

MEMORANDUM

DATE: February 12, 1997
TO: Jim
FROM: Amy
SUBJECT: Firearms Violence Prevention Symposium and Strategy

Symposium

Jim, attached for your review is a draft copy of a firearms fact sheet that will be handed out with a packet at the symposium.

Strategy

After this symposium, you can take action on the following options:

- A. Decide to do nothing more on this issue.
- B. Decide which ordinance(s) (there are at least 4) you may want to have County Counsel draft for you to bring before the Board.
- C. Decide if you want to ask other the Board offices if they would also like to bring an firearms violence prevention ordinance(s) before the Board.

MEMORANDUM

TO : THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE

FROM : THE JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF

SUBJECT: [Illegible]

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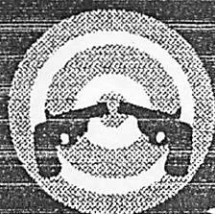
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FIREARM IN SANTA CLARA COUNTY

In 1993 and 1994, over half (58%) of all homicides in Santa Clara County (SCC) were committed using firearms. Of assault injuries, 14% were a result of firearms. Also in 1993 and 1994, 56% of males committing suicide used a firearm, and 18% of female suicides resulted from a self-inflicted gunshot wound.

Handguns are the leading killers of kids in California². In Santa Clara County between 1993 and 1994, firearms were involved in 1002 homicides and assault hospitalizations, occurring predominantly among males aged 15-34¹. During that same time frame in SCC, 76% of homicides killing people aged 21 years and under were committed using firearms¹.

Control measures such as stricter industry regulation, zoning laws banning residential handgun dealers, or policies requiring trigger locks and safety boxes can help reduce fatalities and injuries associated with firearms.

A 1996 telephone survey showed that awareness about handgun-related crime is low in Santa Clara County. It found, however, that once informed of firearm injury and death facts, the majority of Santa Clara County residents vocalized support for gun control legislation³.

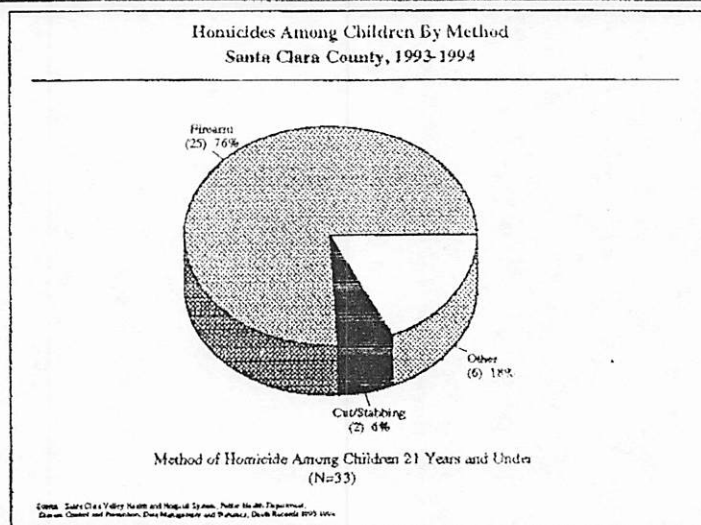
FIREARM ACTS

PUBLIC HEALTH DEPARTMENT

DRAFT

Santa Clara County

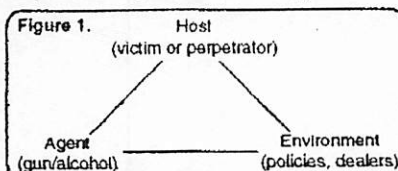
Firearms were responsible for 76% of homicides against children.



The Public Health Approach to Violence Prevention

When people working in public health approach a problem not only do they consider the consequences of an issue, such as deaths due to guns, but they also examine the various causes of a problem, such as joblessness or access to firearms.

This process typically includes three key elements, as shown in Figure 1.



The issues surrounding any of these elements ~ host, agent, environment ~ are interrelated and each element contributes to the greater problem.

Viewing violence within this framework requires that several processes, disciplines and approaches be incorporated to create a cohesive, multidisciplinary prevention plan.

Episode tracking, community data analysis, program planning, development, implementation, and evaluation are critical to a violence prevention effort.

Just as issues are viewed from multiple perspectives, solutions (or interventions) should be designed to address different levels as shown in the graphic below. Some interventions for gun violence could include: community outreach and education, conflict resolution training, parenting training, youth diversion, identification and assessment of potential victims, as well as policies regulating firearm availability and safety.

