

Tough Conversations:

Talking to Patients About Firearms and Risk

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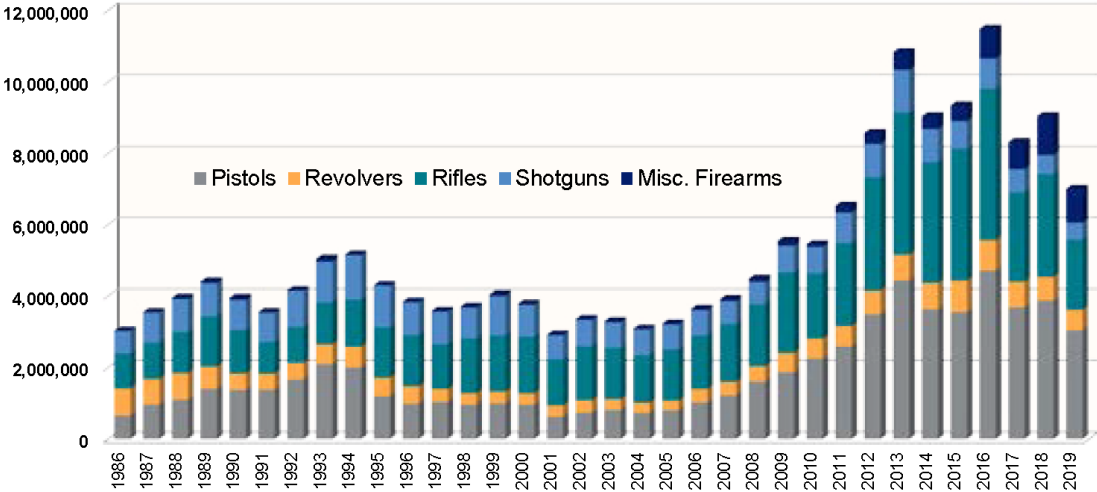
Disclaimer / Conflicts

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Neither I nor my family members have a financial interest in any commercial product, service, or organization providing financial support for this research.

Firearms in the United States

Exhibit 1a: Firearms Manufactured (1986-2019)



>10M new guns introduced in 2019

ATF, 2021

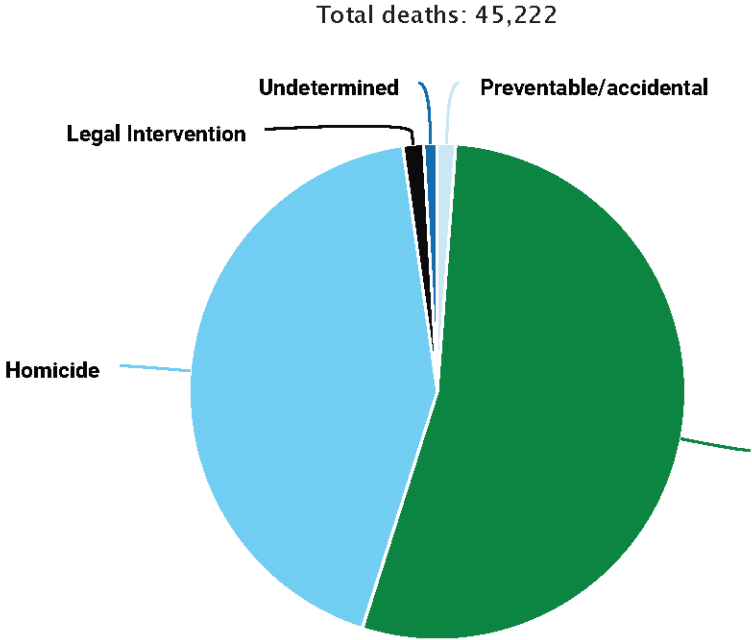
Three-in-ten U.S. adults say they own a gun

% who say they ...

