



## **GA Legislative Study Committee on Public Health Impact of Gun Violence**

Georgia has a gun violence crisis. We can no longer ignore the fact that Georgia has some of the highest levels of gun-related violence in the country. The public health burden is rising from gun violence: Deaths, injuries, anxiety and other associated harms pose substantial risks to the health of the public and take a devastating toll on our communities.

### **Problem**

Gun violence related statistics for [Georgia](#), from 2014-2019, are alarming: 10,917 incidents of gun related violence, 82 mass shootings, 3,283 deaths, 5,121 injuries, 181 children dead or injured, and more - from law enforcement involved shootings to unintentional shootings. [Georgia](#) ranks 18th among US states for gun-related deaths and 11th for gun-related murders. Firearms caused 71% of recorded domestic violence fatalities in 2016, and of the more than 1,200 gun deaths per year, nearly two-thirds are suicides.

### **Research/Data**

As of March 2018, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention was allotted \$50 million to study the causes and effects of gun violence provided that it does not “promote gun control.” However, Georgia cannot rely only on federal government research to find solutions for our state. Georgia needs its own study of gun violence as a way of adopting comprehensive, long-term solutions to end the state’s epidemic. To effectively shape the policies that will help advance gun violence reduction and prevention, our lawmakers must understand the causes, effects and impacts of gun violence on our state.

The Georgia Coalition for Safe Communities (GCSC) is urging Georgia lawmakers to implement a non-partisan Study Committee to provide evidence based data on gun violence in our Georgia communities. By applying the same public health research approach used to study the causes and effect of diseases such as cancer and HIV, and other forms of violence such as child abuse and sexual violence, we can develop and apply strategies to help reduce gun violence in our state. The research will include the behavioral response to gun violence in an effort to break its cycle. The committee will examine a wide range of gun violence data, including injuries, suicides, household homicides, and risks to children. Along with the psychological, physical and social impact of gun incidents, the Study Committee will report the economic impact of gun related violence on the financial health of our communities and state.

### **Moving Forward**

GCSC will make pronounced efforts to influence common sense gun legislation by taking the first step in urging Georgia lawmakers to form a legislative Study Committee and in supporting its work. The Study Committee will focus on a science-based public health approach to gun violence research in Georgia. Currently, Georgia lacks a public health framework for understanding gun-related violence. Without a public health framework and database of accurate information, Georgia will be unable to strategize and implement effective violence-reducing campaigns, procedures and legislative policies. Guided by Georgia specific data and measured impacts, our state will be able to develop wrap-around policies that engage the public and empower officials to secure safety in our neighborhoods.