

# Building a local program to support Gun Violence Prevention

## Bedford Safe Campaign

June 2022

After yet another mass shooting, the Bedford Board of Health set gun violence prevention as one of their actionable goals starting in FY23.

# A Public Health Epidemic

September 2023 - President Biden established the first-ever White House Office of Gun Violence Prevention to reduce gun violence with a goal to implement and expand upon key executive and legislative action which has been taken to save lives.

June 2024 - U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy issued a landmark Surgeon General's Advisory on Firearm Violence, declaring firearm violence in America to be a public health crisis. The advisory was the first publication from the Office of the Surgeon General dedicated to this issue.

# Late Summer 2022



The “Bedford Safe Campaign” was established to protect Bedford’s children, youth and families from gun violence injury and death in homes.

Primary Public Health message:

If you have firearms in your home,  
make sure they're stored safely

## Fall 2022

It was determined that support for the Campaign was needed to make it successful, so we worked to gain the endorsement of these community stakeholders:

- Bedford Select Board
- Representative Ken Gordon
- Senator Mike Barrett
- Bedford Violence Prevention Coalition
- Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. (DVSN)
- Bedford Rotary Club
- Bedford Embraces Diversity
- Bedford Chamber of Commerce
- First Parish in Bedford
- Unitarian Universalist
- Bedford Interfaith Clergy Network
- Town of Bedford
- First Church of Christ, Congregational
- Council on Aging Board
- Youth and Family Services Committee
- St. Paul's Episcopal Church
- League of Women Voters of Bedford
- Bedford Free Public Library Board of Trustees
- Lexington, Bedford, and Carlisle Veterans' Services District
- Bedford School Committee
- Bedford Planning Board
- Middlesex Sheriff's Office
- Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan

November 2022

Planned a Community Forum with speakers from MGH's  
Center for Gun Violence Prevention

Developed a Flyer about the Campaign to mail to all  
Residents.



# Join the ***BEDFORD SAFE CAMPAIGN***

*Protecting our children, youth and families  
from gun violence in homes*

*An unsecured firearm in the home is a public health danger that can lead to more frequent homicides, lethal domestic violence, accidental shootings and suicides in the home.*

Visit the Bedford Safe Campaign Website using the QR code or navigate to [www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe](http://www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe) for more information about:

- **A Community Forum on March 1, 2023 on *Gun Violence in America: community-driven approaches to this local and national crisis* - featuring Dr. Peter Masiakos, Co-Director of the Massachusetts General Hospital Center for Gun Violence Prevention**
- **Awareness and educational programming including tips on safe and secure gun storage and keeping kids safe in their and other homes – available now and ongoing**
- **A FREE Gun Safety Kit (lock and safety instructions) – available now and ongoing**
- **Bedford's Unwanted Gun Buy Back Program – available now and ongoing**
- **Bedford's Enhanced Unwanted Gun Buy Back Program – to be launched in June 2023**



**This initiative is sponsored by the Bedford Police Department, Health Department and Board of Health**

**The following Bedford faith organizations, town boards and committees and community partners endorse this campaign:** *Bedford Select Board, Representative Ken Gordon, Senator Mike Barrett, Bedford Violence Prevention Coalition, Domestic Violence Services Network, Inc. (DVSNI), Bedford Rotary Club, Bedford Embraces Diversity, Bedford Chamber of Commerce, First Parish in Bedford, Unitarian Universalist, Bedford Interfaith Clergy Network, Town of Bedford, First Church of Christ, Congregational, Council on Aging Board, Youth and Family Services Committee, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, League of Women Voters of Bedford, Bedford Free Public Library Board of Trustees, Lexington, Bedford, and Carlisle Veterans' Services District, Bedford School Committee, Bedford Planning Board, Middlesex Sheriff's Office and Middlesex District Attorney Marian Ryan.*



December 2022

Funding!

Applied for and received a \$2,000 grant from CHNA15 to fund the printing and mailing of the Campaign flyer.

