



Keeping Kids Safe: Implementing Firearm Safety Counseling

April 30, 2025

Firearm Injury Prevention

Learning



REPORT —

Keeping Kids Safe

Report outlines firearm injury prevention efforts at children's hospitals.



EVENT —

Advancing Pediatric Firearm Injury Prevention

Learn how children's hospitals are working to keep kids safe through prevention of pediatric firearm injuries.



ARTICLE —

New Research: The Effects of Firearm Violence on Victims

Data shows that the majority of survivors of firearm violence experience chronic conditions and mental health issues.

Insights



Q&A —

5 Questions With Dr. Libby Ireson

A pediatrician shares tips for discussing safe gun storage with families.



COMMENTARY —

How to Stop the Leading Cause of Pediatric Deaths

A hospitalist outlines the most effective ways children's hospitals can help prevent firearm injuries.



BLOG —

A Public Health Crisis: Children's Hospitals' Roles in Keeping Kids Safe from Firearm Violence

Health care providers are uniquely positioned to educate families about the risks associated with unsecured firearms.

Available Resources:

- Keeping Kids Safe: Firearm Injury Prevention Efforts at Children's Hospitals
- Articles exploring implementation of firearm safety strategies
- Template slide deck you can download
- Webinars

www.childrenshospitals.org/firearmsafety

Webinars

Advancing Pediatric Firearm Injury Prevention – Available On Demand

Using Virtual Reality for Firearm Injury Prevention Training -
June 4, 2 pm et



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Keeping Kids Safe: Implementing Firearm Safety Counseling

CHA webinar series

Dorothy Novick MD, FAAP
Professor of Clinical Pediatrics



Goals and Objectives

Name three ways unsecured firearms increase risk for youth firearm fatalities

Identify most common barriers to firearm safety implementation in clinical practice

Apply a harm reduction, patient-centered, collaborative approach to safe storage counseling and gun lock distribution

Gun Safety Program

CHOP Center for Violence Prevention

*“Keep youth safer from firearm injury and death through education and distribution of **free** gun locking devices”*



Clinical Gun Safety Program



**Community Gun Safety
Education and Outreach Program**

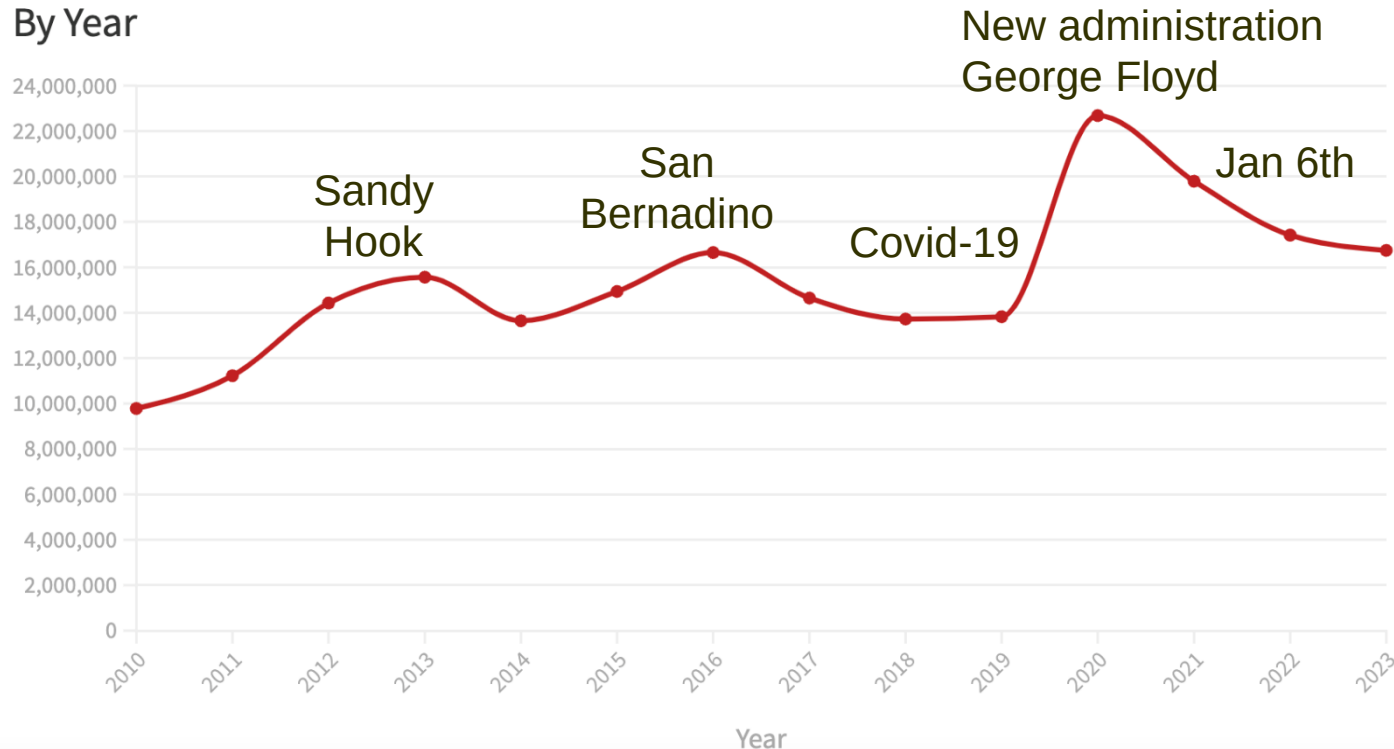
Overview: This is our lane



- **Background and evidence for HCP role**
- **Program overview**
- **Implementation**
- **Clinical tips and pearls**

