



**Public Health Law**  
**WEBINAR SERIES**

# Law and Policy Issues in Reducing Firearm Violence among Children and Teens: The Role of Public Health

Presenter: Jon S. Vernick, J.D., M.P.H.

Moderator: Ellen Schmidt

*Audio will begin at 2:00 PM ET.*

*You can listen through your computer speakers or call 866-835-7973*



# Meeting Orientation

- If you are having any technical problems joining the webinar please contact the Adobe Connect hotline at **1-800-416-7640** or email [csninfo@edc.org](mailto:csninfo@edc.org)
- Type any additional questions or comments into the Q&A box on the left.



# Introductory Polls



# Reducing Gun Violence Among Children and Teens

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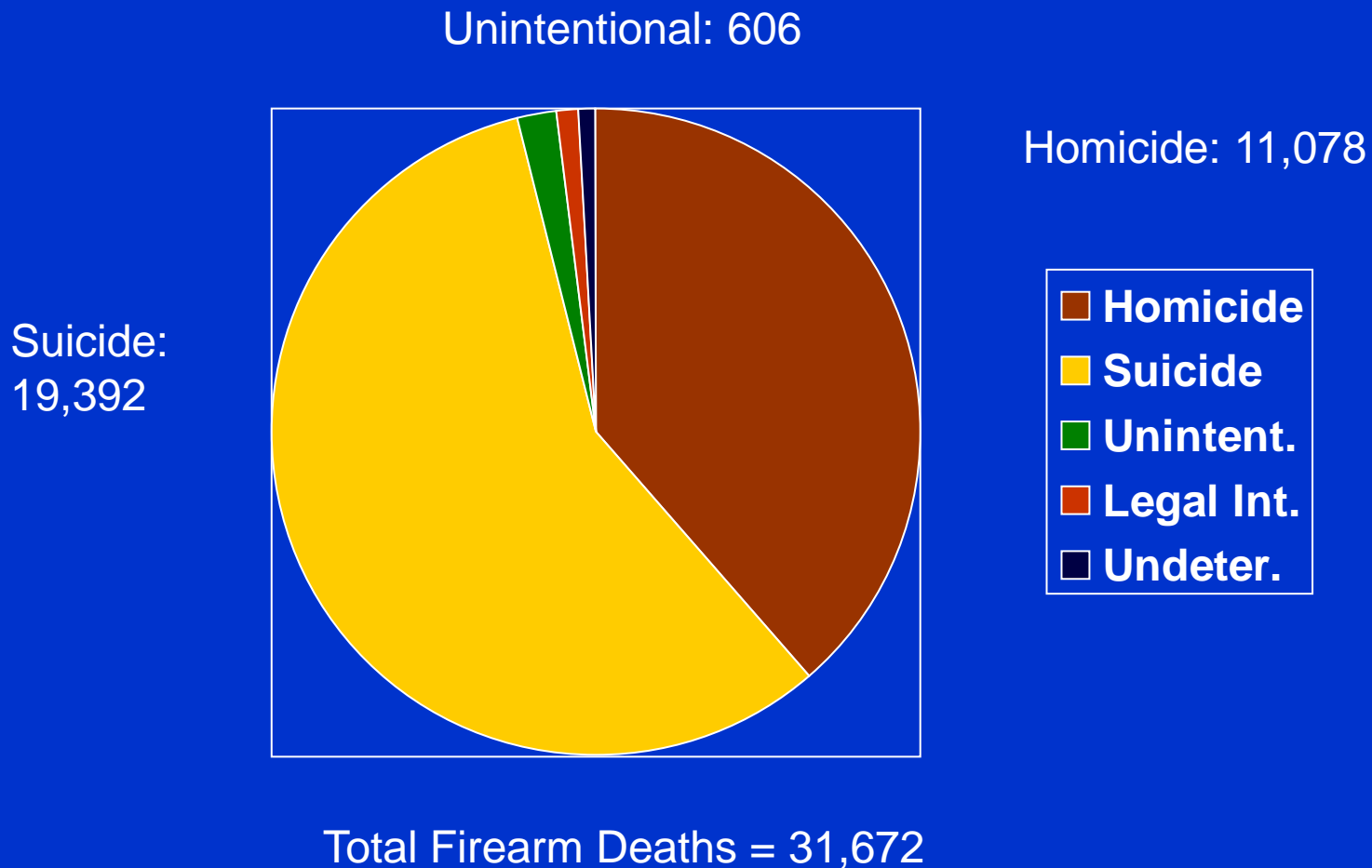
Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research

