

Evaluation of the Colorado Gun Shop Project

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July 2025



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Acknowledgements

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Department of Public Health and Environment
Firearm Safety Advisory Board
Firearm Advocates with Colorado GSP

Funding:

CDC R01CE003289-01-00.

The findings and conclusions in this presentation are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the CDC.



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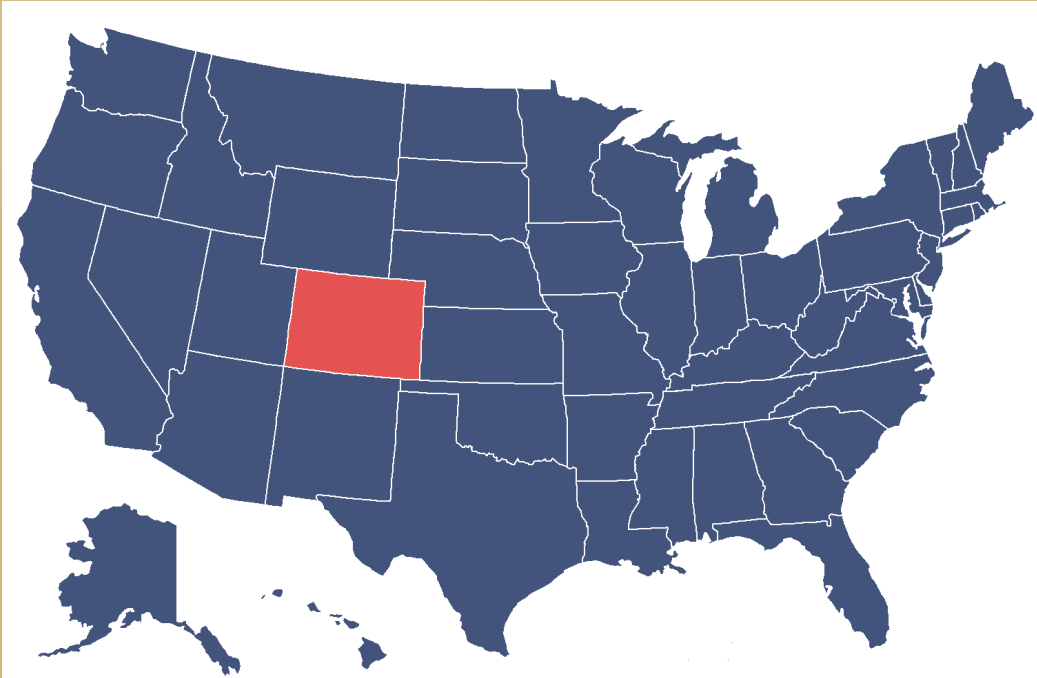


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Why Colorado?



- In 2023, 49,316 died by suicide in the U.S and 55% involved firearms.
- In Colorado in 2023, 1,297 died by suicide and 56% involved firearms.
- Colorado has the 12th highest suicide involving firearms death rate in the U.S.
- Colorado has a robust implementation of the Gun Shop Project (GSP).



History of GSP in Colorado

- Began implementation in 2015 with 5 counties, expanded to 34 counties (of 64) by 2020
- Primary focus is on providing education (and sometimes training) to firearm businesses
- State and federal funding is fragmented and inconsistent

GUN OWNERS, YOU CAN HELP.

Are you concerned about a friend or a family member?

- Are they suicidal?
- Depressed, angry, impulsive?
- Going through a relationship break-up, legal trouble or other setback?
- Using drugs or alcohol more often?
- Withdrawing from things they used to enjoy?
- Talking about being better off dead?
- Losing hope?
- Acting reckless?
- Feeling trapped?

Putting time and distance between a suicidal person and a gun helps keep them safe.

Explore options to temporarily store guns out of the home.

YOU MAY EVEN SAVE A LIFE!

SUICIDES IN COLORADO FAR OUTNUMBER HOMICIDES.

There are about 4 firearm suicides for every 1 firearm homicide.

FIREARMS ARE THE LEADING METHOD OF SUICIDE.

Firearms are used in half of all suicide deaths.

