



Kansas Public Health Association

- Promoting and Improving Population Health in Kansas

Exempting Universities and Hospitals from Right-to-Carry Gun Laws

The Issue:

Every day, 93 people are killed by guns in the United States. While the rate of violent crime has gradually decreased over the years, the rate of gun homicide has remained practically unchanged. Of the 32,000 people who die due to gun violence each year, it is estimated that nearly 12,000 are murdered and over 20,000 commit suicide. With the rate of firearm mortality being 25 times higher in the U.S. than that of other developed countries, gun violence is considered to be a national public health crisis.

Research from Johns Hopkins University shows that allowing the concealed carry of firearms onto college campuses would likely increase acts of gun violence rather than prevent them. First and foremost is the likely increase of suicide that would occur. Not only is firearm access associated with an increased rate of suicide, but suicidal behavior is highest at ages 16-25 and is more likely completed if a firearm is involved. In terms of mass shootings, the events are far more likely to take place in areas where firearm carry is allowed. Additionally, for college-aged students, areas of the brain that support impulse-control, judgement, and long-range planning are not fully developed. This, along with the high rate of alcohol abuse, increases the chances of risky and violent behavior that could easily be escalated with firearms.

In addition to college campuses, hospitals represent a setting in which violence would likely increase if firearms were allowed. Emergency departments, specifically, are at risk when violent events that start in the community have the potential of continuing when the victims are transported to the hospital. This not only puts patients at risk, but may also result in staff being uncomfortable in providing the best care and advice for the fear of violent reprisal.

The student section of the Kansas Public Health Association believes that universities and hospitals should be exempt from the state's right-to-carry laws because guns in these settings can lead to an increase in self-harm, acts of aggression, and a heightened sense of fear. Keeping Kansas universities and hospitals gun free will prevent the deadly effects of gun violence and ultimately ensure the safety of those who attend and work at our state institutions.

2017 Advocacy Priorities

Support the development and passing of legislation that would permanently exempt public universities, community colleges, and hospitals from the statutes stated in the Kansas Personal and Family Protection Act (K.S.A. 75-7c01) amendment 75-7c20.