# Guns in the United States

An estimated 280 million guns in private hands:

- Of these, about 60% are long guns (rifles and shotguns) and 40% handguns
- About 1/3 of households and 1/4 of individuals have at least one gun
- Of households with children and guns, 22% store guns loaded and 32% unlocked

# Firearm-related Deaths in the U.S., 2010



Source: CDC, WISQARS

# Non-Fatal Firearm Injuries

- An estimated 73,505 non-fatal injuries in 2010 (requiring at least ED treatment)
- About 2.3 non-fatal firearm injuries for every fatality

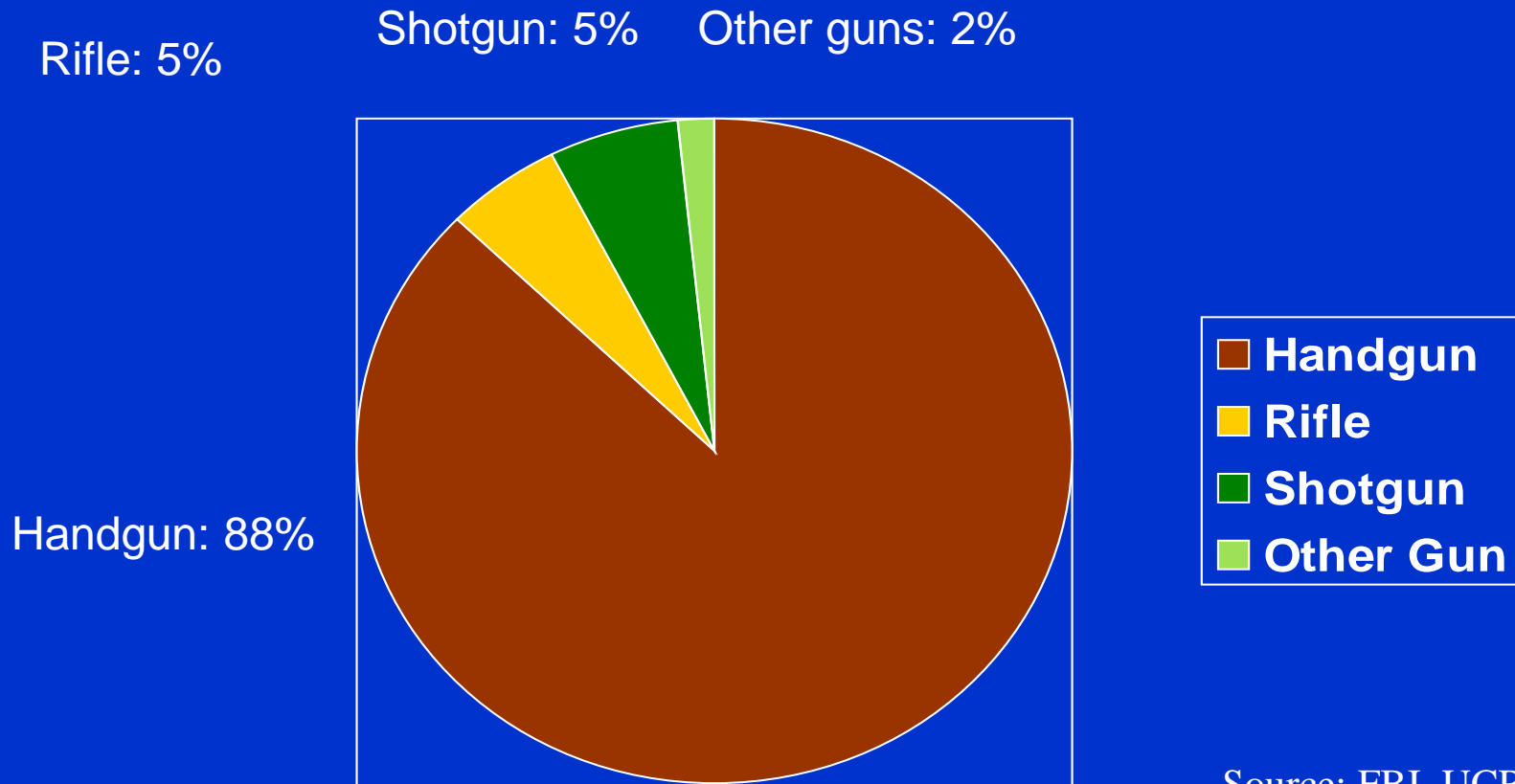