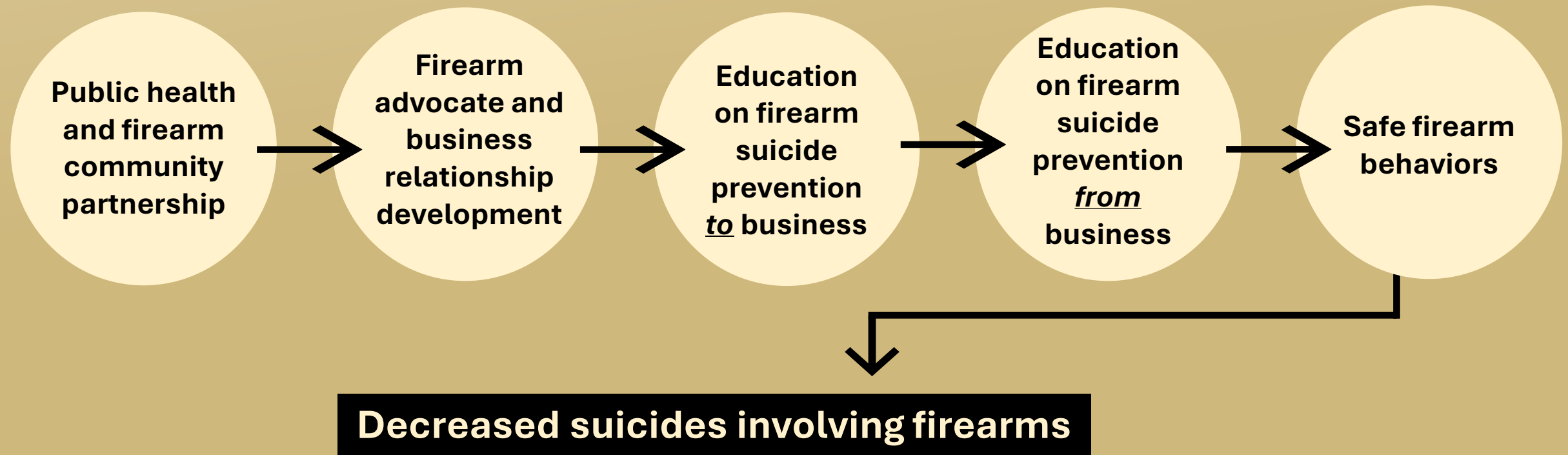
For any mental health, substance use or emotional concern, call **Colorado Crisis Services** at 844-493-TALK (8255) or text TALK to 32855. Learn more at [ColoradoCrisisServices.org](https://coloradocrisiservices.org).

Veterans and their families can also access the **Veterans Crisis Line** by calling 1-800-273-8255 and pressing 1.

Adapted from:



Colorado GSP Theory of Change



Research-Practice Partnership to Evaluate

- Multiple year history of partnerships between the state and university researchers; identified this project as an opportunity to study when the CDC NOFO was released.
- CDC funding made this evaluation possible but note that it did NOT fund implementation.

We'd love to formally evaluate outcomes related to the projects but have very limited funding to implement the project to begin with, and no funding for evaluation of the project.

Polzer E, Brandspigel S, Kelly T, Betz ME. (2021). 'Gun shop projects' for suicide prevention in the USA: current state and future directions. *Injury Prevention*;27:150-154.



