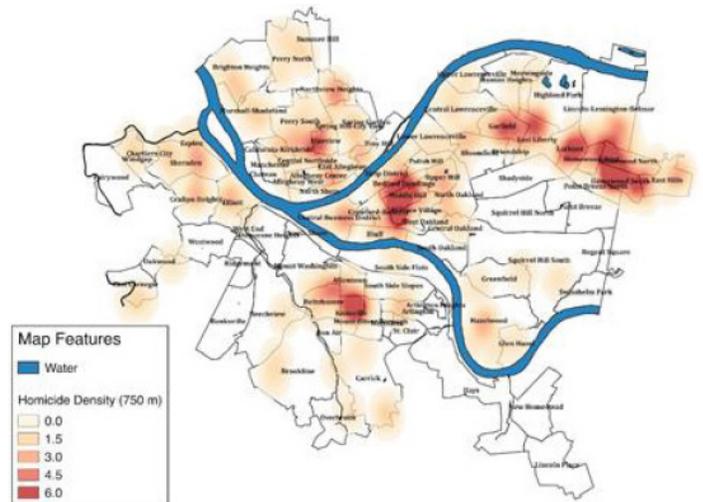
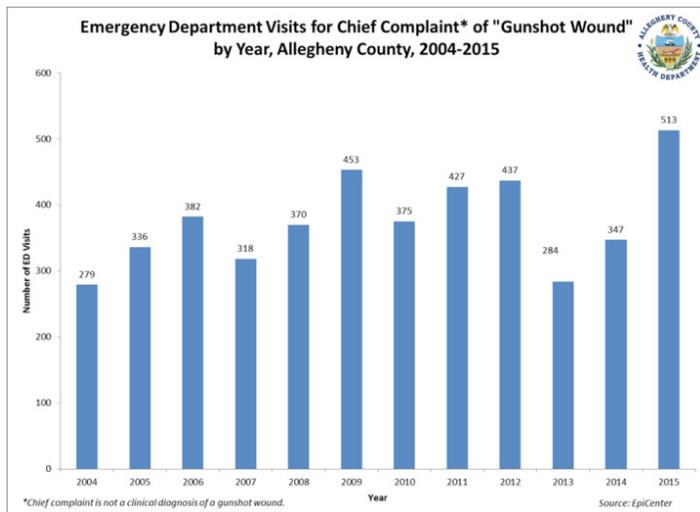


VIOLENCE AS A PUBLIC HEALTH ISSUE

Violence poses a serious threat to the health and well-being of Allegheny County's children, youth, and families. Hundreds of people have been killed and injured, and many are left traumatized. It is time we take a public health view of the problem. The public health perspective presumes that street violence, just like an infectious disease outbreak, can be prevented. To prevent it, we must understand the factors that lead to violence and then intervene with culturally appropriate, evidence-based strategies. These strategies can be applied to those yet to experience or participate in violence, to those who are involved in risk behaviors that contribute to violence, and to those who have experienced violence as victims and perpetrators.

THE FACTS IN PITTSBURGH

- In 2013, the homicide rate in Allegheny County was 7.4 per 100,000, higher than the national average.
- The number of homicides inside the City (56) almost matched those in the rest of the County (57) and the majority of them were related to gun violence.
- The homicide rate from 2010-2104 for African American men in Pittsburgh was 65 times the national average.
- There are only a few communities in Allegheny County and the City of Pittsburgh that contribute to the level of violence.



RESOURCES

- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Division of Violence Prevention / <http://www.cdc.gov/ViolencePrevention/index.html>
- The Community Guide: Violence Prevention / <http://www.thecommunityguide.org/violence/index.html>
- Center for Victims (crisis response, assistance with victim compensation, trauma-informed therapists, support groups for kids and teens, legal support, and more) / 24-Hour Crisis Hotline 1-866-644-2882 / 5916 Penn Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15206 / 412-482-3240
- Re:olve Crisis Network (round-the-clock, mental health crisis intervention and stabilization services; anyone can call for any reason to talk to a trained counselor) / 1-888-7-YOU CAN (1-888-796-8226)
- Center for Traumatic Stress in Children and Adolescents (serves children and families who experience traumatic or stressful events in their lives) / 412-330-4328 / East Commons Professional Building (Four Allegheny Center) Eighth Floor, Pittsburgh, PA 15212
- Foundation of HOPE (chaplaincy and faith-based pre- and post-release care for incarcerated and released individuals) / Executive Director Susan Orr / 950 Second Ave., Pittsburgh, PA 15219 / 412-688-9070 / sorr@foundationofhope.org



Additional Resources on Gun Violence

<http://padisciples.org/gunviolenceprevention>

The Pennsylvania Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) provides a site with a number of helpful links, which include brief descriptors.

<http://www.presbypeacefellowship.org/gun-violence/resources#.Vwk-iyifOfT>

The Presbyterian Peace Fellowship site has one of the best resource toolkits available, including some additional worship resources. The PC(USA) 2010 General Assembly passed a resolution, "Gun Violence, Gospel Values: Mobilizing in Response to God's Call," that resourced similar resolutions in other denominations.

<http://faithsagainstgunviolence.org/>

Among other initiatives to monitor and generate activism against gun violence, Faith Leaders United to Prevent Gun Violence also co-sponsors Gun Violence Sabbath Weekends. The third annual one is planned for Dec. 14-18, 2016. The resource for this Sabbath can be found at <http://www.decembersabbath.org/>; other faith-tradition resources are available there.

<http://heedinggodscall.org>

Heeding God's Call is a Philadelphia-based faith coalition of congregations addressing gun violence. The group holds vigils and memorial installations, and organizes advocacy campaigns to end illegal purchasing and trafficking of handguns. The coalition's website includes a resource center with a congregational toolkit.

<http://bishopsagainstgunviolence.org>

Bishops Against Gun Violence is an advocacy group of more than 60 Episcopal bishops. The organization's website includes liturgical resources with links to prayers and sermons.

<http://www.ucc.org/gun-violence>

The United Church of Christ offers General Synod resolutions and commentary on gun violence, including words from the senior pastor of Newtown Congregational Church, UCC, in Newtown, Conn.

To learn more about Refugees in our World...

- Learn more about the refugee ministry of *Presbyterian Disaster Assistance* (<http://pda.pcusa.org/page/refugee/>)
- Though seeking asylum from within the borders of the United States is a lawful way of seeking protection and status in the U.S., our government, in 2014, began the practice of imprisoning asylum-seeking women and children. Visit the *family detention web page* (<http://oga.pcusa.org/section/mid-council-ministries/immigration/family-detention/>) to learn more about and to bring about the end of this disturbing practice.
- Use this *worship resource* (<http://www.pcusa.org/resource/reflection-and-prayer-world-refugee-day/>) in your Bible study and Sunday school class to lift up outreach and advocacy for refugees and asylees.
- *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Website* For every refugee, there is a story of great sacrifice, patience, and hope. (<http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49c3646c11.html>)
- Read one example of the many varied and long journeys refugees take to finally make it to a place of safety. (<http://www.amnesty.org.au/refugees/comments/27690/>)
- Church World Service (CWS) is one national agency that assists in the resettlement process. The PC(USA) has had an ongoing relationship with CWS since the late 1940s. CWS has affiliate agencies across the U.S. doing the grassroots work of resettling refugees into their new homes in America. *Learn more about CWS* (<http://cwsglobal.org/get-involved/>) and how you assist with refugee resettlement in or near your hometown.

