

# MINUTES MATTER

## Know the Facts About Suicide and Guns

*In North Carolina teens often make the impulsive decision to end their lives. When provided easy access to a firearm it is almost always a permanent and deadly decision.*

- In North Carolina more than 50% of all firearm deaths are suicides (WISQARS)
- In North Carolina suicide is the 2nd leading cause of violent death for adolescents (WISQARS)
- 49 % of youth suicides in North Carolina involve a firearm—the largest chosen method (WISQARS)
- A study of youth under 18 who attempted suicide found 1/3 who attempted suicide made the decision same day & in many cases the same hour (Harvard School of Public Health)
- In a study of firearm suicide survivors the majority stated ‘availability’ as the reason they choose a gun (Harvard School of Public Health)
- An study of firearm suicides among youth under 18 occurring found that **82% used a firearm belonging to a family member, usually a parent**. When storage status was noted, about two-thirds of the firearms had been stored unlocked. Among the remaining cases in which the firearms had been locked the youth knew the combination or where the key was kept or broke into the cabinet (Harvard School of Public Health)
- Firearm suicide is significantly more fatal, more than *90 percent of suicide attempts with a gun are fatal*. In comparison, only 3 percent of attempts with drugs or cutting are fatal (Harvard School of Public Health)
- Suicide death isn’t inevitable, A study of individuals who attempted suicide and survived found that nine out of ten did not go on to die by suicide at a later date (Owens 2002)

Reducing at-risk youth’s access to firearms has been proven to reduce their risk of suicide death and yet. .

- In a recent study 45% of North Carolina gun owners with children in the home report leaving their weapons unlocked and 36% report leaving the weapon **loaded**
- More than 168,000 children and teens in North Carolina live in homes with loaded guns
- More than 82,000 live in homes with guns that are loaded and unlocked
- In a study among gun-owning parents who reported that their children had never handled their firearms at home, **22% of the children, questioned separately, said that they had** (Baxley F, Miller M. 2006)

Sources: WISQARS™ (Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System), Harvard School of Public Health , The Center to Prevent Youth Violence