December 2022

Development of the Bedford Safe Campaign website

([www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe](http://www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe))

on the Health Department website, which included:

- News on gun violence prevention
- Gun violence risk factors, research and statistics
- Recording of the Community Forum (added once held)
- State, regional and local (Bedford) mental health resources
- Slideshow of photos and infographics on safe gun storage and other gun storage resources
- How to get rid of an unwanted firearm
- MA laws for gun ownership
- Where to pick-up free gun safety kits
- Conversation starters to inquire about safe storage at someone's home

# Unsecured weapons a problem...? Not In My Backyard...but wait!

April 2023 - a Bedford resident from a densely populated neighborhood, was cleaning his gun and he accidentally discharged the loaded weapon from his home into an adjacent home. No one was harmed.

May 2024 - a Bedford employee's adult child, while at a party in a nearby community, was shot in the face by a "friend" using someone else's shot gun. She's not walking and is non-verbal with a future of rehab ahead of her.

June 2024 - Bedford experienced a residential double homicide. A 24 year-old woman killed both of her parents with her boyfriend's family's firearm.

In 2024, 61 gun permits were issued (33 were new licenses) in Bedford. We have a total of 798 active Licenses to Carry. That's almost 7% of our population.

# Other Impactful Local PH Programs supporting Gun Violence Prevention

September 2023 - Bedford Safe Homes Pledge

September 2024 – Gun locks and conversation starter handouts at Bedford’s Town Day

October 2024 – two “Gift Cards for Guns events,” hosted in Bedford and Weston, were supported by 6 of the 7 GMPHC towns (Police and Health Departments) and the Middlesex Sheriff’s Office. Fifty-six (56) unwanted firearms were collected between these events. Future regional collection events are planned for 2025.

# Thank You!!!

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Bedford Safe Campaign website:

[www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe](http://www.bedfordma.gov/BedfordSafe)

# Be Empowered to Ask!

Parents and guardians ask all sorts of questions before they allow their children to visit other homes; they ask about pets in the house, discuss allergies and Internet access, and ask questions about supervision. We encourage you to also ask: **“Is there an unlocked gun in your house?”**

**Following are some gun safety conversation starters.**

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Parents/Guardians dropping their kids off for a playdate

“Knowing how curious kids can be, I hope you don’t mind me asking if you have a firearm in your home and if it is safely stored...”

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Babysitter to Parent/Guardian

“Hi Mrs. Hunter, this is Kelsey. I’m looking forward to babysitting Mark and Dylan tonight! I wanted to ask a few safety questions in preparation. Do the kids have any allergies? Who is the best person to contact in case of emergency? Also, are there any unlocked guns in your home which I should be aware of?”



# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Care of an older family member

“With Mom’s recent onset of memory loss, do we need to rethink how we are storing our guns?”

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Parent/Guardian to Parent/Guardian

“Hi Sarah! Sam is so excited to come over to your house for a playdate with Oliver. I wanted to let you know that Sam has a peanut allergy so I’ve packed a snack for him. Also, he isn’t yet a confident swimmer, do you have a pool? And, given the recent campaigns around family fire, we always ask if there are any unlocked guns in the home.”

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Roommate to Roommate

“Hey guys! It’s Steph, your soon to be new roomie. Before we move in, there are a few things I’d like to discuss safety-wise. What are your rules about allowing visitors to stay over? How about having my young niece and nephew over? Also, does anyone own a gun and plan on storing it at our place? If so, can we discuss how the gun will be safely stored?”

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Adult Daughter to Father

“Hi Dad, we’re setting up your room and looking forward to having you move in with us. Before you get here we’ll need to discuss some things, specifically around safety. I know you’ve owned guns in the past, do you currently? If so, we’ll need to discuss how we can safely store them so the kids cannot gain access.”

# Gun Safety Conversation Starters: Adult Child to Parents

“Mom, Dad, this is awkward for me and I mean no disrespect. I am concerned Susie will find one of the guns in your home when we visit. Do you keep them locked up with the ammunition stored separately?”

# Ferocious Tiger

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VEdwq6qgukM>