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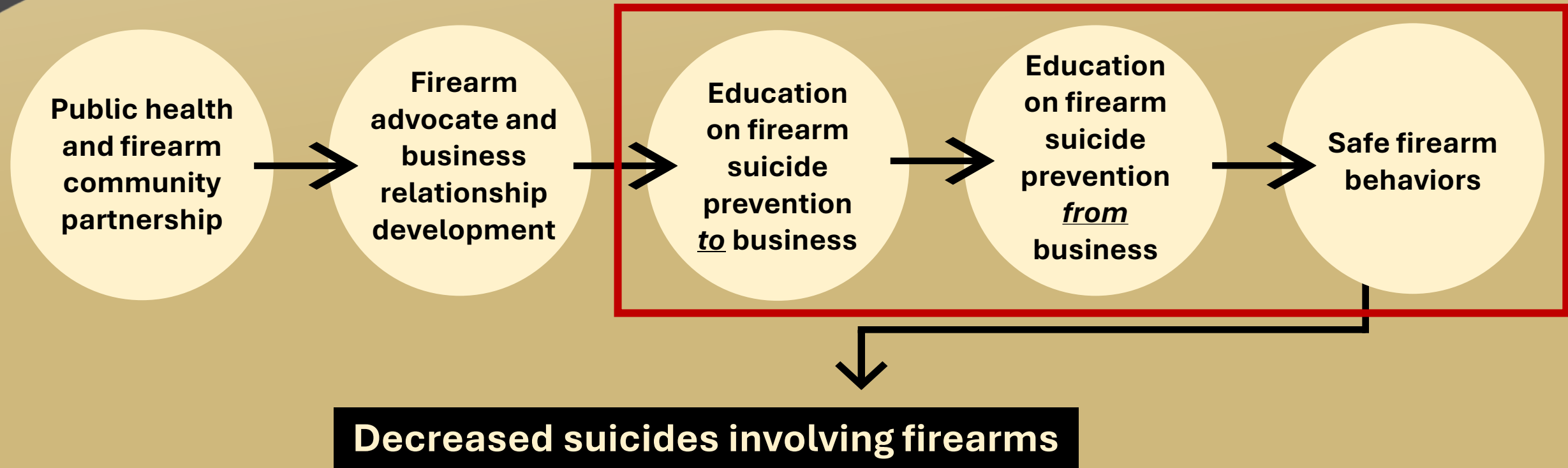


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Colorado GSP Evaluation Methods

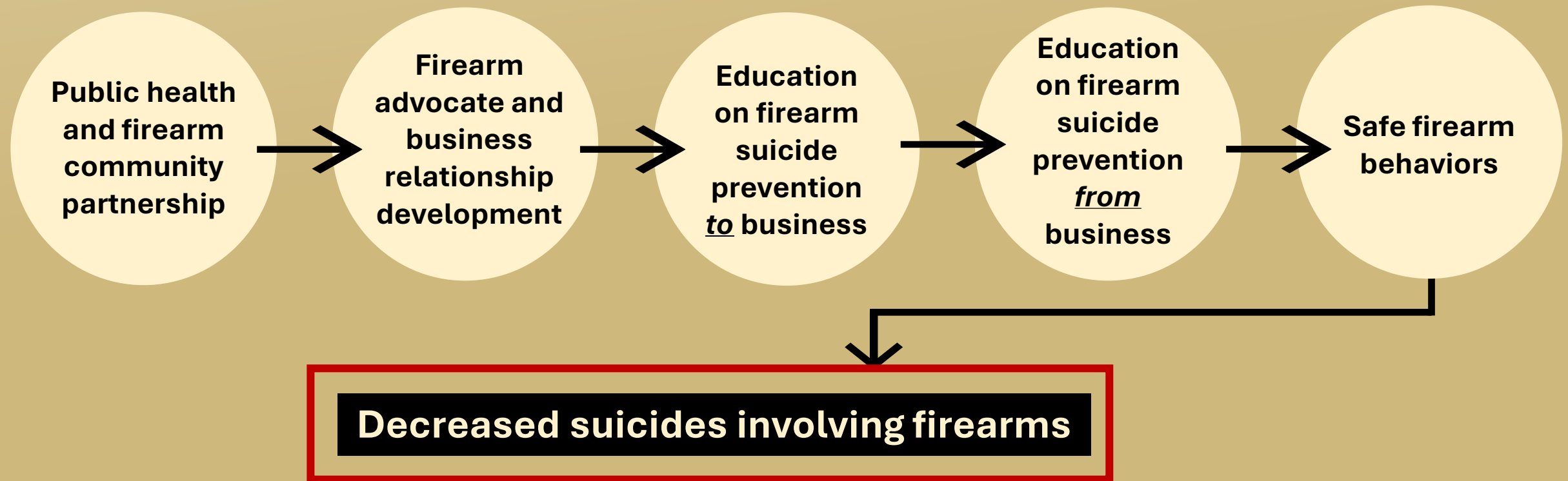


Colorado GSP Evaluation Methods

- **Aim 1.** Administer a cross-sectional survey to firearm businesses participating in GSP to understand the current implementation.
- **Aim 2.** Administer a survey of newly participating business owners/managers, employees and customers before and after implementation to understand how GSP impacts the firearm community's knowledge, attitudes, beliefs and behaviors regarding secure storage and suicide prevention.