GUNS SALES SET RECORDS

**Estimated number of guns sold in the United States
By Year**



<https://www.brookings.edu>

- **46%** of firearm owners practice safe storage
- **4.6 million children** living with unsecured firearms

YOUTH IMPACT

Suicide: 4 – 10x

- 82% family member's gun¹
- 90% completion rate



Unintentional shootings: 4x

- 81% family member's gun²
- 2.5yo strong enough to pull trigger



37%

CDC Wonder Data 2021

Violent crime: 380,000 lost / stolen per year

- Sold away from legal market
- 3x - 9x more likely in violent crime³

¹Johnson R et al, 2010, *Suicide and Life-Threatening Behavior*

²Vaishnav et al., 2023, *Injury Epidemiology*

³Robinson SL et al, 2024, *Injury Epidemiology*

AAP Policy Statement



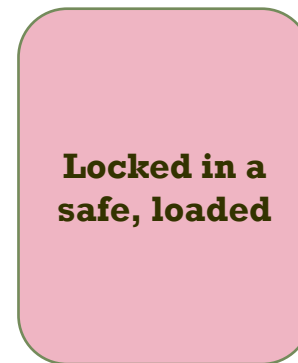
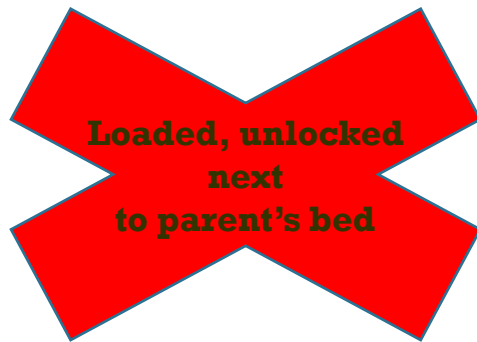
2017

“Removal of firearms from the home, which is **“The safest protective measure and may be strongly advisable in some scenarios, may not be acceptable or achievable for many firearm-owning families.”**

HARM REDUCTION APPROACH

“Good, Better, Best”

Least Safe ←————→ Most Safe



STORAGE DEVICES



Trigger lock

- + Inexpensive
- Weapon can be loaded



Cable Lock

- + Inexpensive
- + Weapon must be unloaded



Safe

- + Most secure
- Expensive
- Weapon can be loaded

Healthcare Provider Counseling **is** Effective (***not enough** to teach the kids!*)¹