	Personally own a gun	Don't own a gun but someone else in their household does	NET Gun in household
All adults	30	11	40
Men	39	4	43
Women	22	16	38
White	36	11	47
Black	24	13	37
Hispanic	18	8	26
Asian*	10	10	20
Ages 18-29	18	17	35
30-49	32	9	41
50-64	33	9	42
65+	32	10	42

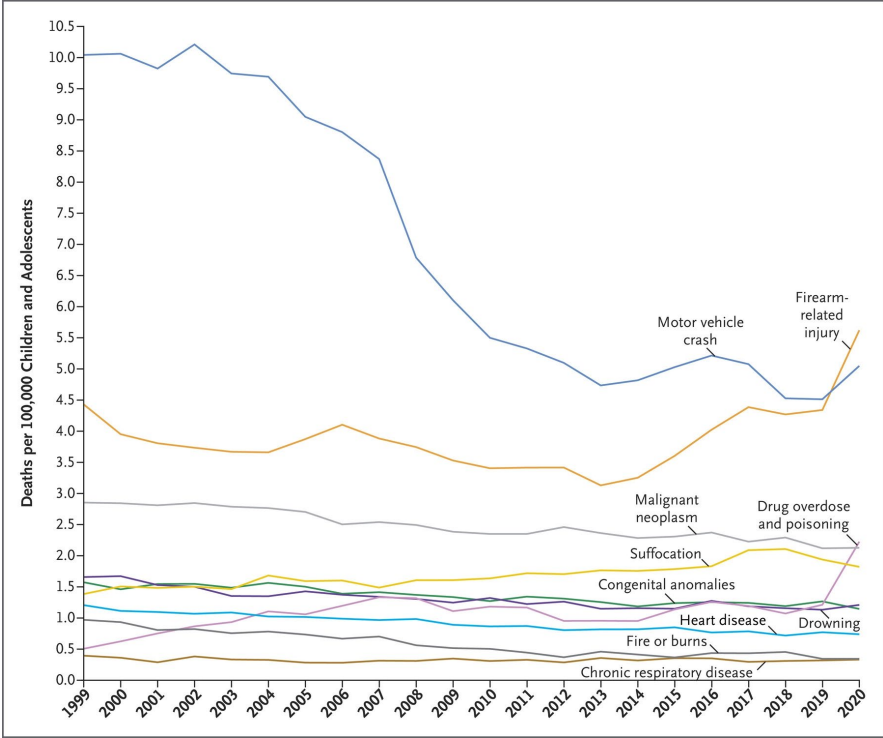
Pew Research Center, 2021

Firearm Deaths in the United States



