

Pennsylvania Health Professionals for Gun Safety
A New Statewide Public Health Coalition Against Gun Violence

Physicians, nurses and other healthcare professionals are directly impacted by gun violence. Whether they experience vicarious trauma by caring for shooting victims or are personally injured in the line of duty, they have lived experience of gun violence.

When healthcare and public health professionals speak up, their voices are incredibly powerful. Doctors who remove bullets from gun shot victims, trauma nurses who care for them, physical and occupational therapists who help them get back to physical functioning, and social workers and other mental health professionals who care for their emotional and social needs, as well as other healthcare and public health professionals – they all have credibility with both the public and with elected officials. In the fight to end gun violence in Pennsylvania, healthcare and public health professionals can make a tremendous impact.

The Pennsylvania Health Professionals for Gun Safety Coalition is a strong, united voice for all healthcare and public health professionals in Pennsylvania who want to put a stop to the senseless gun violence that is taking lives and destroying communities. You'll join hundreds of your colleagues to be a part of a larger group that amplifies your voice, with strategic guidance from CeaseFirePA, Pennsylvania's leading gun violence prevention organization.

The Pennsylvania Health Professionals for Gun Safety will:

I. Educate the Public:

Healthcare professionals are highly trusted by the public and have unique knowledge about the effects of gun violence. They will help the public understand how gun violence impacts both individual patients and their communities through a public health lens, and how key policies can prevent it.

II. Define Gun Violence as a Public Health Crisis:

For too long, gun violence has been viewed as an issue about crime or mental health. Health professionals know that gun violence is a public health crisis just like any other epidemic. It is not a result of accidents we can not prevent. Gun violence is an epidemic with systemic causes and preventive policy solutions.

III. Advocate for Solutions:

Solutions to the epidemic of gun violence exist in legislation, policy, and community and hospital-based prevention and intervention programs. Physicians, nurses and other health professionals already advocate for safe storage of firearms, ways to keep guns out of the hands of those who are in crisis or otherwise unable to safely handle a firearm, and injury prevention programs that help minimize the harm of gun violence. The coalition will bring health professionals from all occupations and specialties together to use their combined voice to advocate for effective solutions.

Who should join the PA Health Professionals for Gun Safety Coalition?

All physicians, nurses, public health educators and researchers, mental health professionals, and others who want to see an end to gun violence in the Commonwealth are invited to join!

How can I get involved and make a difference?

The first step is to [sign the Pennsylvania Health Professionals for Gun Safety Coalition sign-on letter](#) and share it with your colleagues!

The letter, with hundreds of signatures, will be presented to key legislators and the public at our Coalition launch events in early October.

Who is the leadership of the Coalition?

The Coalition Steering Committee is made up of healthcare and public health professionals from all over the state. Trauma surgeons, nurses, Injury Prevention Coordinators, First Responders, Physician Assistants, Physical and Occupational Therapists, Pediatricians and Emergency Department staff, mental health professionals and public health researchers are all taking a leadership role in the formation of the coalition. If you are interested in taking on a leadership role, either statewide or in your local community, contact April, CeaseFirePA's Public Health Partnerships Coordinator, at april@ceasefirepa.org for more information.

What else will the Coalition do?

Provide continuing educational opportunities:

Already, CeaseFirePA has partnered with professional organizations such as the Pennsylvania chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the American Trauma Society- PA Division, Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation, Society of Trauma Nurses, the Pennsylvania Academy of Family Physicians and Physicians for Social Responsibility to produce open webinars on gun violence, its causes, and solutions. The coalition will continue to provide even more opportunities to earn continuing education credits by educating yourself and colleagues about gun violence prevention.

Advocate with our legislators:

Coalition members have engaged our legislators in Harrisburg and in their districts. The Coalition will provide opportunities for health professionals to share their experience and expertise with the legislators who make decisions that affect us and our patients.

Share Our Experience with the Public:

By speaking at local gun violence prevention events, writing letters to the editor and op-eds in local papers, and sharing their expertise in local and statewide media, Coalition members will educate the public about what gun violence does to patients, their families and communities, and how we can all work together to put an end to this public health crisis.

What are my next steps?

- Sign the [Pennsylvania Health Professionals for Gun Safety Coalition letter](#).
- [Share the letter with colleagues](#).

- Email or call April Smith, MPH, CeaseFirePA's Public Health Partnerships Coordinator, at april@ceasefirepa.org and (267) 252-7204 to find out more about how you can help end the epidemic of gun violence in Pennsylvania.