The Spectrum of Prevention
Influencing policy & legislation
Changing organizational practices
Fostering coalitions & networks
Educating providers
Promoting community education
Strengthening individual knowledge & skills

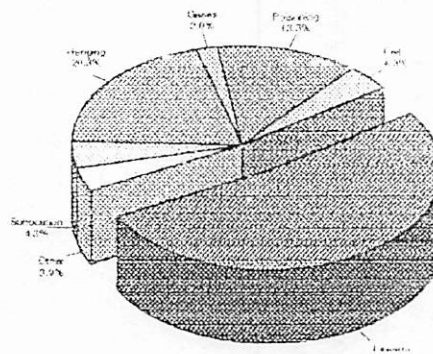
Suicides & Firearms

Relative to other means, the rate of success in suicide attempts is much higher when firearms are used¹. Overall, firearms are used in over half of all suicides in the county¹. By gender, guns are used by over half of all males, 56%, committing suicide, and guns account for 4% of self inflicted injuries in males¹. Among females, 18% of female suicides are due to gun shots, whereas 0.4% are hospitalized for self inflicted firearm wounds¹.

Much debate surrounds the question whether limiting access to handguns would prevent some suicides. Studies among juvenile populations, however, have shown that decreased availability through more restrictive gun control laws is associated with a reduced suicide rate among youth⁴.

Over half of all suicides were committed with a gun

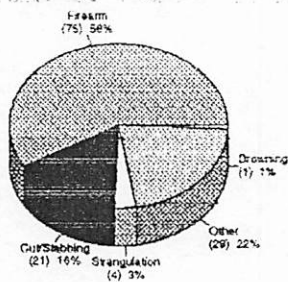
Suicide Methods
Santa Clara County, 1993 and 1994 Average



Source: Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Disease Control and Prevention, Data Management and Statistics, Death Records, 1993-1994

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Homicides by Weapon
Santa Clara County, 1993-1994



Source: Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Disease Control and Prevention, Data Management and Statistics, Death Records, 1993-1994

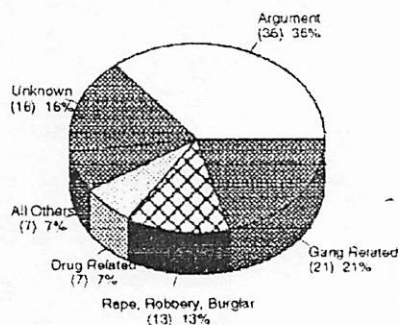
58% of all homicides in Santa Clara County were carried out with a firearm.

FIREARMS: Targeting Women

Firearm assaults are the third leading killer of Santa Clara County females aged 15 to 44 years¹. Firearms kill women in this age group more frequently than do motor vehicle crashes (see chart to the right)¹.

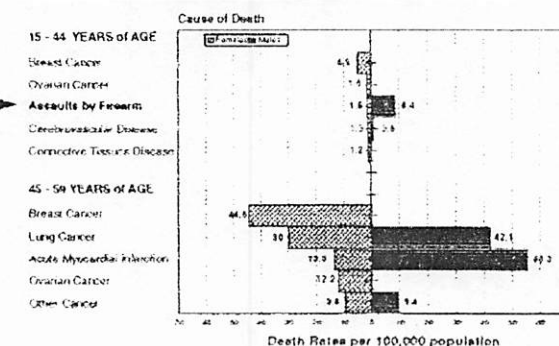
Data show that the greatest threat to a woman comes from the people and guns within her own

Homicide Crimes
Contributing Circumstances
California, 1993



Source: California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Statistics

Top Five Causes of Death in Females by Age, as Compared to Males
Santa Clara County, 1992-1994



Source: Santa Clara County Health and Hospital Survey, Public Health Department, Disease Control and Prevention, Data Management and Statistics, Death Records 1992-1994

home⁵. Between 1976-1987, more than twice as many American women were shot and killed by their husbands or boyfriends as were murdered by strangers using guns, knives or any other means⁶.

More women are killed by their husbands than men are killed by their wives⁶. State data show that in 1993 arguments were the leading contributing circumstance in homicides (see graph to the left).

