Presenters

Dr. Robert Orth
Research Specialist Consultant
PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD)
Assistant Professor
Indiana University of PA

Dr. Brandon Vick
Research Specialist Consultant
PA Commission on Crime & Delinquency (PCCD)
Associate Professor
Indiana University of PA
About PCCD

• **Mission:** To enhance the quality, coordination, and planning within the criminal and juvenile justice systems, to facilitate the delivery of services to victims of crime, and to increase the safety of our communities.

• **Vision:** To be a state and national leader supporting programs and practices that promote justice for all citizens and communities of Pennsylvania.

• **Statutory Role:** Serves as the justice planning and policymaking agency for the Commonwealth.
In 2019-20, PCCD was tasked with convening a Special Council on Gun Violence to assess the issue + make recommendations for improvement.

Among its many recommendations, the Council’s Report highlighted a need to enhance the quality and availability of data and research related to gun violence to inform policy and practice.

This included two recommendations (and underlying action items) explicitly focused on research and data.

1. Examining impact and implementation of Act 79 of 2018 (domestic violence weapons relinquishment law).
2. Significantly increase investments in data collection, reporting, analyses, and research focused on fatal and nonfatal firearm-related injuries and crimes.
3. Included 5 priorities in its research agenda
Assessing local implementation of a new state law designed to protect domestic violence victims.

Data/Research Priority #5: Intersections of Gun Violence with Domestic Violence and Intimate Partner Violence in PA

What We’ve Done So Far. First-of-its-kind statewide quantitative assessment of local jurisdictions’ implementation of Act 79 of 2018, a law requiring relinquishment of guns and other weapons by domestic abusers; completed as part of the agency’s 2021 SAC grant.

Challenges + Gaps. Additional qualitative research is needed to further explain variances between counties in terms of implementation patterns and to inform state-level resource allocations (e.g., through Byrne SCIP).

Data Sources. Protection From Abuse Database (PFAD) system data supplied by PSP, court processing data from Administrative Office of Pennsylvania Courts (AOPC)
PFA and WR Analysis

Findings

*PFA and WR*: 35% of unique cases ending in a final PFA order included a WR order (Over 60,000 WR orders across the state). 85% of these had a successful weapons retrieval (90% in same day).

*3-year Case growth*: 12% no granted final order; 29% with final order; 47% PFAs including WR Order.

*Prevalence of PFA Cases*: 645 per 100,000 households.

*Prevalence of Cases with WR Order*: 259 per 100,000 households owning firearms (RAND estimate of ownership).

WR orders were granted in 79% of cases where petitioner requested WR

Weapons were involved in 7% of cases

Limitations/Next Steps

PFAD not linked to court docket sheets – lack understanding of full process (i.e. withdrawn PFAs, etc.)

No iterative numbering system for subsequent petitions (i.e. multiple temporary and/or final orders)

Additional analysis on emergency PFA orders (and their outcomes for final PFAs and WRs)

Information on final WR orders missing from large counties
Measuring costs of nonfatal firearm injuries over a 5-year period in Pennsylvania.

**Data/Research Priority #4:** Estimating the Scope and Costs of Fatal and Nonfatal Firearm Injuries in PA

**What We’ve Learned So Far.** Data on costs and prevalence of nonfatal firearm injury is a significant research gap. PCCD used a 2020 SAC grant to examine 10,640 nonfatal firearm injuries that occurred between 2016-2020. Initial treatment of these injuries resulted in medical costs totaling $308.4 million, or $51 million per year. Additional longer-term costs were also examined.

**Challenges + Gaps.** Researchers relied on data from participating hospitals across Pennsylvania and does not reflect 100% of gun injuries during the time period examined.

**Data Sources.** Nonfatal firearm-related injury data supplied by Pennsylvania Health Care Cost Containment Council (PHC4)
Nonfatal Firearm Injury Analysis

Findings

*Increasing Injuries:* Total injuries increased by 20 percent and the medical cost for these injuries increased by 107 percent; Accidental injuries increased by 46%; Assaults by 5%. The number of firearm injuries rose dramatically immediately after the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic.

*Disparities:* The poorest one-fifth of zip codes incurred nearly 60% of the total medical costs. Two-thirds of all patients of firearm injuries were Black, despite making up only 11 percent of the population.

*Long-term Harms:* 16% of new injuries require additional hospital visits and incur nearly four times the medical costs. Over 3% of new firearm injuries result in paralysis, increasing costs over the first year to over $100,000.

*Large Economic Costs:* The total economic losses of firearm are an estimated $300 million per year and $1.5 billion for the five-year timespan studied.

Limitations /Next Steps

Imperfect diagnosis coding of assault vs. accidental injuries (underestimate assault).

Do not consider disability and unemployment payments... short-term.

Needs to be considered with fatal shootings.

More analysis to be done at the local level in the context of changing gun culture and “markets”.
Thank You

bcvick@iup.edu
dpfs@iup.edu