45,222 firearm deaths in 2020

National Safety Council, 2022



#1 Cause of death in children and adolescents

NEJM, 2022



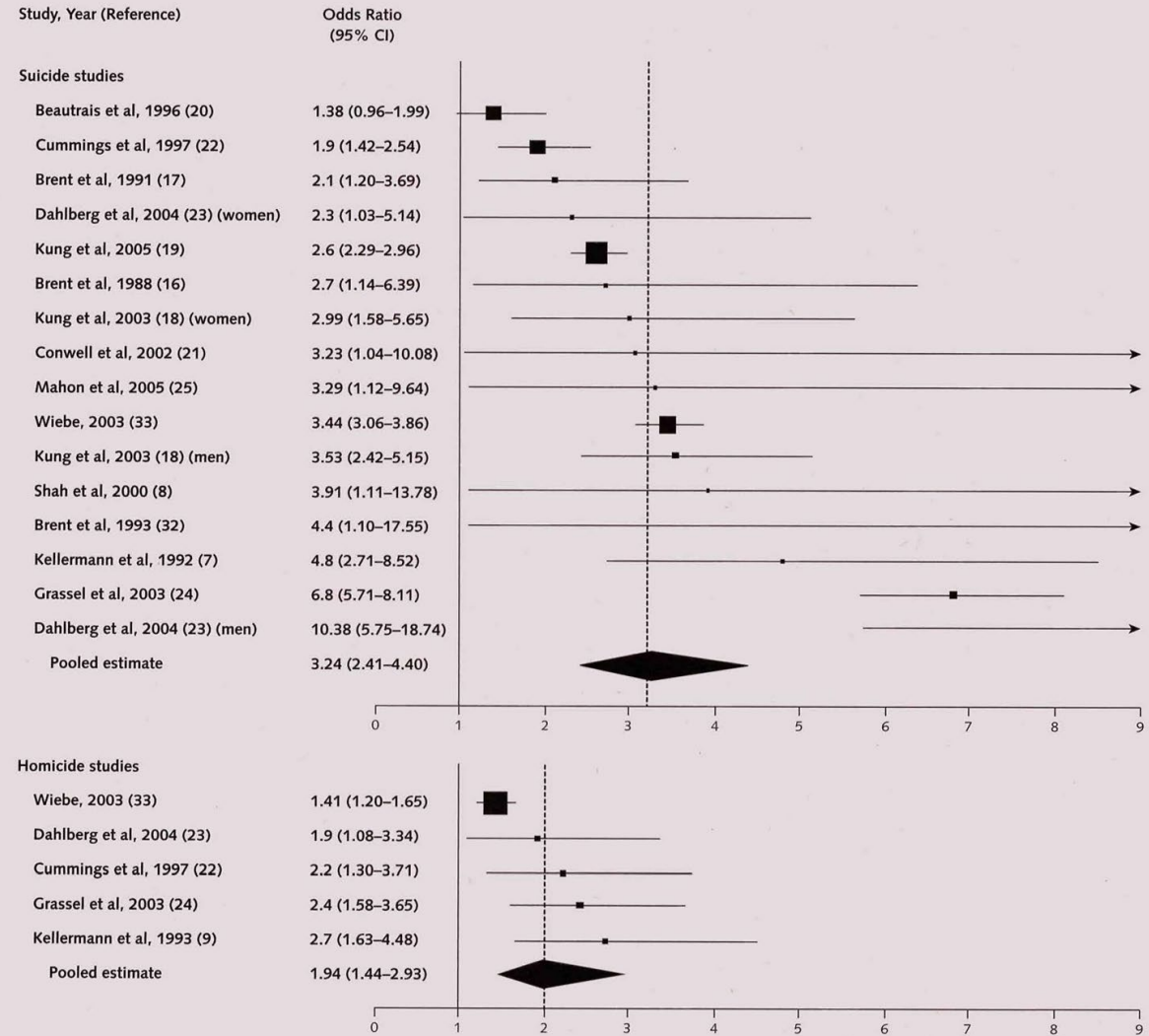
Firearms & Risk

▶ SUICIDE OR = **3.24**

▶ HOMICIDE OR = **1.94**

Anglemyer, Ann Int Med 160(2), Jan 2014

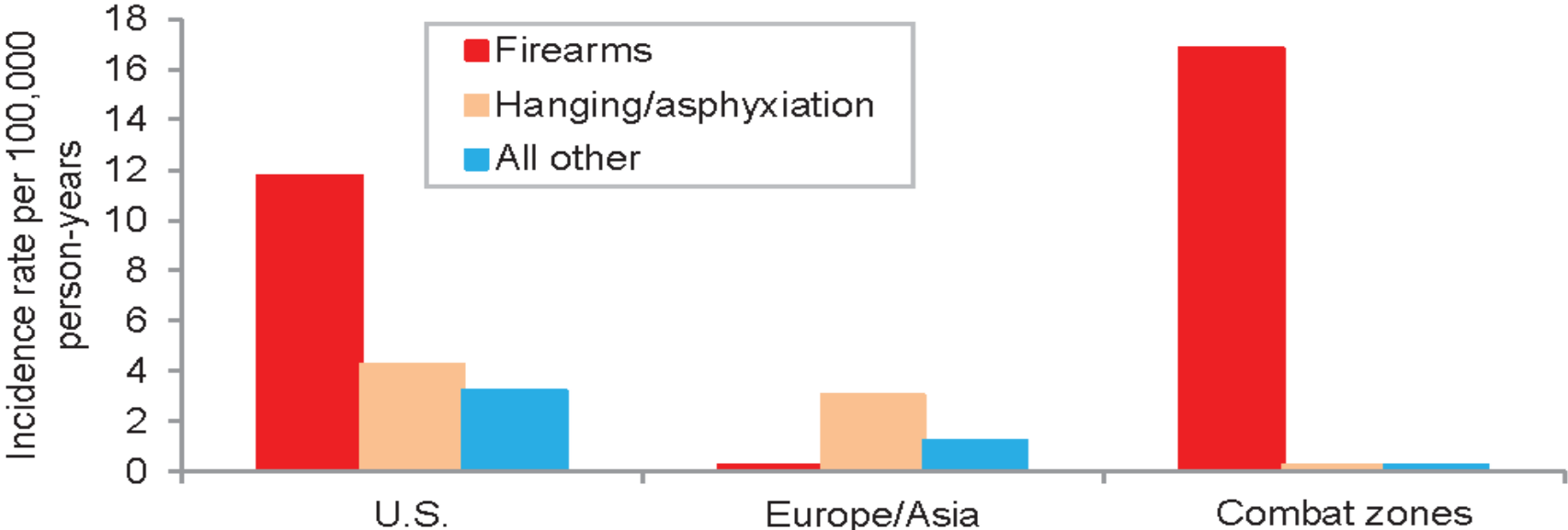
Figure 2. Odds of suicide and homicide in the context of firearm access.