Source: CDC: WISQARS

# Gun Deaths and Injuries Among Children and Young Adults

- From 2000 to 2010, for those ages 0 to 20 years, 41,251 gun deaths, including:
  - 27,030 homicides
  - 11,450 suicides
  - 1,883 unintentional deaths
  - 514 deaths of undetermined intent
- Also, more than 200,000 non-fatal injuries requiring at least ED treatment



# Firearm Homicides by Type of Gun, 2010



Source: FBI, UCR

Total Firearm Homicides for which Type of Gun is Known = 6,836

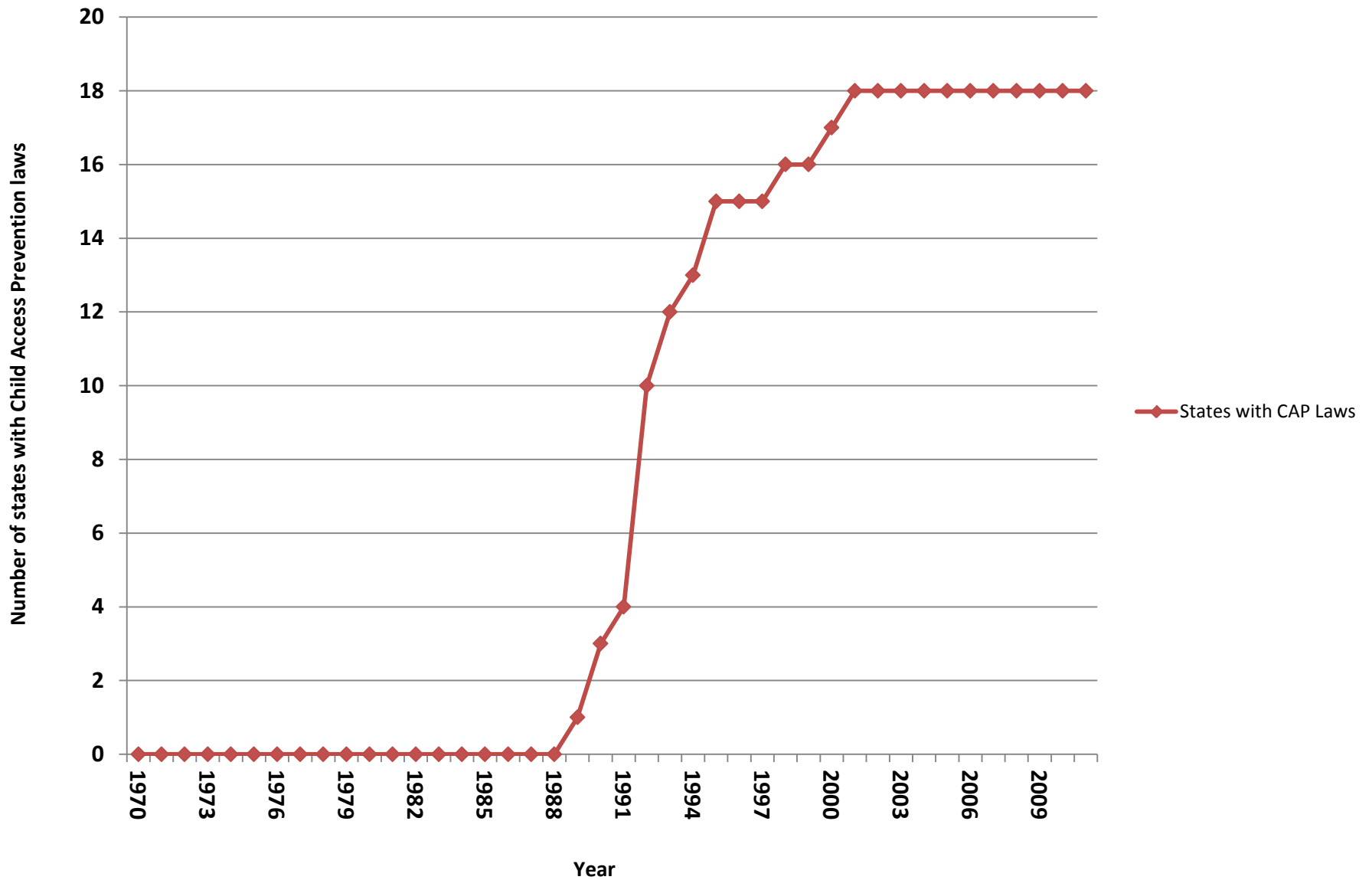
# Some Ways to Prevent These Deaths and Injuries

