

Safer Communities Montana

Serving Broadwater, Jefferson, and
Lewis and Clark County



Lewis and Clark Public Health Suicide Prevention Program



Jess Hegstrom
Suicide Prevention Coordinator

Coalition facilitator



Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition

Subgroups



Safer Communities
Montana
Lethal Means



LOSS Team
of LCA
Postvention

Training
&
Education

Grant Funding

MT Mental Health
trust grant

DPHHS HB 118
Grant

SAMHSA MHAT
grant

DPHHS CORE SIPP
grant

Maternal Child
Health Block Grant

In addition to the suicide prevention coordinator, the suicide prevention team includes an AmeriCorps VISTA and CDC Public Health Associate



Safer Communities Montana

- ❖ Workgroup of Lewis and Clark Suicide Prevention Coalition and a collaborative, grassroots model focused on partnership with firearm and pharmaceutical communities - we work toward solutions to prevent suicide TOGETHER!
- ❖ Based on [New Hampshire Gun Shop Project](#), [Safer Homes](#) in Washington State and the partnership between the [American Foundation for Suicide Prevention and the National Shooting Sports Foundation](#). All promote safe storage through collaboration
- ❖ Supported by the Montana Mental Health Trust and Montana DPHHS to create a toolkit other communities in the state can use



Suicide in Montana

- Treasure State is historically ranked among top five for suicide rate 40 + years
 - U.S. rate is 13.95 people per 100,000 in 2020
 - MT is 25.9 community members per 100,000
- Multiple contributing factors – Vitamin D deficiencies, high elevation, lethal means access, alcohol, provider shortage, isolation, poverty, **STIGMA**
- Large population of middle-aged white males, American Indians, and Veterans – all high-risk groups

Lethal Means in Montana

One Montanan dies...

