



Arizonans for Gun Safety
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NEWS RELEASE

Gun Violence Taking a Toll on Arizonans State's Death Rate Exceeds National Rate

Between 1998 and 2002, 4,315 Arizona residents died as a result of firearm misuse, according to a report being released Tuesday, January 18 at "*Public Health Approaches to Reducing Gun Violence*". Of those deaths, 4,008 were the result of firearm violence -- 2,452 (56.8%) from suicide and 1,556 (36.1%) from homicide.

Arizonans for Gun Safety will host a forum to address gun violence in Arizona, Tuesday from 3- 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center. "*Public Health Approaches to Reducing Gun Violence*" will feature Dr. David Hemenway, Director of Harvard's Injury Control Research Center and a panel of Arizona experts discussing Arizona's gun violence issues, what other states are doing to curb violence, and new approaches to reducing gun deaths and injuries. "These numbers are alarming," says Hildy Saizow, president of Arizonans for Gun Safety. "Arizona rates are one and a half times the national rate in gun homicides and even higher in our gun suicides. This is a public health issue that needs attention now and we are pleased to have Dr. Hemenway here to share insights on how we can work collaboratively to protect our citizens."

The Harvard Injury Control Research Center is the coordinating center for the National Violence Injury Statistics System whose goal is to improve available data on suicide and homicide. In his book, "Private Guns, Public Health," Dr. Hemenway addresses the effects of gun carrying, storage practices, the use of guns in self defense, among adolescents, on college campuses and the relationship between gun prevalence and homicide, suicide and unintentional gun deaths. Joining him will be local experts concerned with the effect of gun violence on Arizona citizens and how health officials, law enforcement and the public can work together are:

- **Dr. Mary Rimza** of ASU's School of Health Management and chair of the Child Fatality Review
- **Dr. Nicholas Theodore**, Director of Neurotrauma. Barrow Neurological Institute
- **Jerry Oliver**, Special Policy Advisor on Public Safety for the Arizona Office of Attorney General

Attendees will receive a packet with findings from the Firearms Related Injuries Report. The final report will be released in the coming weeks by St. Joseph's Hospital Trauma Administration.

"Public Health Approaches to Gun Violence" is being held at Barrow Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital in the Leonard Goldman Auditorium, 350 W. Thomas Rd. (3rd Ave. entrance) from 3:00- 6:30 p.m. The event is presented by Arizonans for Gun Safety with support from the Arizona Community Foundation, Barrow's Neurological Institute at St. Joseph's Hospital and Medical Center and the Arizona Department of Health Services.

Arizonans for Gun Safety (AzGS) is a statewide, grassroots, non-profit organization dedicated to reducing gun deaths and injuries with common sense, prevention-oriented solutions. We have supporters in both Phoenix and Tucson representing health care, child advocacy groups, faith communities, law enforcement, education, parent groups and community organizations. Our mission is to engage individuals, organizations and public officials from diverse communities in a statewide campaign to prevent gun violence.