Colorado GSP Evaluation Methods



Colorado GSP Evaluation Methods

- **Aim 3.** Conduct an outcome analysis to compare suicide deaths involving a firearm in counties with firearm businesses participating in GSP vs. counties with businesses *not* participating in GSP.
- **Throughout**, collaborated with representatives of the firearms community:
 - Firearm Safety Advisory Board
 - Firearm Advocates with Colorado GSP
 - Support for evaluation from reputable firearms community groups



Results Discussing Today



- **Aim 1.** Administer a cross-sectional survey to firearm businesses participating in GSP to understand the current implementation.
- Ongoing publications of findings can be found on CSPV website



Original research

OPEN ACCESS

Firearm businesses as partners in suicide prevention: a cross-sectional study of the Gun Shop Project in Colorado, USA

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► Additional supplemental material is published online only. To view, please visit the journal online (<https://doi.org/10.1136/ip-2023-045178>).
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Received 19 November 2023
Accepted 28 June 2024

ABSTRACT
Background The Gun Shop Project aims to reduce firearm suicide and is widely implemented in the USA, yet little is known about the core firearm business practices and behaviours that might contribute to preventing firearm suicide.
Methods Owners or managers of all firearm businesses identified as participants in Colorado's Gun Shop Project were invited to respond to a questionnaire. Data collection occurred from March to May 2021. Analyses included unweighted descriptive statistics with CIs and Pearson χ^2 tests for categorical associations.
Results 54 firearm businesses participated (response rate: 28%). Under half reported practices that are Gun Shop Project core aspects (range: 14%–45%). 22% of businesses frequently engaged customers on the importance of safe firearm storage in suicide prevention while 26% had denied a firearm sale and 14% had assisted with temporary secure storage in the past year with customers perceived to be in suicidal crisis. However, high proportions reported willingness to engage in these behaviours if a customer was in crisis: 74% were willing to refuse a sale of a firearm or ammunition, 70% were willing to discuss temporary secure storage options and 70% were willing to direct customers to mental health services.
Conclusions This study suggests that efforts to continue educating and involving firearm businesses may have an impact on the adoption of organisational suicide prevention practices and behaviours. Ongoing efforts are needed to understand core components of Gun Shop Project to inform standardised recommendations for effective firearm business practices that prevent firearm suicide.

WHAT IS ALREADY KNOWN ON THIS TOPIC
⇒ Using trusted messengers to deliver firearm suicide prevention education to the firearms community is a promising pathway to deliver firearm suicide prevention education to a high-risk population with access to firearms. The Gun Shop Project establishes firearm businesses as the trusted messenger to provide this education and services to the firearms community.

WHAT THIS STUDY ADDS
⇒ Little is known on the core components of the Gun Shop Project and how businesses are adopting and implementing them. This study advances our understanding of the core aspects of implementation of the Gun Shop Project in Colorado and which are associated with organisational practices that may prevent firearm suicides.

HOW THIS STUDY MIGHT AFFECT RESEARCH, PRACTICE OR POLICY
⇒ The Gun Shop Project has been widely implemented in US states; implementing agencies and firearm businesses would benefit from guidance on core aspects that are associated with adoption of practices that may prevent suicide. These findings suggest that businesses implementing the Gun Shop project would be better supported with consistent visits and technical assistance to build their understanding of their role in promoting secure firearm storage to prevent firearm suicide and services they could offer to their customers and community.