Horizontal lines indicate 95% CIs, squares reflect point estimates, and the size of the squares is proportional to the study's weight. The diamonds reflect the pooled estimate across all studies, and the solid vertical lines reflect the null hypothesis.

Firearms and Risk

FIGURE 1. Incidence rate of suicide according to principal methods and geographic location of event, active component, U.S. Armed Forces, 2010–2012



Corr, MSMR 21(10) Oct 2014

Principles of Safe Storage

1. FIREARM IS UNLOADED
2. DISASSEMBLED OR PROPERLY APPLIED LOCKING DEVICE
3. LOCKED IN A GUN SAFE OR SECURE STORAGE CONTAINER
4. AMMUNITION LOCKED & STORED SEPARATELY
5. HAVE AN ALTERNATE STORAGE PLAN FOR TIMES OF INCREASED RISK

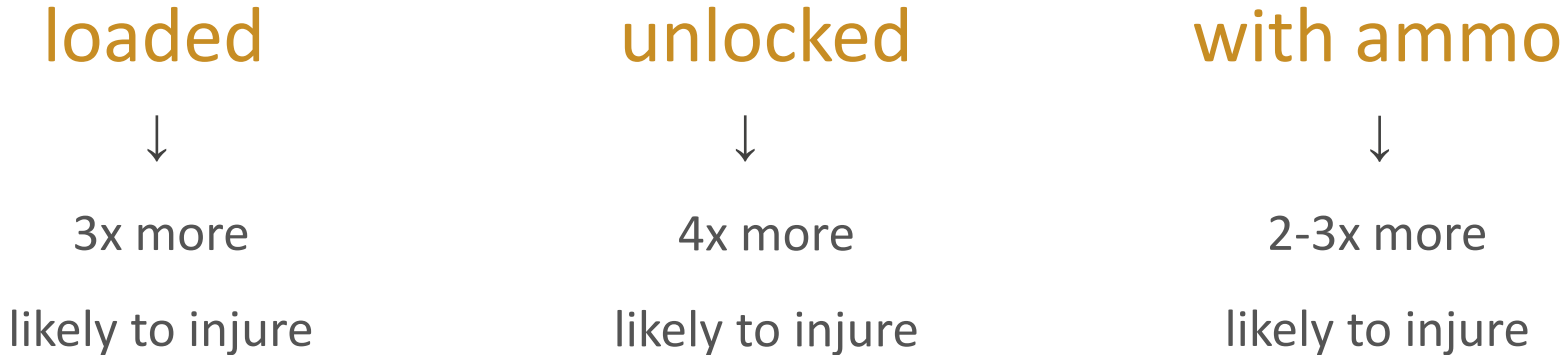
▶ SAFE HOME CHECKLIST

- Firearms kept for security reasons are fully controlled at all times.
- Firearms are securely stored in a location inaccessible to children and other unauthorized persons.
- Sporting firearms are unloaded before they are brought into the home and never loaded while in the home.
- Sporting firearms are immediately cleaned and placed in secure storage when they are returned from hunting or target shooting.
- When firearms are removed from storage, they are always carefully checked to confirm that they are unloaded.
- Ammunition is stored under lock and key, separately from firearms.
- The owner's manual that came with the firearm must be read and understood.

National Shooting Sports Foundation, 2017

Firearms and Risk

“Gun Storage Practices and Risk of Youth Suicide Unintentional Firearm Injuries”