Barkin et al 2008²

124 primary peds offices

21.4% increase in storing firearm locked

Rowhani-Rahbar et al 2016 systematic review³

Distributing free **locking device critical** ingredient

Hoskins et al 2021⁴

Safer storage intervention **highly acceptable**

- Trust pediatrician advice
- Tangible resources

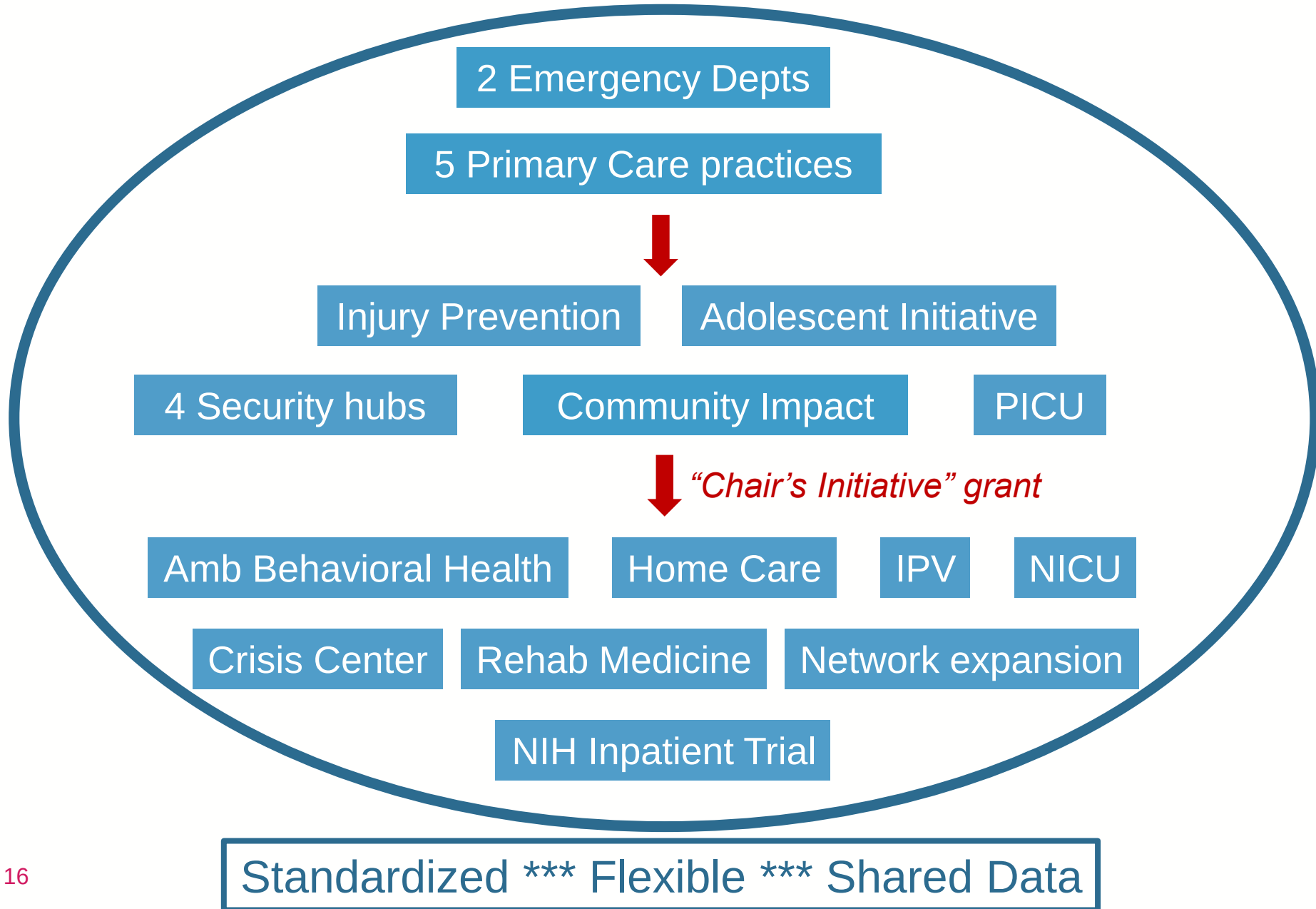
¹Himle et al, 2004, *Pediatrics*

²Barkin et al, 2008, *Pediatrics*

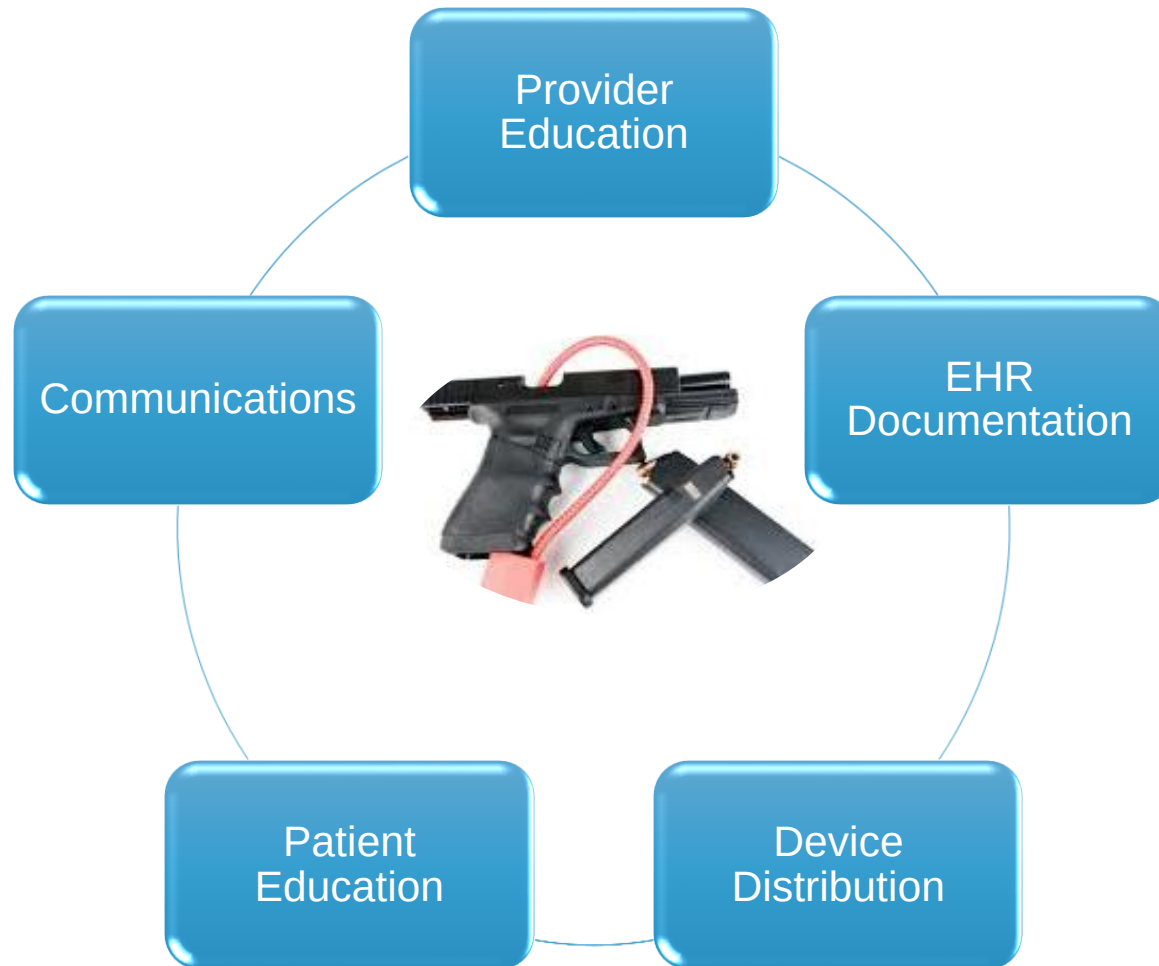
³Rowhani-Rahbar et al, 2016, *Epidemiologic Reviews*

⁴Hoskins et al, 2022, *Journal of Applied Research on Children*

Gun Safety at CHOP 2019 - present



Firearm Safety in Clinical Care Program Components



EHR Documentation

Standardized...

