MEMBER OR FRIEND?
Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun helps keep them safe. Explore options to temporarily store guns out of the home.
You may save a life!

Are they suicidal?
- Depressed, angry, impulsive?
- Going through a relationship break-up, legal trouble, or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more often?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Acting reckless?
- Feeling trapped?

SUICIDES IN COLORADO FAR OUTNUMBER HOMICIDES
there are about 4 firearm suicides for every firearm homicide

FIREARMS ARE THE LEADING METHOD OF SUICIDE
and are used in about half of all suicide deaths

ATTEMPTS WITH A GUN ARE GENERALLY MORE DEADLY
than attempts with other methods

For ways to help, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline:
1-800-273-TALK [8255]
Process

• Identify Licensed Firearm Retailers/Ranges in the County

• Identify firearm advocate that is trusted member of the community

• Visit ranges/shops (including pawn shops) to introduce to the program

• If interested, ask to display materials in the store

• Follow up within 1 month with survey
Local Perspective

- On the ground process
- Challenges
- Lessons learned
- Community feedback/response
- Relationships
Process evaluation results

25 shops responded to survey (out of original 45)
- 36% Pawn Shops
- 36% Sporting Goods
- 4% Shooting Ranges
- 16% Gun Shop

Materials Present?
- 36% Tip Sheets
- 56% Poster
- 48% Safety Brochures
- 40% Lifeline cards

Employee thoughts about materials.
60% positive
“Gun safety is very important, it would catch someone’s eye.”

“First thought it was anti gun but after talking to someone realized it was pro life”

Customer Impressions:
One thanked them for posting.

One thought it was very important.

“People are surprised how much it happens in the county”
Results - Barriers Identified

Reasons why a dealer might not use materials:

- 8% selected “no way to help someone who’s suicidal”
- 40% selected “Materials could strike customers as anti-gun”
- “They might lose customers”

What prevented Managers from posting materials

- Lack of counter space - 8%
  - “Don’t have enough space to display materials.”
- Didn’t get to it - 20%
  - “Hadn’t looked at them.”
- Didn’t want to talk about it - 8%
- Didn’t know what to do with materials. - 4%
“If someone is suicidal, temporarily storing their guns somewhere else for while, could save their life”

In answer to above question:

68% Agree or Strongly Agree, only 4% Disagree

(16% Neither Agree nor Disagree)

Gun shop owners agree they would like to be able to help where suicide is an issue, but legal procedures make it difficult to do it through the shop.

Only 28% indicated they would be willing to store weapon for someone who was suicidal

“Doesn’t want to be liable.”

“Prefer they go to a family member.”

“To much of a process to hold gun and then give it back.”
Incorporated Feedback

- Need smaller materials and display case
- “too many posters and papers, too small of counter space.”
- Elk poster most popular
- Unclear what the initial “ask” was

Gun shop owners agree they would like to be able to help where suicide is an issue, but legal procedures make it difficult to do it through the shop.

Uncertainty on what the law actually says
Where?
2015 – Year one of the Pilot

- Center for Mental Health (Montrose/Delta)
- Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide (Moffat/Routt)
- Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation (Mesa)
2016-
- Center for Mental Health (Montrose/Delta/San Miguel/Gunnison)
- Reaching Everyone Preventing Suicide (Moffat/Routt)
- Western Colorado Suicide Prevention Foundation (Mesa)
- Centennial Mental Health (Morgan/Logan)
- 3 Metro area large volume retailers/ranges
2017: Plans to Expand!

- Continue in existing counties
- CDPHE has provided an additional $50k to expand in select urban counties through Preventative Health and Human Services Block Grant funding
On the Horizon:

- Training Courses
- Hunting/Safety Instructors
- Gun Shows
- Law Enforcement
- Improved Data
- Offering gatekeeper training to shops or customers if interested
Questions?
Contact Information

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