FIREARM VIOLENCE IN KING COUNTY:
A LOOK AT THE DATA

Tony Gomez
Violence and Injury Prevention Manager
Presentation Outline

Background
Youth firearm violence
Firearm suicide
Firearm domestic violence
Data needs
Firearm violence is a public safety and public health issue

- More people in King County are killed each year by gun violence than car crashes.
- On average, 130 people die from gun violence.
- $177 million each year in medical costs & lost productivity in King County.

Average annual number of King County deaths from gun violence, 2006-2010:

- Firearm Violence: 130
- Car Crashes: 102
Firearm deaths in King County: Twice as many firearm suicides as homicides

- Homicide: 29%
- Suicide: 68%
- Other Intent: 3%
  - Unintentional: 0.3%
  - Legal intervention/undetermined: 2.7%
Firearm hospitalizations in King County: About 3 out of 4 due to assaults

- Assaults: 73%
- Self-inflicted: 6%
- Unintentional: 15%
- Other intent: 6%
Among children, firearm homicides are more common than suicides.

**King County Firearm Deaths – All Ages, 2006-2010**
- Suicide: 68%
- Homicide: 29%
- Other intent: 3%

**King County Firearm Deaths – Children (<18 yrs.), 1999-2012**
- Suicide: 37%
- Homicide: 62%
- Undetermined: 1%
Young adults, ages 18-29, comprise about half of both firearm homicide victims and suspects.
Firearm homicides of 18-29 year olds disproportionately affect African American/Black and American Indian/Alaska Native young adults.
Young victims more often strangers or acquaintances of suspects; closer relationships with suspects for older victims.
Youth firearm homicides summary

- Among children (<18 yrs), firearm homicides are more common than firearm suicides.
- Young males are more likely to die from firearm homicides than young females.
- Young victims more often strangers or acquaintances with suspects.
- African Americans of all ages face firearm homicide rates seven times higher than whites.
In the U.S. and King County, firearm suicide rates increase with age and are the highest among elderly men.

King County firearm suicide rates for males are eight times higher than for females.

In King County, whites & American Indian/Alaska Natives have the highest firearm suicide rates.
Firearm ownership and storage practices

- Nearly one-quarter of King County households have firearms.
- Firearms valued at over $4 million were reported stolen in Washington in 2012.
- Statewide 84 incidents involving a firearm in school system during 2011-2012 school year.
- Risk of completed firearm suicide among King County youth <18 years is 9.2 times higher when firearms are stored unlocked.

**Storage Practices among Households with Firearms – King County, 2009**

- 23% (41,300 Households) loaded
- 14% (26,500 Households) loaded & unlocked
Total motives/crime classifications of firearm homicides by victim age

18-29 Years
- Heat Of Anger: 27%
- Gang: 21%
- Drug Related: 15%
- Other: 16%
- Domestic Violence: 4%
- Accidental: 4%
- Robbery: 5%
- Revenge: 8%

30+ Years
- Heat Of Anger: 25%
- Gang: 8%
- Drug Related: 12%
- Other: 30%
- Domestic Violence: 13%
- Accidental: 1%
- Robbery: 7%
- Revenge: 4%

Firearm Violence-Homicide

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Total motives/crime classifications of firearm homicides by victim gender

**Females**
- Domestic Violence: 30%
- Other: 38%
- Heat of Anger: 17%
- Drug Related: 4%
- Revenge: 2%
- Robbery: 4%
- Accidental: 4%

**Males**
- Domestic Violence: 27%
- Gang: 18%
- Drug Related: 15%
- Other: 20%
- Revenge: 7%
- Robbery: 6%
- Accidental: 3%
- Heat of Anger: 4%
- Other: 0%
Over 60% of domestic violence firearm homicides occurred in a private residence.

### 10 Leading Locations – Domestic Violence Firearm Homicides

- **Home/Single/Family**: 37
- **Apt/Condo**: 24
- **Motor Vehicle**: 5
- **Paved Street/Highway**: 5
- **Business/Office Bldg.**: 3
- **Driveway**: 3
- **Parking Lot, Motor Vehicle**: 3
- **Restaurant**: 3
- **Apt/Condo, Parking Lot**: 2
- **Apt/Condo, Parking Lot, Motor Vehicle**: 2

Percentages range from 0 to 100.
Domestic violence firearm homicides summary

- Domestic violence was reported as a motive 3 times more often among victims older (≥ 30 yrs.) than younger victims.
- Domestic violence is reported as a motive more often in incidents involving female than male firearm homicide victims.
- Majority (~60%) of domestic violence firearm homicides occurred in a private residence.
Data needs for prevention efforts

- Contextual information to understand circumstances of incidents and identify risk factors
  - What individual- and community-level factors lead to patterns of suicide and homicide?

- Details on prior histories of violence or interactions with law enforcement
  - Individual information may be available through law enforcement or court records; often cannot be shared due to legal restrictions

- Systematic, standardized data collection and sharing mechanisms
Key findings – firearm violence in King County

- Magnitude and pattern of firearm homicide and suicide deaths are different
  - Rate of firearm suicide is two times higher than firearm homicides
- Firearm homicides impact male youth of color
- Firearm suicide affect older adult white males
- “Heat of Anger” is the leading firearm homicide motivation for all ages, while domestic violence is an increased factor among victims 30 years and older
- Domestic violence is reported as the motive more commonly among female firearm homicide victims and primarily occurred in a private residence
- Limited contextual information to understand circumstances of incident and presence of risk factors (e.g. suspect criminal history or firearm ownership)
Thank You.

Acknowledgements

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Public Health – Seattle & King County
  Prevention Division, Injury and Violence Prevention Unit
  Assessment, Policy Development and Evaluation Unit
# Data sources for this presentation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Data Source</th>
<th>Provider</th>
<th>Limitations</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Death Certificates</td>
<td>WA State Department of Health</td>
<td>Limited information on perpetrator or incident circumstances</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehensive Hospital Abstract Reporting System (CHARS)</td>
<td>WA State Department of Health</td>
<td>Emergency department visits not included; inpatient discharge information (not medical record)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Medical Examiner Data</td>
<td>King County Medical Examiner’s Office</td>
<td>Deaths based on occurrence rather than residence; includes non-residents of King County</td>
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<tr>
<td>Homicide Investigation Tracking System (HITS)</td>
<td>WA State Attorney General’s Office</td>
<td>Limited information on suicides</td>
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<tr>
<td>Child Death Review</td>
<td>Public Health – Seattle &amp; King County</td>
<td>Case series; limited to deaths under 18 years of age</td>
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Seattle PD and King County Sheriff’s Office cover over 70% of firearm homicide occurrences.

Firearm Homicide Occurrences by Law Enforcement Agency Jurisdiction — King County, WA, 2001-2012

Top 7 agencies together have jurisdiction over 94% of King County firearm homicide occurrence.