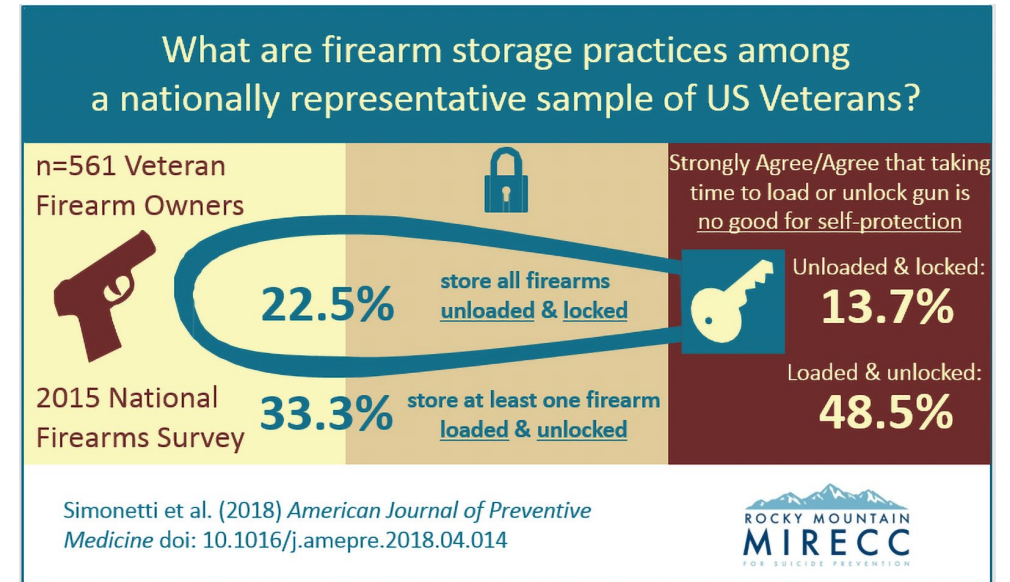


Each individual safety practice reduced risk of injury

Grossman, JAMA 293(6) Feb 2005

Barriers to the Conversation

- ▶ “I don't have the time.”
- ▶ “There's nothing I can do to help.”
- ▶ “My patients will get angry.”
- ▶ “I don't know enough about firearms.”
- ▶ “Why do people need to keep guns.”
- ▶ “I don't know how to have the conversation.”
- ▶ “There are laws that prevent me from talking about guns.”



<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/vism19/cpg/recs/18/>

Having the Conversation

- ▶ Prepare yourself
- ▶ Adopt a respectful stance
- ▶ Ask about reasons for owning firearms
- ▶ Ask about storage practices
- ▶ Collaboratively assess risk
- ▶ Identify potential areas for change
- ▶ Agree on concrete steps
- ▶ Plan a follow up