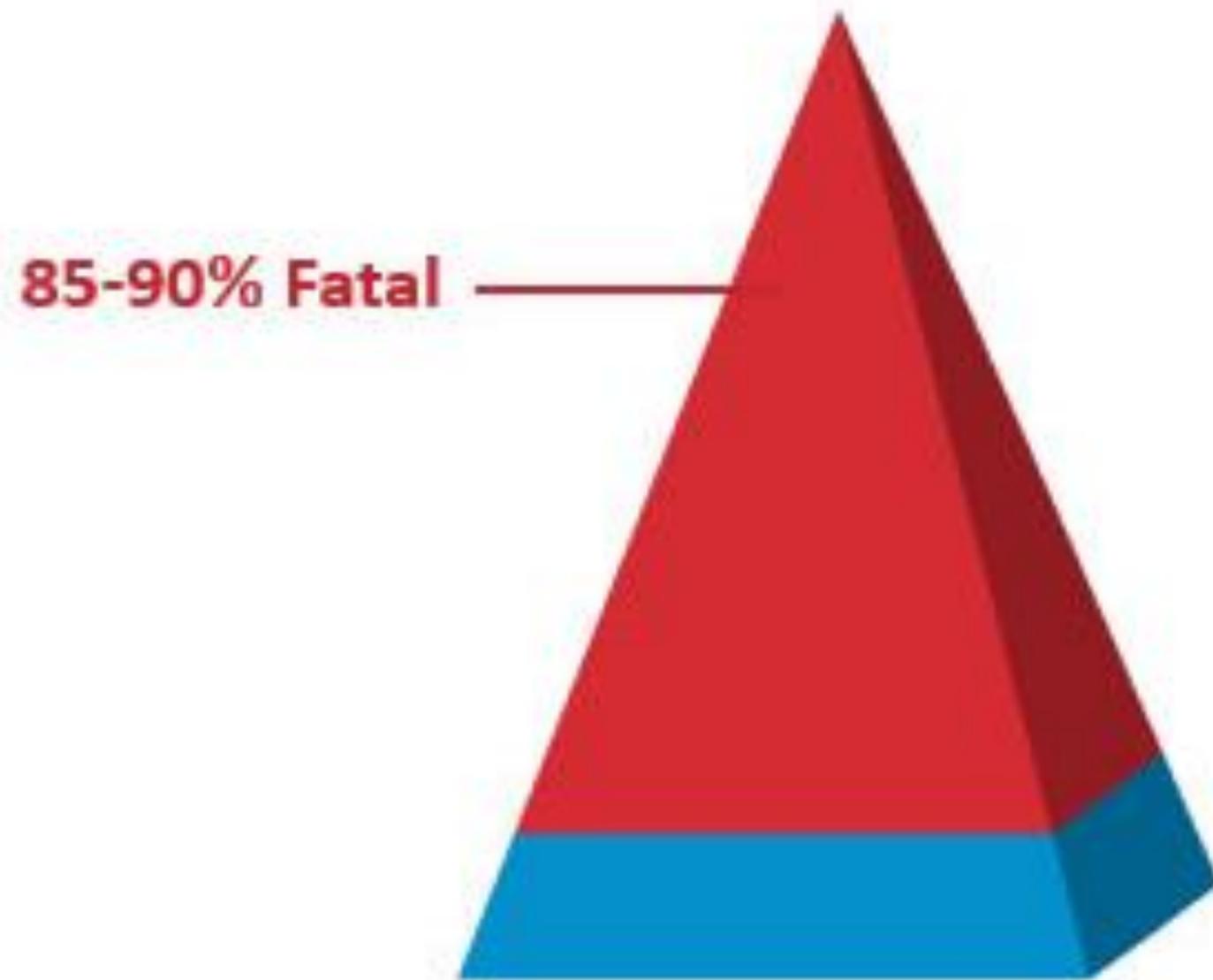
every 50 hours

as a result of gun-related suicide

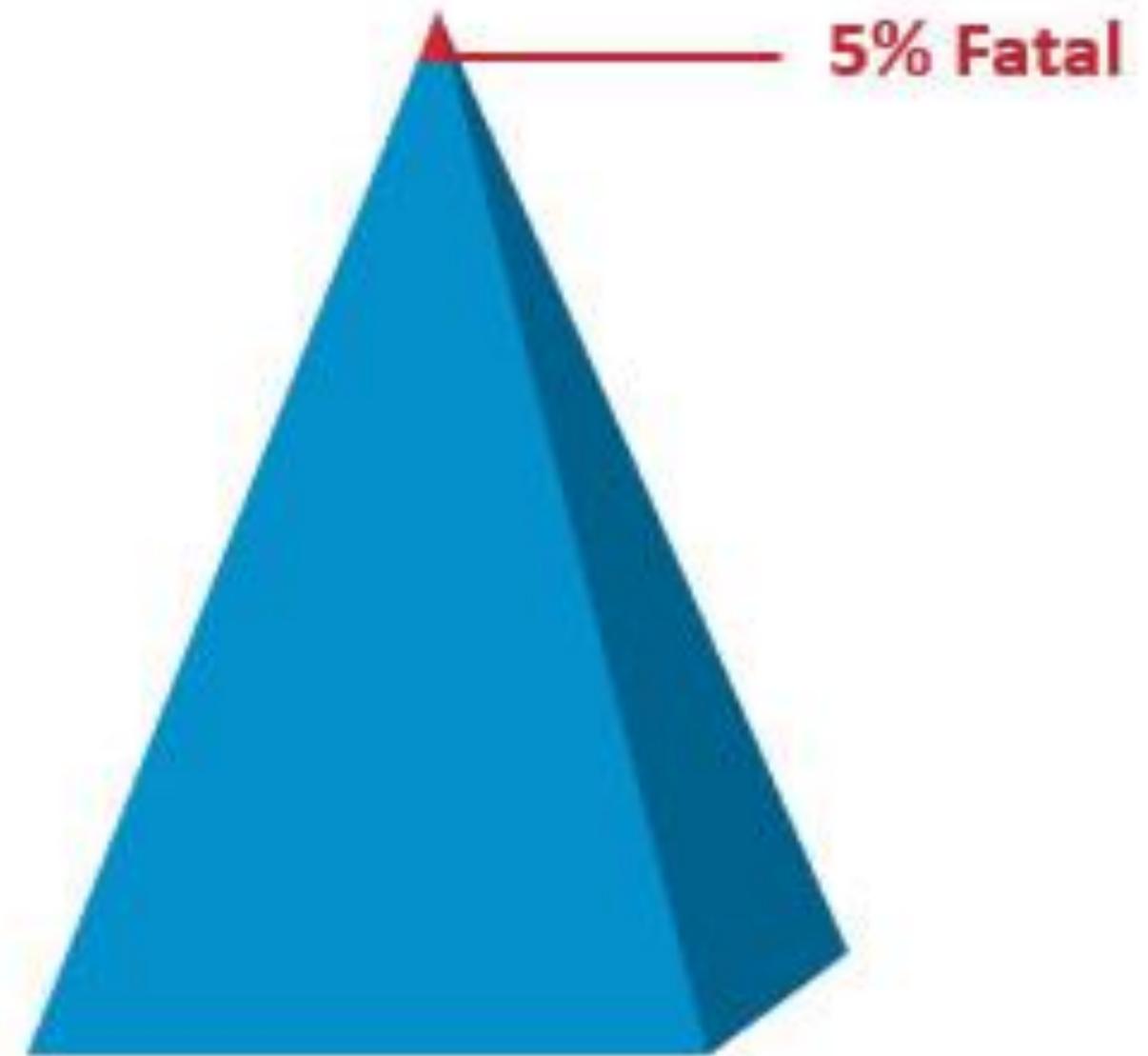


63%

Of all suicides in Montana
involve firearms



Firearm Injury



**All other methods
combined**