- 1) Child Access Prevention Laws:  
Owner/storage focused
- 2) Safer Gun Designs: Gun focused
- 3) Mentoring and Violence Interruption:  
User/Community focused

# Child Access Prevention (CAP) Gun Laws

- Require a gun owner to store his/her gun so that young child cannot gain easy access
- Age limit varies by state
- Penalty (felony or misdemeanor) varies
- 18 states (and DC) currently have CAP
- No new CAP laws enacted recently

# Total Number of States with Child Access Prevention Laws, 1970-2011



# Evaluations of CAP Laws

- Enactment of CAP laws associated with fewer (- 23%) unintentional gun deaths among children 0-14 (Cummings et al.)
- Associated with fewer (- 8%) suicides among teens 14-17 (Webster & Vernick, et al.)
- Felony penalty more effective
- No information yet about changes in storage practices associated with CAP

# Safer Gun Designs

- Guns can be made safer
- Loaded chamber indicator (LCI) tells if a pistol is loaded
- Personalized (aka “smart”) guns operate only for authorized users
- Consumer Product Safety Commission is forbidden to regulate safe design of guns

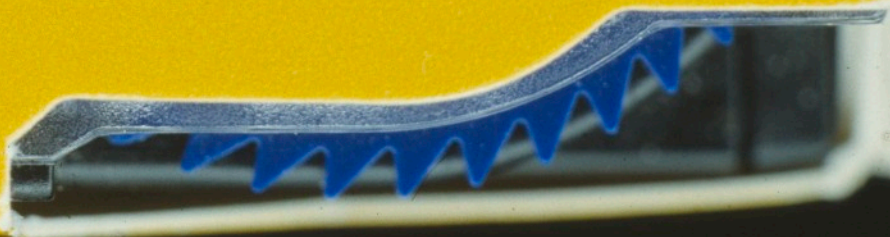


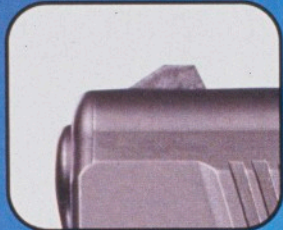
**SHOOT**

**3**



**PICTURES  
REMAINING**





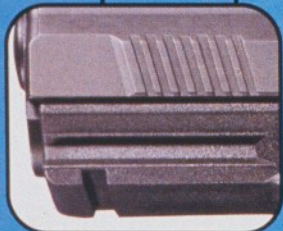
• Multiple front sight heights



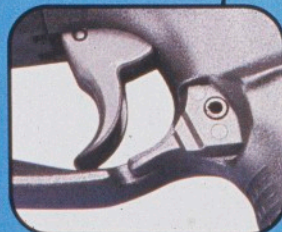
• Loaded chamber indicator (on opposite side of gun)