Wright-Kelly E, Buck-Atkinson JT, Betz ME, *et al.* (2024). Firearm businesses as partners in suicide prevention: a cross-sectional study of the Gun Shop Project in Colorado, USA. *Injury Prevention*. Published Online First: 15 July 2024. doi: 10.1136/ip-2023-045178



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Methods

➤ Design & Population

- Cross-sectional survey (mail, email, phone) to firearm businesses who participated in Colorado GSP between 2015-2020

➤ Response Rate

- 28% (54/196); consistent with other surveys to this population

➤ Measures

- Business participation in GSP
- Suicide prevention practices (typical GSP components)
- Suicide prevention behaviors (engaging customers more directly in suicide prevention)



Key Findings: Participation in GSP

- Only 20% of businesses said they were involved in the Colorado GSP
- Of those who said not involved in GSP, 62% said they were visited by someone who provided information or resources on suicide prevention
- 44% of businesses were aware of Colorado GSP by name



Key Findings: Organizational Practices

Practice	% (95% CI)
Suicide Prevention Materials Available for Customers or on Display (n=54)	
Yes	44.4 (31.8, 57.7)
No	55.6 (42.3, 68.2)
Include Suicide Prevention Materials during a Sale or When Interacting with Customers (n=50)	
Often, Usually, All the Time	14.0 (6.5, 25.5)
Sometimes, Never	86.0 (74.5, 93.5)
Employees Receive Suicide Prevention Training (n=54)	
Yes	16.7 (8.6, 28.2)
No/Unsure	77.8 (65.4, 87.2)
Provide Firearm Safety Instruction to Customers that Includes Suicide Prevention Information (n=29)	
Yes	44.8 (27.9, 62.7)
No/Unsure/Not Applicable	55.2 (37.3, 72.1)
Offer Temporary Secure Storage (n=54)	
Yes	40.7 (28.4, 54.0)
No/Unsure/Not Applicable	59.3 (46.0, 71.7)



Key Findings: Organizational Behaviors

Behaviors	% (95% CI)
Engage customers in conversation about the role secure storage can play in suicide prevention (n=50)	
Often, Usually, All the Time	22.0 (12.3, 34.8)
Sometimes, Never	78.0 (65.2, 87.7)
Assisted a customer with temporary secure storage in last year if in crisis or displaying warning signs of suicide (n=51)	
Yes	13.7 (6.4, 25.1)
No	86.3 (74.9, 93.6)
Denied a sale to customer in last year if in crisis or displaying warning signs of suicide (n=38) ⁺	
Yes	26.3 (14.4, 41.7)
No	73.7 (58.3, 85.6)

⁺ Provided to only businesses that sold firearms/ammunition



Key Findings: Strategies Associated with Behaviors

- **Engaging customers in conversation about role secure storage can play in suicide prevention (22%)**
 - Included suicide prevention materials during a sale or when interacting with customers
 - Provided firearm safety instruction that included suicide prevention to customers
- **Assisting a customer with temporary secure storage if they believed they were in crisis in past year (14%)**
 - No practices associated with this
- **Denying a sale of a firearm to a customer they believed was displaying signs of suicide in the past year (26%)**
 - No practices associated with this
 - Those who had been directly impacted by a suicide or those with strong knowledge about connection between firearms and suicide



Key Findings: Willingness to Engage

Behaviors	% (95% CI)
<i>Willingness to Engage in Behaviors (responded 'Yes')* (n=54)</i>	
Refuse sale/rental of a firearm/ammunition	74.1 (61.3, 84.3)
Discuss temporary secure storage options	70.4 (57.4, 81.3)
Direct to mental health services	70.4 (57.4, 81.3)
Notify law enforcement	46.3 (33.5, 59.5)
Ask directly if considering suicide	42.6 (30.1, 55.9)
Notify other firearm establishment of your concern	35.2 (23.5, 48.4)

* More than one response option allowed



Recommendations for Practice

- **Make it easy for firearm businesses to provide education on suicide prevention.**
 - Provide businesses with an easy opportunity to facilitate conversations with their customers through safety training or instruction or as an educational pamphlet
- **Keep showing up to support firearm businesses.**
 - Need repeated and consistent contact between firearm advocates and firearm businesses engaging in GSP to provide ongoing support
 - Provide technical assistance on services they could offer
- **Standardize the GSP components that could be provided to businesses.**
 - Educational materials, plus training for employees and offering temporary storage
- **Federal, States, foundations, or other funding sources should invest in GSP implementation.**
 - Infrastructure (e.g., core staff, funding for local communities, educational materials) is critical for success



Thank you!

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Find future results on the
CSPV website



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