



Washtenaw County Board of Health

A RESOLUTION CONFIRMING GUN VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE IN SUPPORT OF THE COMMUNITY VIOLENCE INTERVENTION TEAM RECOMMENDATIONS

Washtenaw County Board of Health
March 24, 2023

WHEREAS, gun violence became the leading cause of death for children for the first time in the U.S. and Michigan in 2020; and

WHEREAS, the largest increase in firearm homicides from 2019 to 2020 in the U.S. was among Black people (39%) and the largest increase in firearm suicides was among American Indian and Alaska Native people (42%) according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC); and

WHEREAS, firearm deaths in Michigan have increased from 12.1 deaths per 100,000 people in 2019 to 14.6 deaths per 100,000 in 2020 according to the CDC; and

WHEREAS, the substantial increase in the firearm homicide rate, along with notable increases in firearm suicide rates for some groups, has widened racial, ethnic, and other disparities within a context of long-standing systemic inequities and structural racism that contribute to unfair and avoidable health disparities; and

WHEREAS, there was a 200% increase in firearm homicides in Washtenaw County from the years 2012-2016 (n=16) to 2017-2021 (n=48); and

WHEREAS, Black male homicides increased 191% in Washtenaw County from the years 2012-2016 (n=11) to 2017-2021 (n=32); and

WHEREAS, suicides by firearm have increased 44% from the years 2012-2016 (n=64) to 2017-2021 (n=92); and

WHEREAS, the Washtenaw Board of Health passed a Resolution Addressing Gun Violence as a Public Health Issue on May 25, 2018 supporting primary prevention approaches involving the use of core public health activities to address gun violence; and

WHEREAS, in May 2022, the Washtenaw County Board of Commissioners passed resolution 22-087 adopting the policy recommendations to save lives by interrupting violence developed by the Community Violence Intervention Team, including:

1. Setting a clear goal of saving lives by stopping violence
2. Identifying key people and place driving violence
3. Creating a plan for engaging key people and places
4. Engaging key people with empathy and accountability
5. Addressing key locations by place-based investment and policing
6. Placing responsibility for violence reduction efforts at the top of organizations
7. Emphasizing health with trauma informed approaches
8. Investing in anti-violence workforce development
9. Setting aside funding for new stakeholders and strategies
10. Creating the Washtenaw County Violence Commission
11. Building a Community Center in Eastern Washtenaw County
12. Building a Community Mural & Safe Grieving Community Space



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WHEREAS, staff from the Washtenaw County Health Department are part of the Community Violence Intervention Team and contributed to developing their recommendations.

NOW THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Washtenaw County Board of Health accepts this list of recommendations from the Community Violence Intervention Team and affirms its support of community-based peer violence intervention programs; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health supports the continued participation of dedicated staff from the Washtenaw County Health Department in the Community Violence Intervention Team and the Washtenaw County Violence Commission when created; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT the Board of Health supports the development of community-wide strategies using multi-sectoral partnerships to identify, develop and evaluate strategies to increase firearm safety and prevent firearm injury and death using a public health approach that includes activities such as conducting surveillance to track gun-related deaths and injuries; identifying risk factors associated with gun violence and resilience or protective factors that guard against gun violence; reducing access to and/or securing firearms, and interventions to reduce risk factors and build resilience.