“As part of our safety counseling, we talk to **all** families about keeping children safe from **firearms** in the places where they live and play”

- Is there **ever** a firearm **in or around** your home(s) or car(s)?
- Is there ever a firearm in other places your child spends time, such as friends or relatives' homes? (BH only)
- Are all firearms stored **locked**?
- Are all firearms stored **unloaded**?
- Was safety **education** or **device** given today?

Flexible...

Notewriter

ED, BH

Smartlist

Ambulatory

**Pre-visit
Screeners**

Primary
Care

**Universal
Offering**

PICU

Nursing Ed
Inpatient R01

Communication Materials

Patient Education



GUN SAFETY

Tips from CHOP experts

CHILDREN ARE SAFEST IN A HOME WITHOUT A GUN.
If you have a gun in your home, keep children safe by following this advice:

- Store all guns unloaded, locked and out of sight.
- Store all bullets separately and keep them locked and out of sight.

There are many options to store your gun safely. Keep keys and combination codes hidden and secure.



Cable lock



Gun safe

TALK ABOUT GUN SAFETY WITH YOUR CHILDREN, FAMILY MEMBERS AND COMMUNITY MEMBERS

- If your child sees a gun, tell them to not touch it, move away from the area and tell a grown-up immediately.
- Ask family members and friends about guns in their homes and how they are stored before your child goes to visit. Here are some suggestions for getting the conversation started:
 - Normalize the discussion by asking about firearms along with other common safety issues such as pool safety, bike helmets, car seats and food allergies.
 - Say that your pediatrician suggested you ask, or that you saw it on a parenting website.
 - Mention that your child is naturally curious and loves to explore.

DID YOU KNOW?

- Firearms are the leading cause of death for kids ages 1–19 in the U.S.¹
- Playing with a gun is the most common cause of accidental gun deaths among children.³
- Three out of four kids ages 5–14 know where guns are kept in the home.³
- A 3-year-old is strong enough to pull the trigger of a handgun.⁴
- Most cases of childhood suicide involve a family member's unlocked gun.⁵



Scan the QR code for additional educational resources, including a video demonstrating how to use gun locks and lock boxes, or visit violence.chop.edu/gun-safety-resources

References
1. Madigan S, et al. Current Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents in the United States. *New England Journal of Medicine*. April 2023.
2. Fowler D, et al. Childhood Firearms Exposure in the United States. *Pediatrics*. 2018;141(4):e20171000.
3. <https://www.aap.org/american-academy-of-pediatrics/pediatrics/child-safety>
4. <https://www.aap.org/american-academy-of-pediatrics/pediatrics/child-safety>
5. <https://www.aap.org/american-academy-of-pediatrics/pediatrics/child-safety>

CH Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Center for Violence Prevention

Last reviewed April 2025

Posters / Snapcomm's

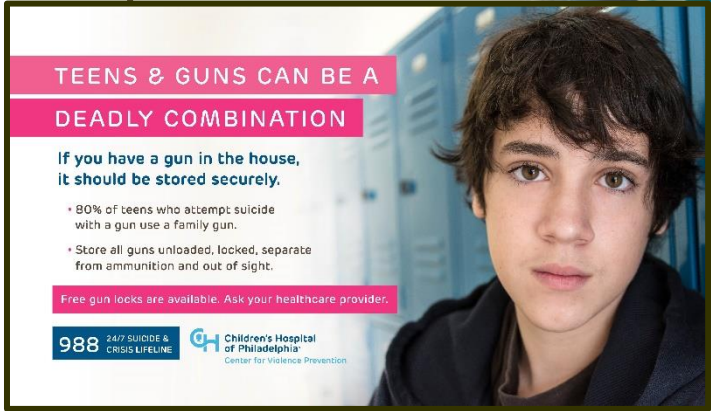


SAFE GUN STORAGE SAVES CHILDREN'S LIVES

All guns should be stored unloaded, locked, separate from ammunition, and out of sight.

To help keep children safe, CHOP has gun locks available for distribution to families.

Interested in receiving a gun lock or learning more about safe storage? Speak to your healthcare provider for additional information.



TEENS & GUNS CAN BE A DEADLY COMBINATION

If you have a gun in the house, it should be stored securely.

- 80% of teens who attempt suicide with a gun use a family gun.
- Store all guns unloaded, locked, separate from ammunition and out of sight.

Free gun locks are available. Ask your healthcare provider.

988 24/7 SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE **CH** Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Center for Violence Prevention



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Barriers and Challenges

Human^{1,2}

Intrusiveness

Privacy



Confrontation

Time

Lack of knowledge

Systems

Range of settings

IS programming



Supply and distribution

Data

Funding!