Firearms are part of Montana Life



Source: Helena Independent Record
Photo source: Great Falls Tribune

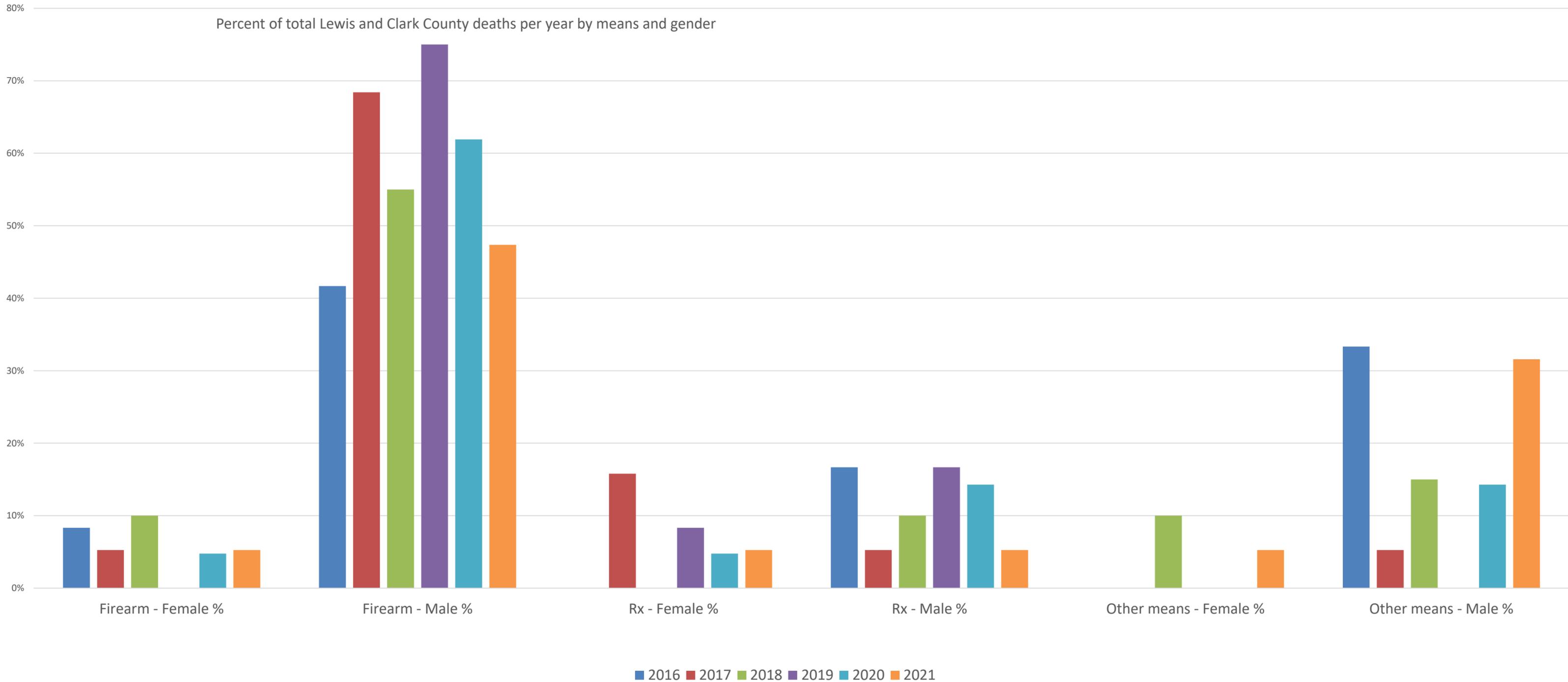
Firearm ownership is part of the fabric that makes up our “Big Sky Country”