78%

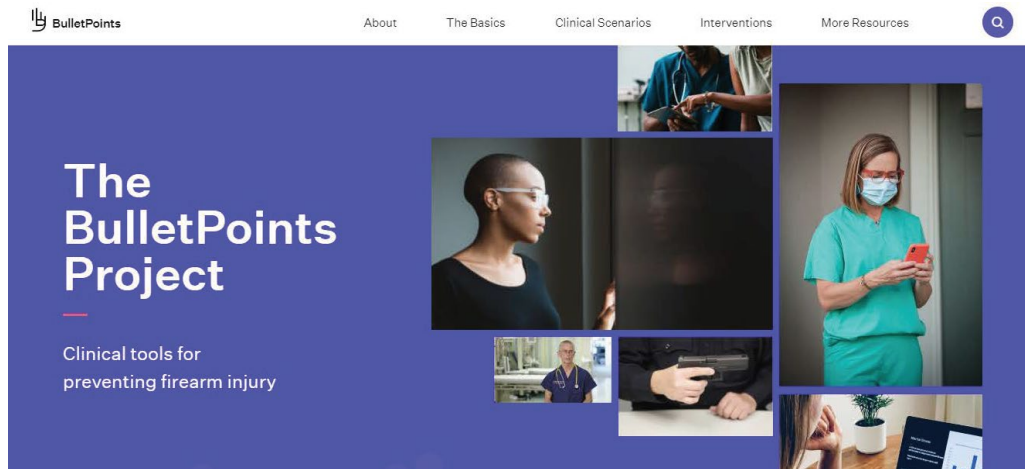
*OF GUN OWNERS
CONSIDERED BEING
COUNSELED
ACCEPTABLE*

64%

*OF PATIENTS
COUNSELED ON
FIREARM SAFETY
CHANGED THEIR
PRACTICES*

Albright, J Am Bd Fam Prac 16(1), 2003

Resources to Prepare for the Conversation



<https://www.bulletpointsproject.org/>

Annals of Internal Medicine

MEDICINE AND PUBLIC ISSUES

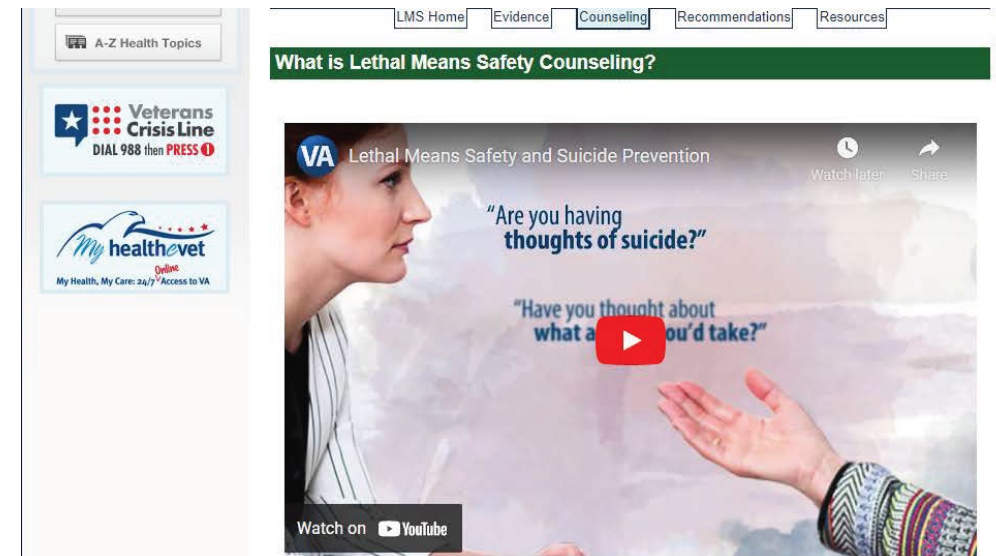
Yes, You Can: Physicians, Patients, and Firearms

Garen J. Wintemute, MD, MPH; Marian E. Betz, MD, MPH; and Megan L. Ranney, MD, MPH

Physicians have unique opportunities to help prevent firearm violence. Concern has developed that federal and state laws or regulations prohibit physicians from asking or counseling patients about firearms and disclosing patient information about firearms to others, even when threats to health and safety may be involved. This is not the case. In this article, the authors explain the statutes in question, emphasizing that physicians may ask about firearms (with rare exceptions), may counsel about firearms as they do about other health matters, and may disclose information to third parties when necessary. The authors then review circumstances under which questions about firearms might be most appropriate if they are not asked routinely. Such circumstances include instances when the patient provides information or exhibits behavior suggesting an acutely increased risk for violence, whether to himself or others, or when the patient possesses other individual-level risk factors for violence, such as

alcohol abuse. The article summarizes the literature on current physician practices in asking and counseling about firearms, which are done far less commonly than recommended. Barriers to engaging in those practices, the effectiveness of clinical efforts to prevent firearm-related injuries, and what patients think about such efforts and physicians who engage in them are discussed. Proceeding from the limited available evidence, the authors make specific recommendations on how physicians might counsel their patients to reduce their risk for firearm-related death or serious injury. Finally, the authors review the circumstances under which disclosure of patient information about firearms to third parties is supported by regulations implementing the Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act.

Ann Intern Med. 2016;165:205-213. doi:10.7326/M15-2905 www.annals.org
For author affiliations, see end of text.
This article was published at www.annals.org on 17 May 2016.



<https://www.mirecc.va.gov/visn19/lethalmeanssafety/counseling/>

Wintemute, G. J., Betz, M. E., & Ranney, M. L. (2016).
Yes, You Can: Physicians, Patients, and Firearms.
Annals of internal medicine, 165(3), 205–213.
<https://doi.org/10.7326/M15-2905>



SUICIDE PREVENTION PROGRAM



- OVERVIEW
- ABOUT
- PROJECTS
- RESOURCES
- STAY CONNECTED

<https://www.cstsonline.org/suicide-prevention-program/overview>

Podcast: Let's Talk About Your Guns



<https://www.cstsonline.org/suicide-prevention-program/projects/conversations-about-safe-storage>

Podcast: Let's Talk About Your Guns

- Older Adults and Gun Safety
- Children and Gun Safety
- Families and Gun Safety
- Healthcare Professionals and Gun Safety
- Supervisors/Leaders and Gun Safety
- Peers and Gun Safety
- Counselors and Gun Safety
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders



<https://www.cstsonline.org/suicide-prevention-program/projects/conversations-about-safe-storage>

Thank you

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