Addressing Human Factors: *Provider Education*



Context of **safety**

➤ **Gun safety, not gun control**

Collaborative, **nonjudgmental** approach

➤ **We share the same goals!**

Speak from **what we know**

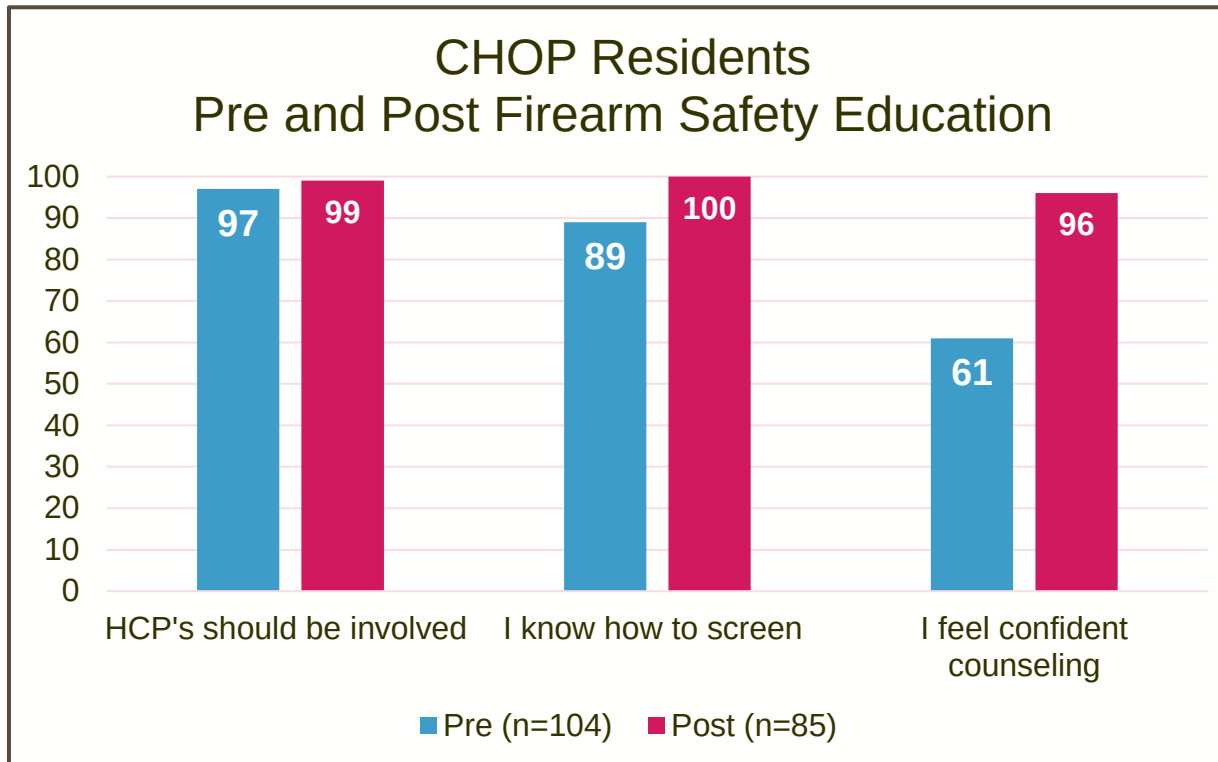
➤ **Experts in child behavior,
development**

Educate ourselves

➤ **Local laws, language**

Navigating **caregiver concerns**

Provider Education Session



Delivered over 8 sessions 2024-2025

- Integrated into residency curriculum
- 710 health care providers trained over 34 live sessions
- Video in process

Addressing logistical challenges: *Chair's Initiative grant*

“Support innovation, improvement and collaboration throughout and beyond Children’s Hospital”



Seed funding

Dedicated
personnel

Expert
advisory
team

Priority
access to
resources

Salary support
Cable locks

IS team
QI Advisor
Data Analyst

Health Equity
Development
Implementation
Leadership

Central supply
Digital Services
Marketing
Communications
Patient/Family Svcs
Development
Govt Affairs