Montana is 1st in firearm ownership in the United States

3rd for firearm-industry jobs per capita

Hunting, sport shooting, concealed carry very common among average Montanans

Suicide by method in Lewis and Clark County



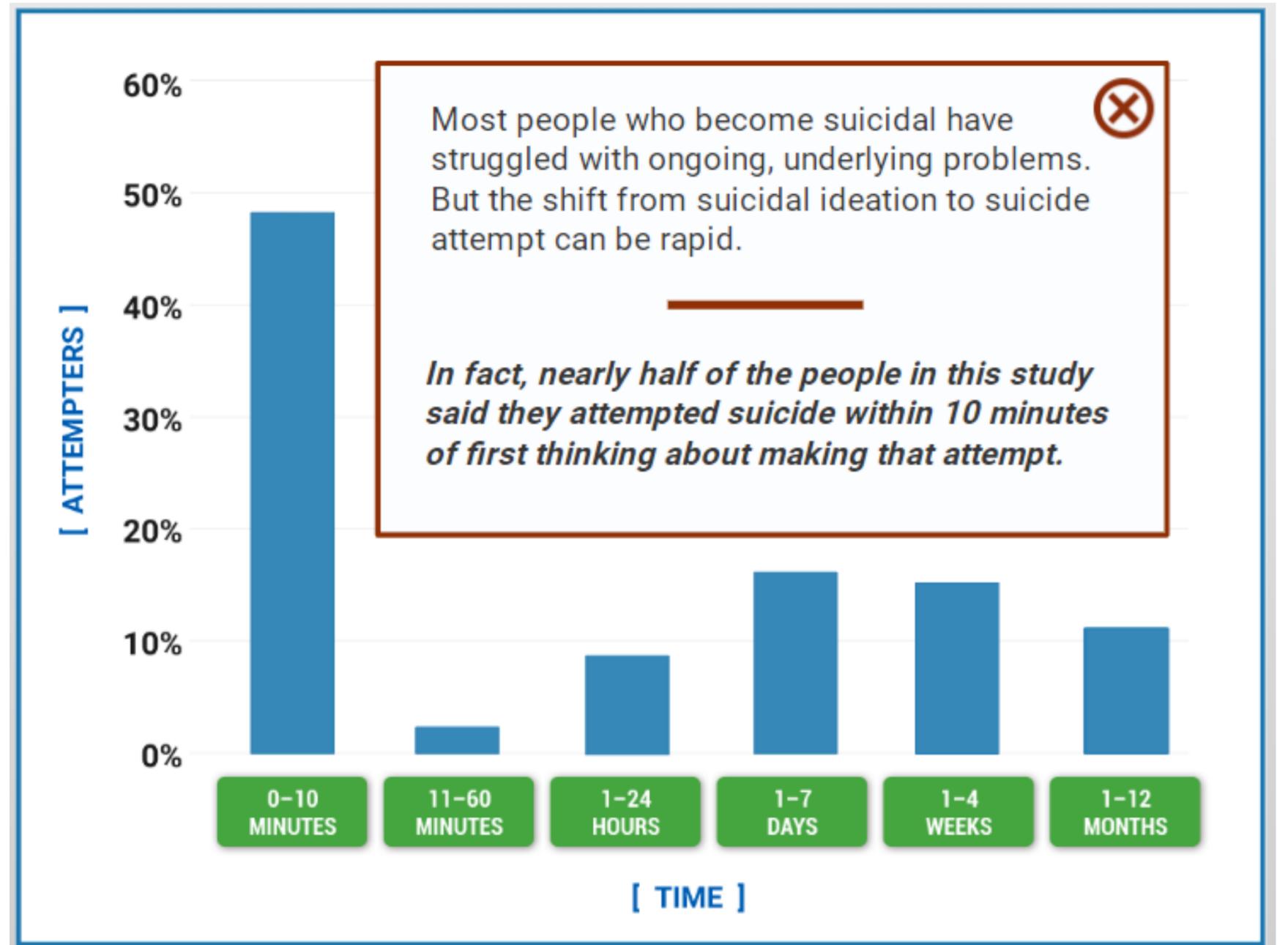
What we know: means substitution

If the chosen method is unavailable when someone is ready to attempt suicide, one of two things is likely to occur:

- ❖ They may delay the attempt as they try to gain access. The greater the delay, the greater the chance the suicidal crisis will pass
- ❖ They may substitute another method, but substitution is less likely if the original method is thwarted
 - If they do substitute, it is usually less lethal. That gives the person a better chance to be saved, change their mind or survive. Most people who survive do not later go on to kill themselves.
 - The two methods used in most nonfatal suicide attempts are overdosing with medications and cutting

What we know: Time and space saves lives

- The acute phase of a suicidal crisis is when a person is ready to attempt to end their life
- Suicidal crises are often brief
- While some attempts follow a long period of deliberation, other attempts are acted on hastily and may be difficult to predict
- Most people who attempt suicide don't necessarily want to be dead, but they want the pain they feel to stop
- Most people who attempt suicide and survive do not ultimately kill themselves —even people who make a very serious suicide attempt



What we know: Lethal means reduction saves lives

Access reduction is one of the few population-level interventions that has been shown to decrease suicide rates.

Examples:

- ❖ The Israeli Defense Force – lowered accessibility of nonessential weapons by service members off duty
- ❖ Placing nets under bridges known for suicide attempts
- ❖ Detoxification of gas in English and Swiss homes
- ❖ Banning highly lethal pesticides in Sri Lanka and Western Samoa and Finland



Partner organizations

Capital Sports

Dave's Pawn

Helena Police Department

Helena Public Schools

Lewis and Clark County Sheriff's Office

Lewis and Clark Public Health

