



Strategy Five: Support and Promote Lethal Means Safety Initiatives

Dr. Erik Wallace, MD, FACP

Associate Dean, Colorado Springs Branch
University of Colorado School of Medicine



School of Medicine
UNIVERSITY OF COLORADO

Thank You!

- Colorado Springs Firearm Safety Think Tank
- El Paso County Firearm Safety Workgroup
- El Paso County Coroner's Office
- Suicide Prevention Collaborative of El Paso County
 - Focus group data
 - Video
 - Social Media Campaign

Data Summary

- El Paso County 2019
 - # firearm suicide deaths > # homicides + motor vehicle accidents
 - # firearm suicide deaths > suicide deaths by all other means
- 90% who survive suicide attempt don't die by suicide later
- Case Fatality rate (% of people who die using specific means)
 - Firearm: 90%
 - Hanging: 56%
 - Medication Overdose: 2%
- Suicide is impulsive (minutes to hours)

Take Home Points

- Must develop trusting relationships with firearm owners
 - Emphasize individual rights, responsibility
 - Language is important (i.e. voluntary and temporary)
- Behavior change is needed, but difficult
 - Combination of key data and emotional connections
 - Share data and be open to discussion and questions
- Empower with new information to make changes
 - Address myths (i.e. people will die by suicide if they don't have a gun)
- No one must die by suicide – suicide is preventable!

Call for Action: Lethal Means Safety

- Store firearms and medications, not accessible to those in crisis
- Share social media distribution of video from CHP's facebook page
- Op-Ed from firearm owner
- Letters to the Editor
- Closed circuit tvs in waiting rooms
- Share video on websites
- Email marketing such as electronic newsletters