• Decocking button



• Equipment Groove  
• Front Slide Serrations



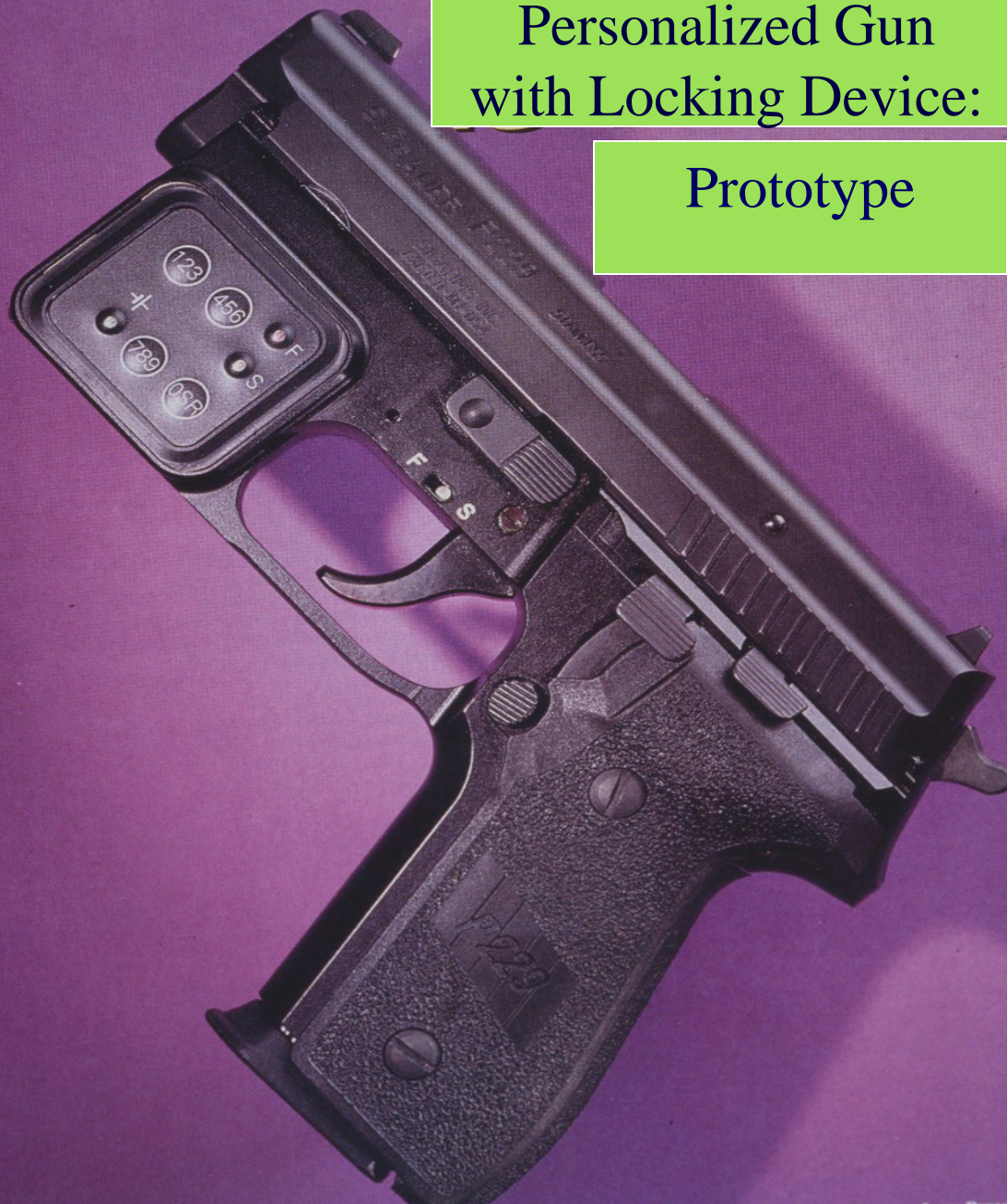
• Ambidextrous Magazine Release





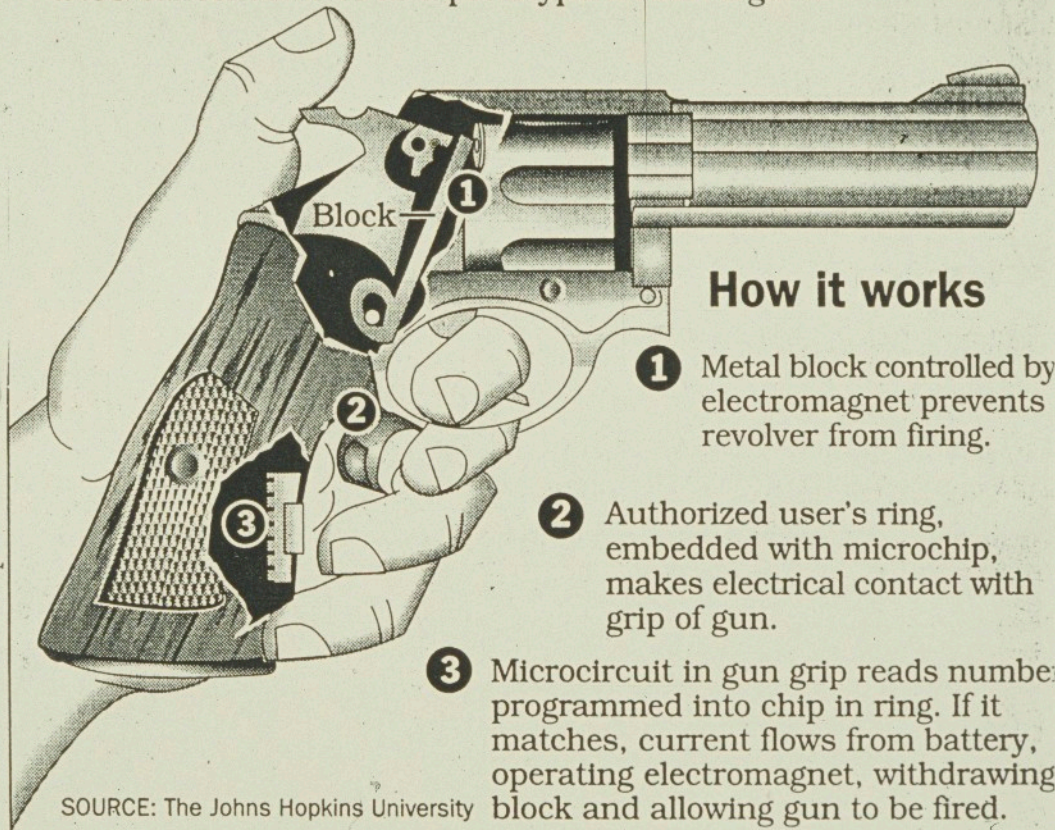
Personalized Gun  
with Locking Device:

Prototype



## A PERSONALIZED GUN

A gun designed so that it could be fired only by a person wearing an electronically coded ring would reduce the number of suicides, accidental shootings and crimes committed with stolen guns. Engineering students at the Johns Hopkins University "personalized" a .38-caliber revolver as a prototype of such a gun.



### How it works

**1** Metal block controlled by electromagnet prevents revolver from firing.

**2** Authorized user's ring, embedded with microchip, makes electrical contact with grip of gun.

**3** Microcircuit in gun grip reads number programmed into chip in ring. If it matches, current flows from battery, operating electromagnet, withdrawing block and allowing gun to be fired.

SOURCE: The Johns Hopkins University



## When the User Grips the Handle . . .

1

A signal is sent from the gun to the wristband . . .

2

. . . which responds with a coded signal.

3

If the code matches, a chip releases a blocking mechanism, enabling the gun to be fired.

Sources: Colt's Manufacturing; Smart.Links

Photograph by George Ruhe for The New York Times

## Proportion of all unintentional firearm deaths preventable by various safety devices

In a study using medical examiner data from Maryland and Wisconsin:

- 20 % of deaths preventable by LCI
- 37% of deaths preventable by a personalized gun
- 442 deaths might have prevented in 2000 if all guns had both devices: many involve children

# Design Changes Supported by the Public

- 73% support law requiring LCIs
- 71% support personalized guns law
- California and Massachusetts have LCI laws; New Jersey has a novel personalized gun law

Source: Teret, Webster, Vernick et al., *NEJM* 1998

# “CeaseFire = “Safe Streets” Community Intervention

- Begun in Chicago by Gary Slutkin and colleagues
- Replication in Baltimore



# Core Components of CeaseFire


- Outreach to high-risk youth in high-risk neighborhoods with credible messengers
- Conflict mediation/Violence Interruption
- Community mobilization including clergy and CBOs
- Public education: posters, PSAs

