

Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention

Executive Summary: September 15, 2025 Report

The Task Force on Community Safety and Firearm Suicide Prevention was created via Senate Bill 1503 and has met monthly since October of 2024. This Task Force brought together individuals from the state of Oregon with expertise in areas such as suicide, lethal means management, violence prevention, tribal affairs, domestic violence, and mental health care. During the monthly meetings, the Task Force heard from national experts in the areas of science-based suicide care, science-based community violence reduction, firearms cultural competence, lethal means management, tribal health and firearms storage.

Suicide is a significant public health issue in Oregon, with multiple challenges to policy change. Additionally, while assessment, prevention, and treatment of suicide requires a comprehensive approach including primary prevention, the focus of the task force is on ensuring individuals who are currently at high risk both in terms of suicidal ideation and access to lethal means are adequately screened and treated. To this end, while the findings and suggestions related to primary prevention in this document, the majority of findings and policy suggestions are focused around individuals currently falling into high risk of death.

Membership

Donna-Marie Drucker, Co-Chair	A representative of a nonprofit organization focused on suicide prevention with experience in lethal means safety
Andrew White, Co-Chair	A psychologist who works with youth
Valerie Colas	A public safety policy advisor to the Governor
Paul Kemp	A representative of a community-based firearm safety and protocols program
Kathleen Carlson	A representative of the public health research field
Vanessa Timmons	A behavioral health professional or provider
Emmy Ritter	An adult behavioral health provider
Matthew Crabtree	A medical provider who has worked with firearm violence victims
Dean Sidelinger	A representative of a state public health agency
Andy Leonard	A tribal representative from a suicide prevention program
Jerome Sloan II	A person with lived experience with community safety threats or suicidal ideation
Chris Burley	A representative of law enforcement
James Dixon	A professional who works in veterans' mental health

Additionally, the taskforce has 4 non-voting members: Sen. Floyd Prozanski, Sen. David Brock Smith, Rep. Jason Kropf, Rep. Rick Lewis. It is staffed by Toni Kemple, Paralegal in the Criminal Justice Division and Alicia Temple, Legislative Director for DOJ.

Findings:

Suicide remains a significant public health issue in Oregon, with a statewide suicide rate higher than the national average. When looking at suicide methods and firearms deaths in Oregon, 77.6% of all firearms deaths from 2018 to 2022 were from suicide (a rate higher than the national average), and over half of all suicide deaths were related to firearms.

Firearm injury is a public health crisis impacting communities across Oregon, resulting in 642 deaths in Oregon in 2023 alone. The majority of these firearm-related deaths in Oregon were firearm suicides (76%). For every person killed by a firearm, more will suffer nonfatal firearm injuries. In 2023, there were a total of 761 firearm injury emergency department visits across Oregon

While Oregon has expanded screening for suicide, actual treatment for suicide remains unfunded and unevenly expanded across the state. Additionally, while multiple science-based approaches to suicide treatment exist (e.g. CAMS, DBT, CBT-SP), they are not implemented comprehensively and with fidelity across the state. These approaches have robust evidence for the treatment of individuals experiencing suicidal crisis and ongoing suicidal ideation, have been developed with the voices of individuals with lived experience, and have demonstrated effectiveness with at risk populations, across languages and cultural groups, and with stigmatized and marginalized groups.

Suicide and Firearms Policy Recommendations

- Creation of suicide fatality review board
- Suicide prevention training as a part of education for mental health professionals
- Funding the Adult Suicide Intervention Prevention Plan and Zero Suicide
- Create central repository of information on statewide suicide programming
- Create state certification processes for evidence-based suicide treatment to create incentives for programs to expand and rollout evidence-based practices
- Expand primary suicide prevention programs beyond schools (workplaces, community centers, housing programs, etc.)
- Extreme Risk Protection Orders (ERPOs)—increase awareness and accessibility
 - Public and professional training on ERPOs and how to use them
 - A navigator role or support person in the courthouse to assist with ERPOs
 - Follow-up for petitioners and respondents
- Voluntary removal of firearms
 - Voluntary do not sell list
 - Create a program to allow surrender of lawfully owned guns to gun dealers
- Provide funding to support implementation of Oregon's Permit-to-Purchase law
- Increase access and education to safe storage laws and support secure storage device distribution (possible tax credits, incentives, discounts, etc.)
- Reinstate Community Violence Intervention Funding