Many Rivers Whole Health

Modern Pawn

Moms Demand Action – BeSmart Program

Montana Army and Air National Guard

Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks

Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services –
Suicide Prevention and Injury Prevention offices

Montana VA Health Care System

National Alliance on Mental Illness – Helena Chapter

Prickly Pear Sportsmen's Association

PureView Health Center (FQHC)

St. Peter's Health

Mobile Crisis Response Team

SCM Project Elements

Tip sheets for
firearm-related
businesses,
pharmacies

- How to recognize warning signs in patients/customers
- How to slow down sales/ dispensation if concerned about patient/customer
- Provide appropriate interventions within their scope – 9-8-8 Lifeline

Gunlock +
Deterra
distribution

- Volunteers hand out combination trigger gunlocks and Deterra drug deactivation kits at outreach events
- Partnerships with three pawnshops to distribute gunlocks if requested
- MOUs in development with PureView Health Center, St. Peter's Health, Broadwater County Public Health, Shodair Children's Hospital to distribute

Public-facing
materials +
multimedia
campaign

- Postcards with tips on how to safe store
- Business cards
- Posters on what to do if a friend is struggling
- Radio ads on KGR, The Montana Radio Co., Jefferson County Radio
- Off the Wall Media ads in local restaurants and other venues
- Television ads and digital media

Firearm Dealers



Our partnership with Capital Sports, a popular, locally owned sports store and its owner, Ed, has been key to the work. Here's Ed being filmed for a TV spot for SCM on June 8, 2021

Pawn shops



Modern Pawn Gun Counter. Like Dave's Pawn, Modern Pawn keeps all firearms locked when displaying or showing them to customers. Ownership began offering gun locks to the community in December 2022 through a partnership with SCM.

Matt Schlick, the owner of Dave's Pawn, shows off an SCM poster; Dave's Pawn Gun Counter – all firearms for sale are secured with gunlocks; offers gunlocks to anyone who wants them through partnership with SCM.

Previous Tip Sheets



Worried about a friend or family member?