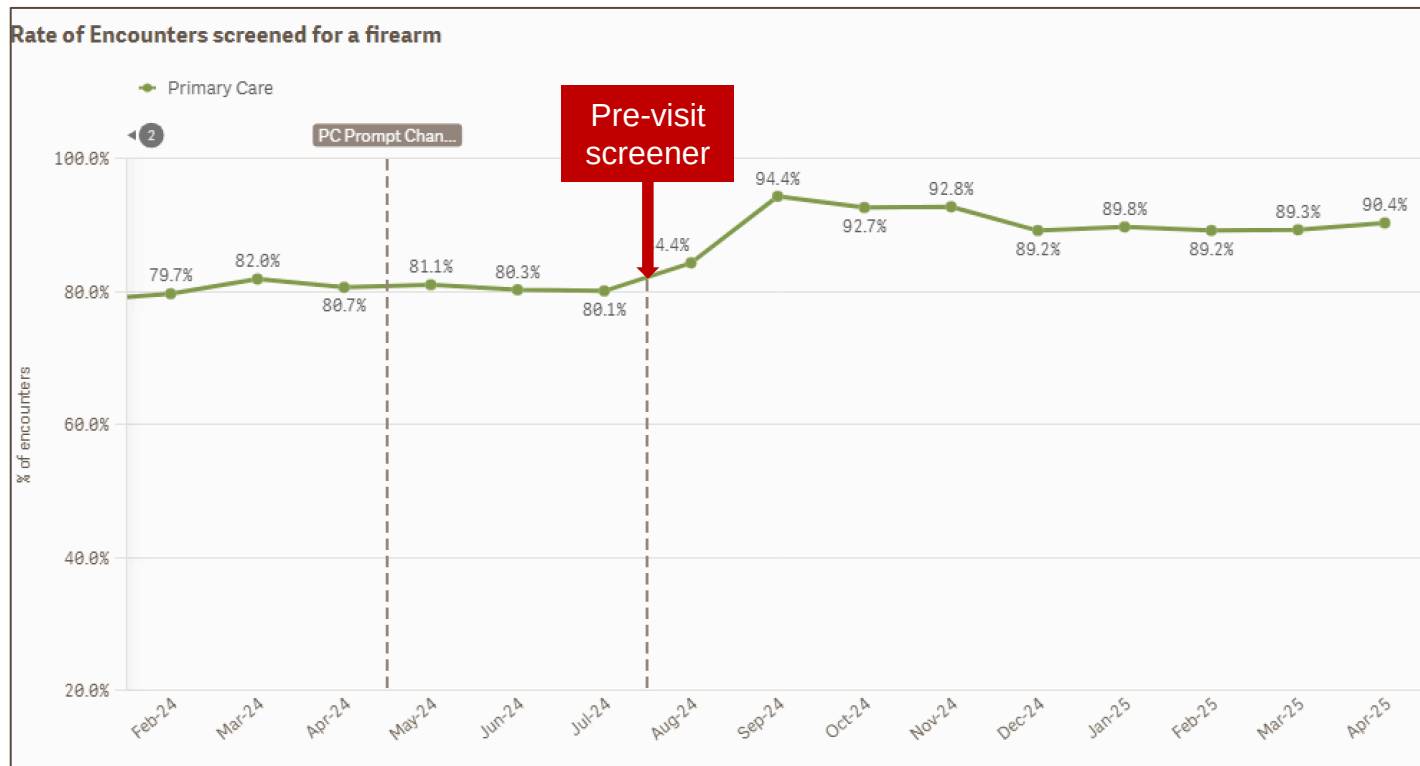
Screening Rates: Primary Care

Firearm Safety Assessment

Is there ever a firearm in or around the patient's home(s) or car?

Are ALL firearms stored locked?

Are ALL firearms stored unloaded?



Eligible encounters = WCC visits age newborn – 12yo

Device Distribution

Was safety information or a safety device provided today? (select all that apply)

Education

Gun Lock

Lock Box

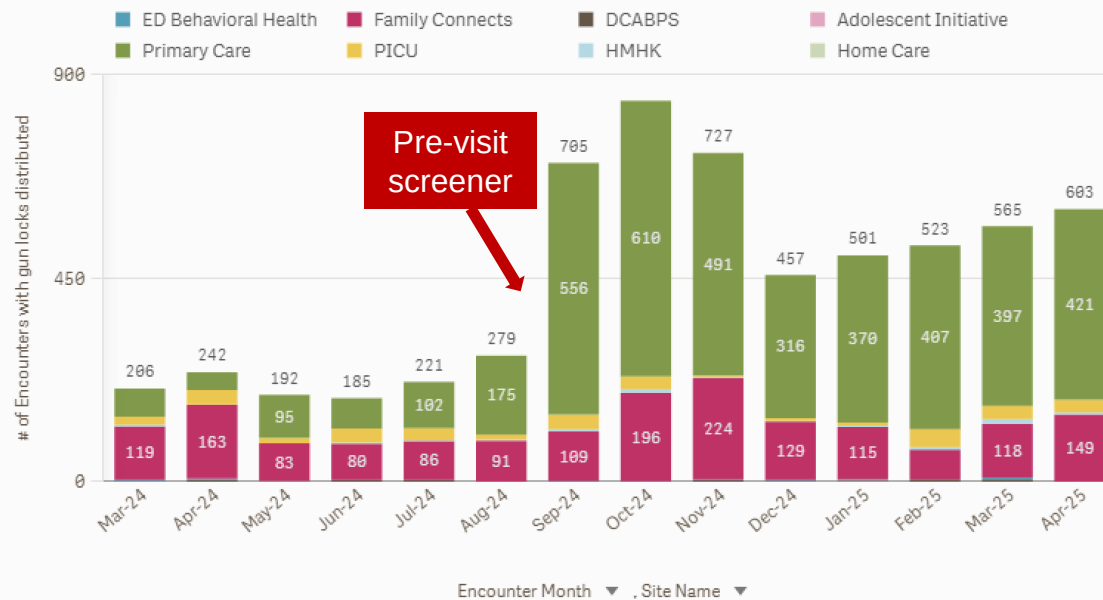
Declined

Additional Information

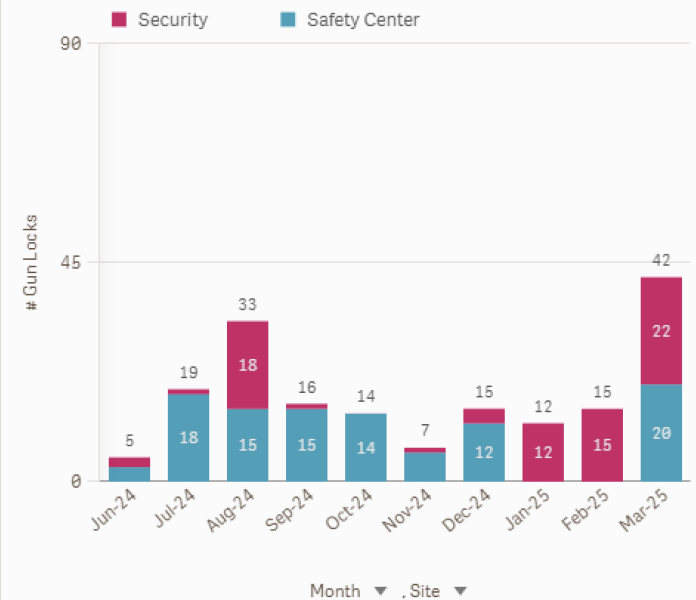
[Gun Safety Handout \(English\)](#)

[Gun Safety Handout \(Spanish\)](#)