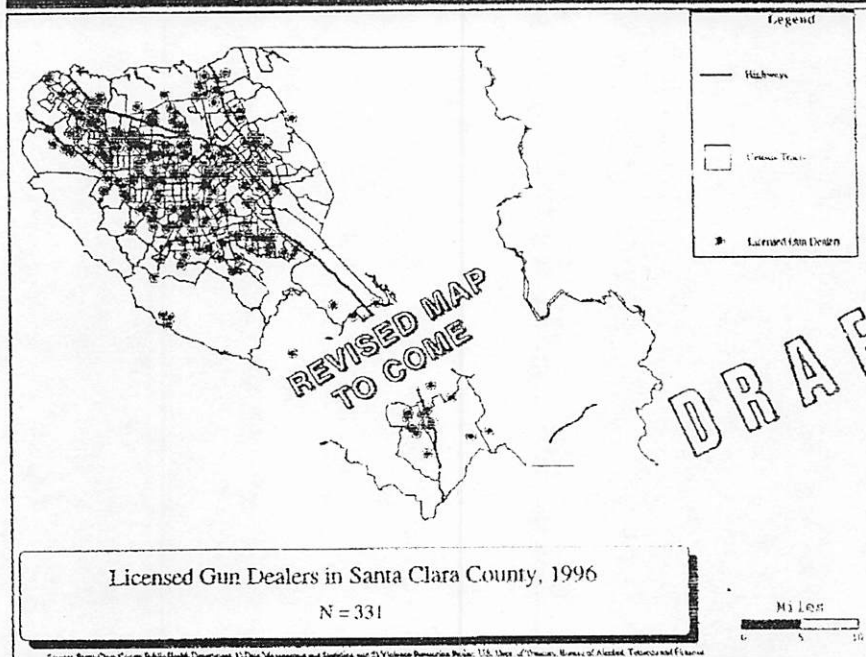
Firearm Manufacture & Sales

Guns are subject to fewer safety regulations than cars, baby cribs, or teddy bears ~ toy guns are even more strictly regulated than real guns⁸. American-made guns are not subject to federal safety standards⁹. Although technology has been available for over 50 years to make guns child-resistant, incorporation of such safety devices has been resisted by the industry due, in part, to concern about costs⁴.

In 1994, 13,478 handguns were legally sold in Santa Clara County ~ that is more than 36 guns purchased each day, or 1.5 guns per hour⁷. Easy availability of handguns is one factor abetting violent acts such as homicides, assaults, and suicides.

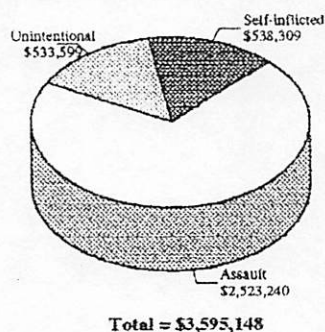
In Santa Clara County, 270 dealers are licensed to sell guns⁸. This compares to 53 high schools, 29 libraries, and 55 McDonalds. Some dealers sell guns out of their homes, leading to concern about proximity of residential firearm dealers to sensitive sites such as schools or day care centers. Recent legislation, which increased dealer license fees and mandated background checks, has led to a decreased number of gun dealers in Santa Clara County ~ in a three month period during 1996 the number of dealers decreased by 22%⁸.

Santa Clara County is home to 270 licensed gun dealers.



Estimated annual weapons stolen in California: 100,000⁹

Hospitalization Costs of Firearm Injuries by Intent Santa Clara County, 1993



Source: Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Disease Control and Prevention, Data Management and Statistics, Data Corporation Hospital Discharge Data, 1993

reached \$3.6 million¹. These figures, however, do not include the cost of emergency room (ER) or trauma center (TC) care, therefore costs for those patients treated for a gunshot wound in the ER or TC, but not admitted to the hospital, are not included in these sums.

Costs of Firearms to Society

Not only do guns inflict emotional and physical terror on victims, but firearm-related deaths and injuries cost California taxpayers over \$176 million dollars annually⁴.

The average cost of a gunshot wound requiring hospitalization is \$28,000¹⁰. Of this cost, 80% is borne by taxpayers⁴. These are simply direct costs, and do not take into account lost years of productivity, reduced quality of life, or emotional burdens firearms inflict on families and communities. When those costs are factored in, the estimated cost per survivor of a gunshot wound due to assault was \$260,000¹⁰.

