



Gun Violence

Ohio's 112 Local Health Districts (LHDs) are charged with the primary responsibility of preventing illness and injury, promoting a sustainable public health infrastructure, and protecting the health and well-being of their respective communities. To support these foundational public health services, the Association of Ohio Health Commissioners (AOHC) provides leadership and advocacy efforts on behalf of, and in conjunction with LHDs.

AOHC recommends preventing injury and death, addressing multi-faceted health issues such as infant mortality, food insecurity, preventable chronic diseases, mental health and substance misuse/abuse, through a public health lens. Regarding injury prevention, AOHC recognizes that firearm-related violence is a national public health issue. As such, the core public health functions of assessment, policy development and assurance should be used to reduce the burden and impact of firearm-related injury and death.

Preventing firearm-related violence must begin with an understanding of the epidemiology data to guide evidence-based interventions. The data and scientific evidence tell us the common assumption that individuals with mental illness are more likely to commit firearm-related violence is false. Acts of firearm-related violence are more deeply rooted in the social determinants of health.

The current national and state climates on reducing firearm-related violence mandate building the public health infrastructure to address violence and its root causes. AOHC has determined the following positions as critical to reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths to improve the health and safety of all Ohio communities, and is encouraging Ohio's 112 LHDs to embrace their role in responding to this crisis.

- Adopt a multi-sector public health system approach to prevent firearm-related violence.
- Public health advocacy and practices will establish conformity with the U.S. Constitution Bill of Rights Second Amendment.
- Advocate for background checks to be conducted on all firearm purchases.
- Invest in federal and state research and data collection from multiple sectors (e.g., public health, law enforcement, medical examiners, and social services) to better understand the evidence related to the causes of firearm-related injury and death and the effectiveness of prevention strategies.
- Support enhanced efforts to reduce intimate partner violence through the judicial system.
- Support the enactment of Extreme Protection Order laws through the judicial system.
- Implement uniform, state-wide public awareness and education to promote safe firearm ownership and storage.
- Implement screening and education "family fire" prevention efforts by health care and social service providers and public health workers.
- Support the increase of behavioral health care capacity and accessibility.
- Support community and school-based prevention programs to achieve collective impact.

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