

Milwaukee Health Dept.: Statement regarding mass shooting at Serenity Funeral Home and increasing gun violence in Milwaukee

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Milwaukee, WI – Our hearts go out to the family members and friends impacted by the mass shooting outside of Serenity Funeral Home on Wednesday. No family in our community should have to suffer the grief and pain of gun violence—especially while mourning the loss of a loved one. Over 15 people have been shot in Milwaukee over the last 24 hours. Since February of this year we have seen a 100% increase in homicides. In recent years, we have seen increasing levels of gun violence in the fall months. We cannot rely on cold weather to slow this deadly epidemic.

In 2020 our 414 LIFE team has seen a 54% increase in referrals of gun shot victims to the program through our partnership with Froedtert Hospital. The team has conducted over 53 high-risk mediations this year which, could have resulted in a shooting or homicide. This level of gun violence requires all of us to do more to de-escalate tensions and resolve conflicts and disagreements without resorting to gun violence.

In 2015, Milwaukee saw a 70% increase in homicides. Since that time, we expanded our efforts to address violence as a public health issue and increased investments in community based solutions identified in the Blueprint for Peace. The uptick in violence in 2020 comes after a steady 4-year decline in non-fatal shootings and homicides from 2016-2019. Increased access to firearms paired with the stress,

tension, and despair caused by Covid 19 is having an impact on violence in cities across the country. This year we have seen a sharp increase in suicides and mass shooting incidents that began with the Molson Coors shooting.

We must treat every single shooting as a state of emergency and act with the urgency it deserves.

Measures such as Universal Background Checks and Emergency Risk Protection Orders can have a profound effect on reducing suicides and domestic violence related shootings and homicides. In addition, we call on state leaders to support [measures](#) to establish a statewide violence prevention fund to support community level, evidence-informed strategies proven to reduce gun violence and promote safe and healthy communities.

Healing moves at the speed of justice, and far too many families are living in fear and anger because their assailant was never found or convicted. We strongly encourage people with information about a shooting or homicide to contact Milwaukee Crime Stoppers anonymously at 414-224-TIPS. A financial reward is offered for credible information leading to an arrest.