Encounters w/ Gun Locks Distributed

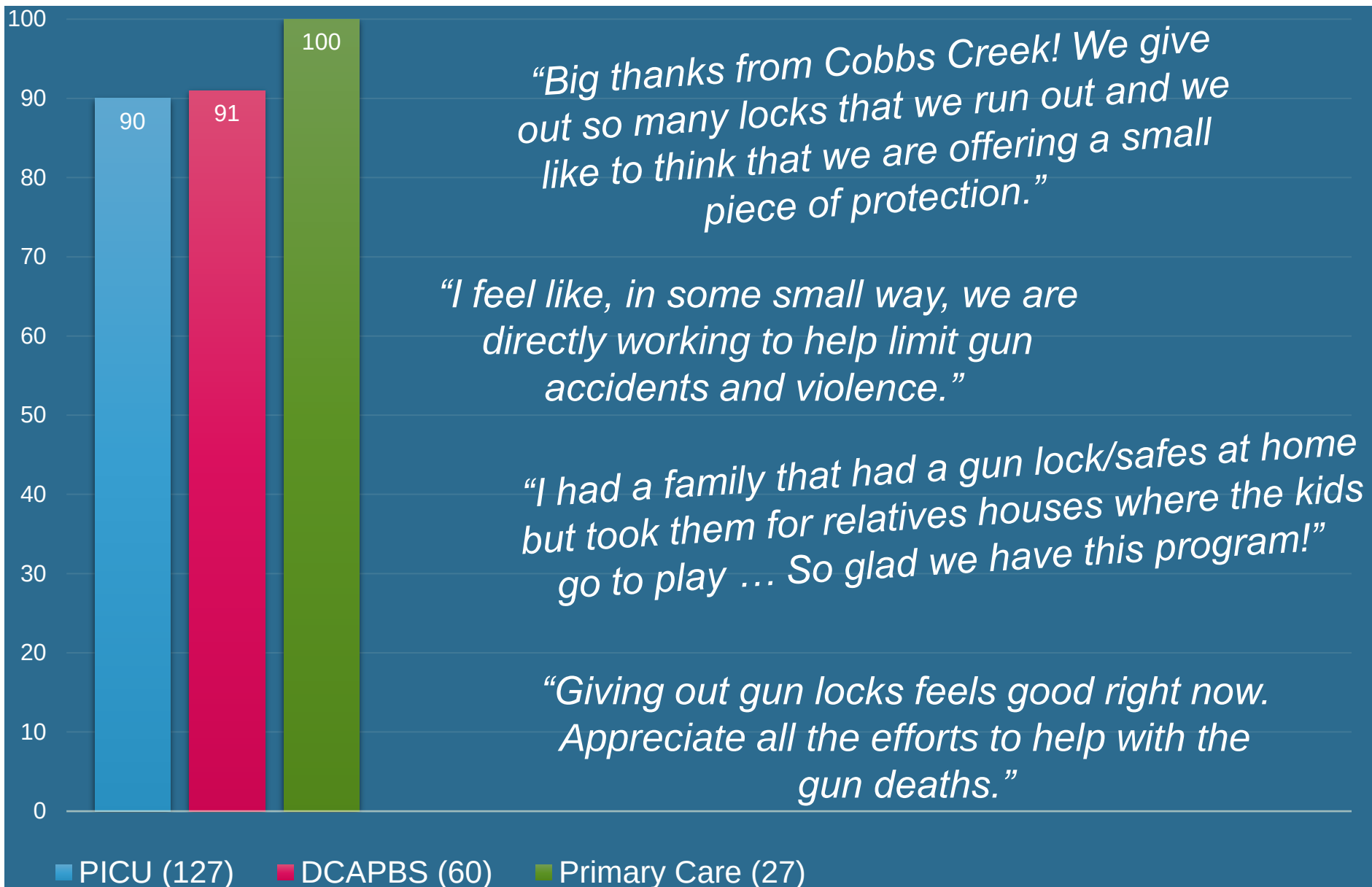


Gun Locks Distributed: Security and Safety Center

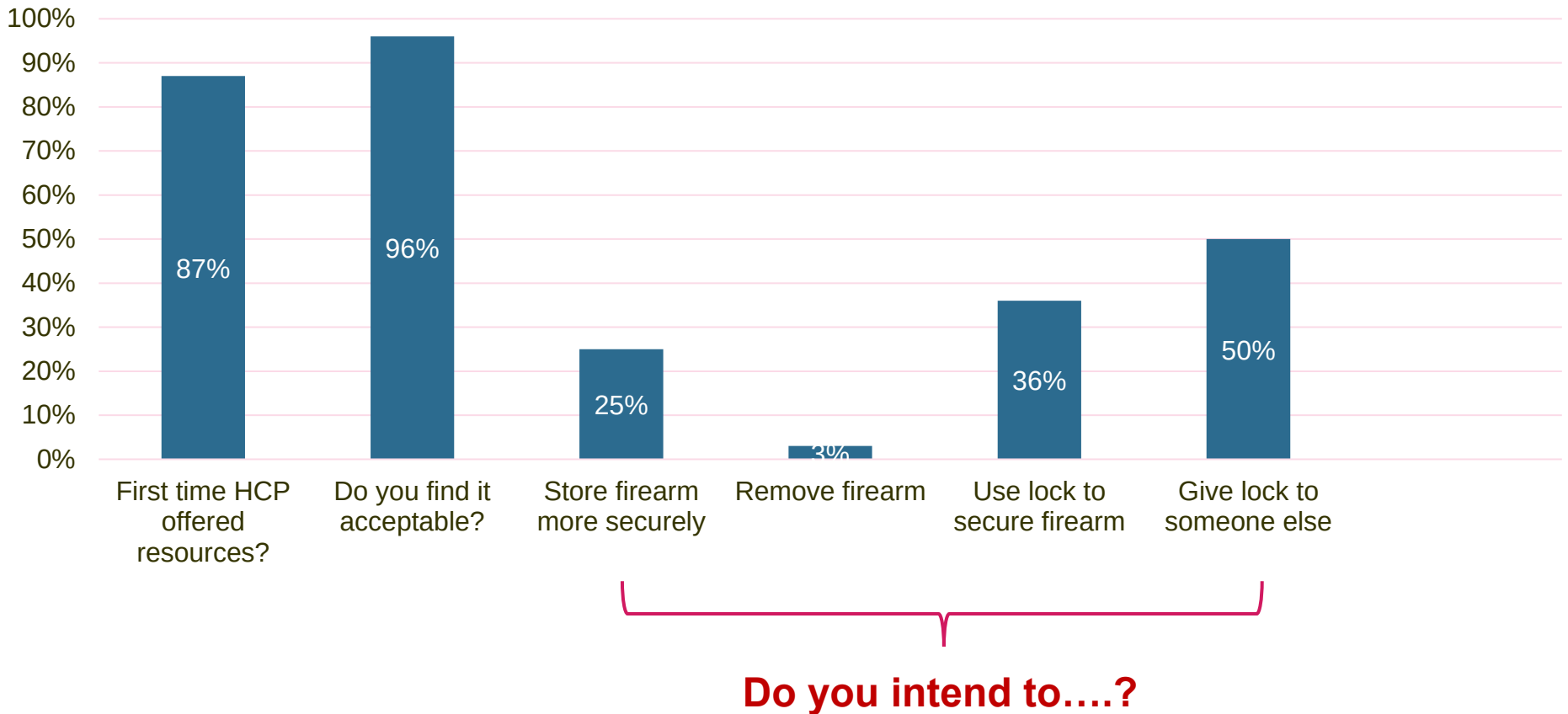


- **10,600** locks distributed since inception
- **70%** to injury “hot spots”¹

HCP Acceptability



Caregiver Survey ($n = 434$)*



*Lock recipients PICU and ED

Firearm Safety Toolkit

FS

Firearm Safety in Clinical Care

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Firearm Safety in Clinical Care Toolkit

The Center for Violence Prevention's **Firearm Safety in Clinical Care Initiative** aims to keep children and youth safer from firearm injury and death through safe firearm storage education and distribution of gun locking devices.

This toolkit provides a **step-wise** approach for integrating firearm safety education and gun lock distribution into care environments at CHOP.



[Click here to read more firearm safety efforts at CHOP](#)



[Click here to support funding for gun locks!](#)



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Center for Violence Prevention

SAFE STORAGE COUNSELING



tips and pearls



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What if they say yes...?!

Is it OK if we talk
a little bit about
the firearm, to be
sure we keep the
kids as safe as
possible?

Can I ask
where you
keep it?

Do you have it
for work? Or
sport? Or
for your
protection?

"I don't want to discuss this!"

We don't have to discuss this if you'd rather – the reason I'm asking is to help you keep her safe.

Everything we talk about stays confidential, we don't share any information outside of your health care team.

That's no problem, I let all my patients know we have free gun locking devices.



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“I teach my children not to touch guns”

Even a
2.5yo can
pull the
trigger

It's so
crushing
about that
9...2...7yo
who was
killed

Kids are so
incredibly curious –
they often go
searching just to
see what they'll find

My own
patients have
found
firearms they
thought were
toys

“But I need ready access”