# Community Mobilization






# Public Education



**DON'T SHOOT.**  
I want to grow up.

CeaseFire Hotline  
312-355-0206  
[www.ceasefirechicago.org](http://www.ceasefirechicago.org)

THE CHICAGO PROJECT FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION



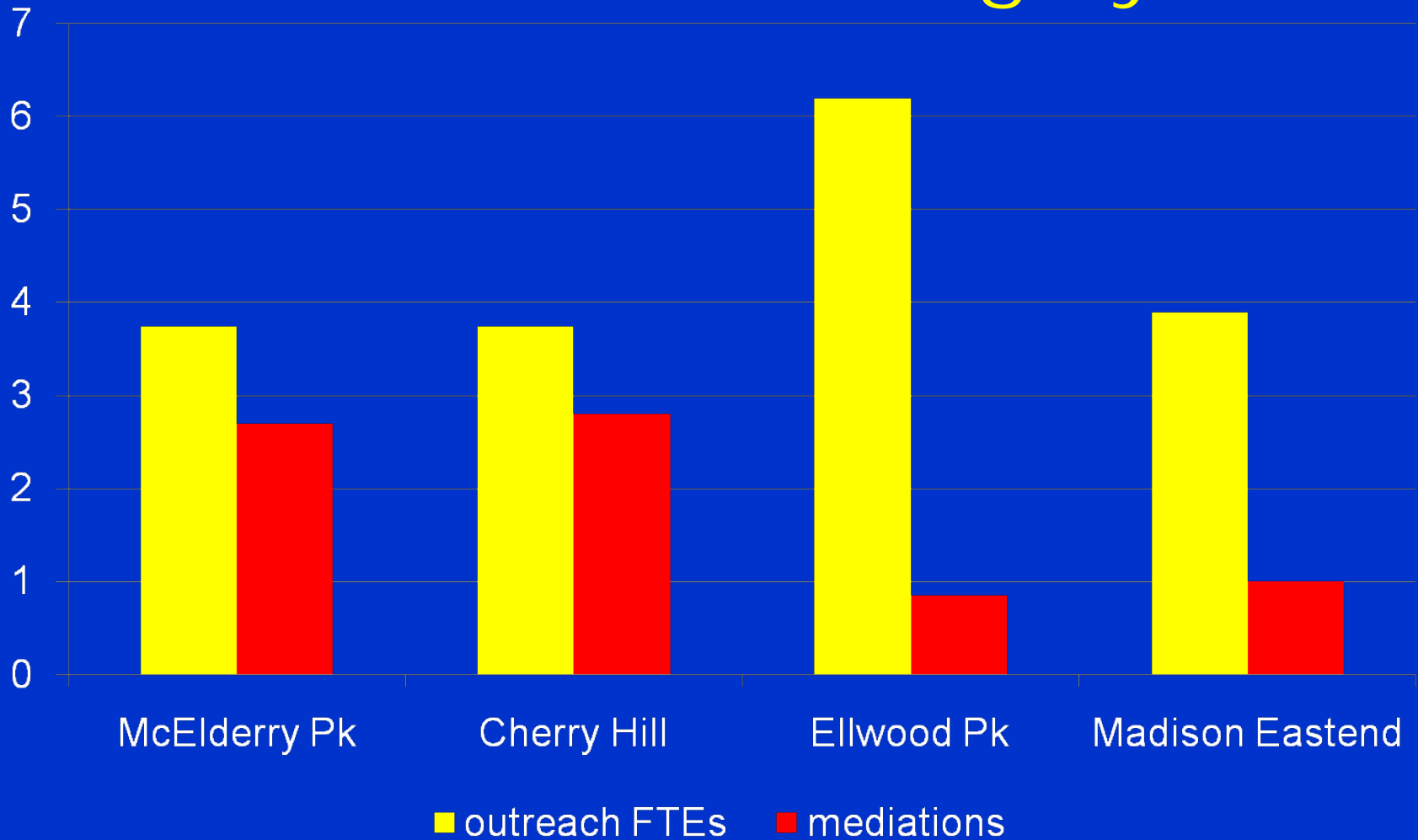
# Summary of Chicago CeaseFire Evaluation