In Santa Clara County the costs of violent injuries totalled \$13,679,360 in 1993¹. Of that sum, direct hospitalization costs for firearm-related injuries in SCC

reached \$3.6 million¹. These figures, however, do not include the cost of emergency room (ER) or trauma center (TC) care, therefore costs for those patients treated for a gunshot wound in the ER or TC, but not admitted to the hospital, are not included in these sums.

Sources

1. Santa Clara County Public Health Department, Disease Control and Prevention, Data Management and Statistics.
2. State of California, California Department of Health Services, Death Records, 1995.
3. Passion & Policy: As facts replace feelings in the handgun debate, more voters support efforts to reduce access to handguns. October,

4. 1996. EDK Associates.
5. Pacific Center for Violence Prevention, Policy Paper "Preventing Youth Violence."
6. Kellerman, A. & Mercy, J. (1992). Men, Women, and murder. *Journal of Trauma*, 33:1-5.
7. Tucker, C. "Guns are a Hazard." *Chronicle*, 12/7/96.
8. California Department of Justice, Division of

9. Law Enforcement.
10. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco & Firearms, Licensing Division, 1996.
11. California Department of Justice, AFS Section.
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Arresting Facts about Firearms

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SANTA CLARA COUNTY

- A gun is purchased every 1.5 hours².
- Firearm assaults are the third leading killer of Santa Clara County females aged 15 to 44 years⁷.
- Overall, firearms are used in over half of all suicides in the county⁷.
- In 1993 and 1994, over half (58%) of all homicides were committed using firearms¹.
- Between 1993-1994, 76% of youth homicides (<21 years) were committed using firearms⁷.
- Hospitalization costs for firearm injuries totaled \$3.6 million⁷.
- There are 270 gun dealers in the county, many of whom sell guns from their homes⁷.



CALIFORNIA

- Firearms have surpassed motor vehicle crashes and diseases as the number one killer in the age group of 15-24 years old⁴.
- Carrying a concealed handgun is a misdemeanor. However, carrying a knife or other less fatal weapon is punishable as a felony.
- The leading contributing circumstance for homicides is argument⁵.
- Firearm injuries cost California taxpayers over \$177 million annually⁴.

UNITED STATES

- A gun in the home is 43 times more likely to kill a family member or friend than it is to be used in self-defense⁷.
- Three times more people are murdered during arguments than robberies².
- An estimated 30% of all unintentional shootings could be prevented by the presence of two safety features: trigger locks and loading indicators⁴.
- Few guns have trigger locks and loading indicators because no law requires them⁴.

- Most children unintentionally kill themselves or other children while playing with a gun they found in their home or the home of a family member or friend⁴.
- Over half of all handgun owners keep their guns loaded at least some of the time⁴. In one study, 53% of gun owners surveyed did not keep their guns locked up⁴.
- In 1992, about 78% of murder victims were killed by someone they knew¹.
- Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death for adolescents and young adults in the US, after car crashes and homicides⁴. In 1990, 3,165 youths aged 15-24 killed themselves with guns. Guns are now used in about 60% of all teenage suicides⁴.
- More firearm murders occurred in two years, than deaths in the 9 year Vietnam War¹⁰.
- The average medical cost of a gunshot wound is \$33,000. Eighty percent of those costs are borne by taxpayers⁴.

What you can do to prevent further firearm injuries and deaths...

- **Write, telephone, fax or e-mail** your local, state, and national representatives to let them know your concerns about the toll firearms take on your community.
- **Ask your elected official to:**
 - ban sales of handguns from residential dealers
 - advocate for stricter regulation of the firearm industry
 - ban the sale of Saturday Night Specials in your area
 - require back ground checks on people working for gun dealers
 - require trigger locks

- **If you are a parent or teacher:** Sensitize yourself and your children/students to violent images in the media. Explain to them that although TV doesn't show the consequences, guns do cause pain, death, and disability. Remind your children/ students that what they see on television or in movies is not real life.

- **If you are a gun owner:**
 - get a trigger lock and loading indicator
 - store ammunition separately from the firearm
 - take a gun safety course

For more information contact:
Violence Prevention Program
Santa Clara County Public Health Department
1-408-885-4202

February, 1997

1. California Department of Justice, Division of Law Enforcement.
2. Santa Clara County Public Health Dept., Disease Control & Prevention, Data Mgmt & Statistics.
3. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms, Licensing, 1996.
4. State of California, California Department of Health Services, Death Records, 1995.
5. California Department of Justice, Bureau of Criminal Statistics.
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