How about a
biometric safe?

Or locking it
during the day,
when the kids
are awake?

Many people
FEEL safer with
firearms -- but
when intruders
see weapons,
that's often when
they reach for
theirs

Firearm
training!

“I would know if my child was depressed ”

Suicide can be so impulsive, especially for teens. People often become suicidal in the moment, because of a thing that happened

Nine times out of ten, if they can access a firearm, they'll succeed

This isn't always the kind of depression we can see

“You’re asking because of my (race/ethnicity/gender/political affiliation...)”

HCP’s across the country are making firearm safety part of our routine safety guidance

These days people of all different backgrounds own guns

We talk about the dangers of firearms with all our patients

Firearms are the leading cause of death for children

CHOP Firearm Safety Partners

Joel Fein MD MPH

Kimberly Sterner-Stein MPH MSW

Torrin Davis MPH SSGB

Bhavanna Muralidharan

Anireddy Reddy MD MSHP

Charlotte Woods-Hill MD MSHP

Katie Hoskins PhD MBE CRNP

Priya Shah MD

Deniz Cataltepe MD

Noreena Lewis JD

Falguni Patel MPH

Tessi Ruiz MPH

The Possibilities Project

Injury Prevention Program

Dept of Pediatrics Chair's Initiative

38 Center for Violence Prevention

...and more!



TO LEARN MORE:



AAP Course – Safer: Storing Firearms Prevents Harm

<https://www.aap.org/Safer-Storing-Firearms-Prevents-Harm>

NEJM Perspective Video

Reducing Harm – Having Conversations about Firearm Storage

<https://www.nejm.org/doi/full/10.1056/NEJMp2310000>

The BulletPoints Project: Tools for clinicians and educators

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

Northwell Health Campaign -- “It Doesn’t Kill to Ask”

<https://www.northwell.edu/lock-guns>

Everytown for Gun Safety

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

Giffords

<https://giffords.org/>

Gun Safety Program, CHOP’s Center for Violence Prevention

<https://violence.chop.edu/research-and-programs/gun-safety>

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