- 7 intervention sites with 33-59 months of post-intervention follow-up
- Significant reductions in shootings in 6 sites (Skogan, et al.)
- Reductions were significantly greater than comparisons in 4 sites (-16% to - 34%)
- No retaliatory homicides in 4 sites

# Baltimore Safe Streets

- Initially implemented in 4 neighborhoods beginning in June 2007
- Substantial difference in implementation across neighborhoods
- Estimated cost of \$375,000 per year/per neighborhood
- Evaluation examined multiple outcomes

# Conflicts Mediated Per Month and Outreach Staffing by Site



## Responses to Questions on Support for Shooting to Settle Disputes, Survey Waves 1 and 2 Combined: % Reporting Not OK

<i>Do you think it's okay to shoot someone if ...</i>	% No	
	Int.	Comp.
Guy dancing with girlfriend.	68	53
Guy beat up my brother last week.	65	49
Guy robbed me of \$50 and boots.	50	42
Guy hasn't paid \$100 he owes me.	61	42
Guy disrespects me in front of my friends. I think he is carrying a gun.	42	44

# Baltimore Safe Streets: Evaluation

- Substantial reductions in homicides in 2 neighborhoods with best implementation (Cherry Hill: -56%; McElderry Pk: -53%)
- Some reduction in border neighborhoods
- On-street survey of high risk youths:
  - 86% less likely to have strong support for using guns to settle disputes in intervention
  - Evident at 6 months and sustained 22 months

# Two Approaches that Do Not Appear to Work

- Gun buy-back (turn-in) programs
- Teaching children to always be safe around guns

# Gun Buy-Back (Turn-in) Programs

- Very popular programs
- Guns often exchanged for some incentive (cash, product, etc.)
- Police usually involved to be sure gun is not stolen or associated with a shooting
- Very “successful” programs might net from several hundred up to 1,000+ guns



# Gun Buy-Back Programs: The Good News

- Relatively easy to implement
- May serve as a form of community mobilization to address gun violence
- May reduce household level risk factors

# Gun Buy-Back Programs: The Bad News

- No evidence of reduction in street crime
- Relatively few guns recovered compared to number in circulation
- Disproportionately:
  - Lower risk people
  - Lower risk guns
  - Non-functioning guns
- May discourage communities from more effective approaches

# Teaching Children to Always Be Safe Around Guns

- No evidence that children exposed to various educational interventions are less likely to play with guns they find in the home
- Dangerous to rely on education alone

# Guns: Some Legal Issues

- Second Amendment
- Preemption
- Recent Gun Law Changes

# *District of Columbia v. Heller*

- Decided by Supreme Court: June 26, 2008
- Established individual right to own handguns in the home
- Struck down D.C.'s handgun ban
- Certain law are presumptively valid:
  - prohibiting felons or the severely mentally ill from owning guns
  - requiring safe storage
  - imposing conditions on the sale of guns
  - restricting the carrying of dangerous or unusual weapons

# Since *Heller*

- Numerous challenges to gun laws
- Overwhelmingly the lower courts have upheld gun laws
- Some remaining issues, including restrictions on carrying guns outside the home

# Preemption

- Primary federal gun law (Gun Control Act of 1968) permits states to act if their law doesn't conflict with federal law
- Localities have only the powers granted by the state
- More than 40 states preempt some or all local gun laws
- Some preemption is not total, though

# Recent Gun Law Changes

- U.S. Senate fails to pass a universal background check law
- 4 major state laws since Newtown: NY, MD, CT, CO
- Other trends:
  - “Stand your ground” laws
  - Expansion of concealed carry laws
  - Physician counseling law in Florida



# Conclusion

- Public health approach works: 1) identifying risk factors; 2) developing interventions; 3) implementing those interventions; and 4) evaluating results
- We do know something about what works and what doesn't: no single approach
- We can reduce the risk of gun violence for children and families.



# Questions?



# Thank you!

Thank you for your participation!

Please take a moment to take a brief survey on your webinar experience:

[https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/firearmpolicy\\_may222013](https://www.surveymonkey.com/s/firearmpolicy_may222013)