Ask if you or someone they trust can hold on to their firearms



Safe storage saves lives

Many suicide attempts are impulsive. Temporary safe storage gives a person time to think and cool down.



Create time and distance

Placing time and space between a suicidal person and a lethal method like a firearm or medication will likely save their life.



Try different storage options

If the person is uncomfortable voluntarily handing over their firearms, consider holding onto the ammunition, purchasing a gun safe, or using a gunlock instead. Order free gunlocks and drug deactivation kits at safercommunitiesmt.org.

NEED HELP NOW?

Call or text **9-8-8**, or visit 988lifeline.org/chat to reach the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline.

For the **Veterans Crisis Line**, call **9-8-8** and dial **1** at the prompt.



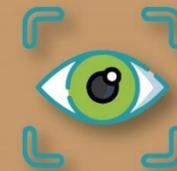
Updated Tip Sheets

Montanans watch

out for each other

LOOK for warning signs

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- Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet
- Consectetur adipiscing elit, sed diam



SLOW down the sale

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“ Sometimes rough times make people think about suicide, are you thinking about it? ”



ASK about suicide



Safety options like:
Storage with law enforcement
Gun locks and gun safes
Keeping firearms with a friend
On-site storage options

TALK about safety



LOOK



SLOW



ASK



TALK

Call or text 9-8-8, or visit 988lifeline.org/chat to reach the Suicide Prevention and Mental Health Crisis Lifeline.



Learn more and request free gunlocks and drug deactivation systems at:
SaferCommunitiesMT.org



For the Veterans Crisis Line, call 9-8-8 and dial 1 at the prompt.

**Suicide is preventable.
Medication overdoses are too.**

Request free gun locks and Detera drug deactivation kits at safercommunitiesmt.org



Prevent an impulsive decision from becoming a permanent one

Dispose

Don't leave leftover medication lying around. Find local drug disposal sites at bit.ly/RXdropbox.

Deactivate

Make leftover meds inactive by using Detera, or mix them with kitty litter, dirt or coffee grounds. Place in trash.

Secure

Lock up all Rx and over-the-counter drugs except for a 1-week supply. Ask your pharmacy to use a blister pack.

Limit Access

When not in use, lock firearms with a gunlock or gun safe. If used for safety, consider a biometric or RFID safe.

Store Ammunition

Make sure all firearms are unloaded before locking and storing. Secure ammo separately from firearms.

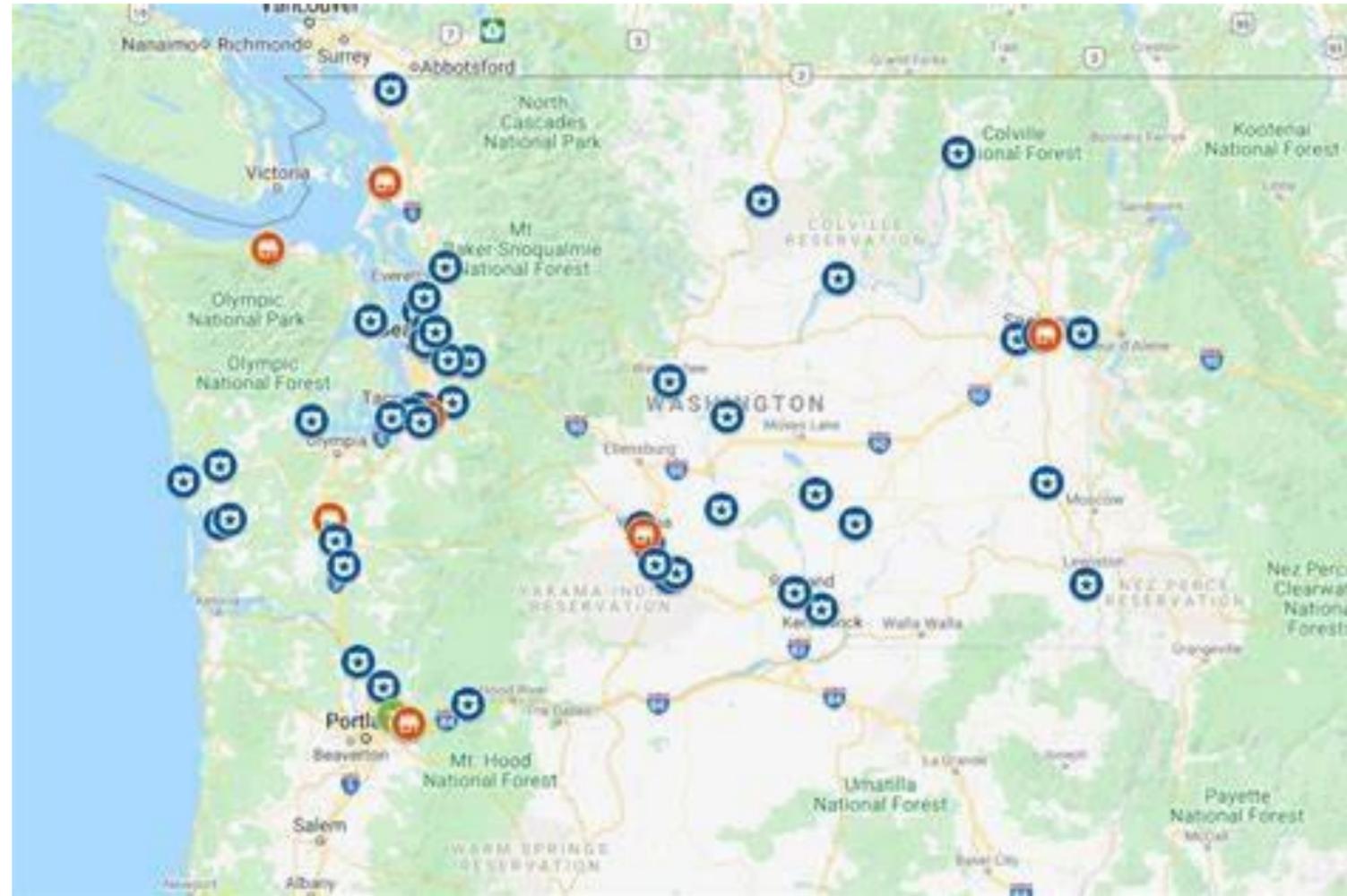
Hold and Transfer

Ask someone you trust outside of the home to temporarily hold firearms and/or ammunition during a crisis.



Partnership: Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center

- ❖ Working together on a safe storage mapping approach that will involve recruiting law enforcement, firearm-related business to consider holding firearms for individuals on a case-by-case basis
- ❖ Problem: Firearm businesses told us they will be uncomfortable with issues of liability.
Therefore...



SB 423

11 A BILL FOR AN ACT ENTITLED: "AN ACT GENERALLY REVISING LIABILITY RELATED TO FIREARM
12 HOLD AGREEMENTS; LIMITING LIABILITY FOR AN INDIVIDUAL OR A PRIVATE ENTITY THAT RETURNS
13 A FIREARM TO THE OWNER AT THE END OF A FIREARM HOLD AGREEMENT; AND PROVIDING A
14 DEFINITION.

15

16 BE IT ENACTED BY THE LEGISLATURE OF THE STATE OF MONTANA:

17

18 NEW SECTION. Section 1. Limitation of liability -- firearm hold agreement -- definition. (1) No
19 cause of action may arise against an individual or a private entity for returning a firearm to the firearm owner at
20 the termination of a firearm hold agreement.

21 (2) The immunity provided in subsection (1) does not apply to an action arising from a firearm hold
22 agreement if the action was the result of otherwise unlawful conduct on the part of the individual or private
23 entity holding a firearm for another individual.

24 (3) As used in this section, "firearm hold agreement" means a written or oral agreement between a
25 firearm owner and another individual or a private entity in which the other individual or private entity takes
26 physical possession of the firearm owner's lawfully possessed firearm at the owner's request, holds the firearm
27 for an agreed period of time, and returns the firearm to the owner according to the terms of the agreement.

<https://apps.montanafreepress.org/capitol-tracker-2023/bills/sb-423/>







Contact Info:

Tabreez Kara

CDC Public Health Associate

tkara@lccountymt.gov

If you would like free gunlocks, Deterra, or informational materials to give to your clientele, please email me!

Also, if you would like to set up an MOU with your organization and [SCM](#) please let me know. 😊

Thank you!

