



J. Howard Beard Health Services Building
3 Harry S. Truman Parkway
Annapolis, Maryland 21401
Phone: 410-222-7095 Fax: 410-222-7294
Maryland Relay (TTY): 711
www.aahealth.org

HOUSE BILL 713

Public Safety - Distribution of Literature to Purchasers of Firearms and Ammunition

TESTIMONY BEFORE THE HOUSE JUDICIARY COMMITTEE

Dr. Tonii Gedin

For Anne Arundel Department of Health

The Anne Arundel County Department of Health **supports HB 713**. The bill would require local health departments to distribute literature prepared by the Maryland Department of Health in establishments that sell firearms or ammunition.

Each year, hundreds of lives are lost in Maryland due to firearm-related injuries; 2023 was no exception with 737 firearm-related deaths in Maryland.¹ Firearms are the leading cause of death in Maryland children, with 90 deaths occurring in 2023 for ages 1-19 years; more than double the number of transportation-related deaths for this age group (43 deaths). Additionally, there were over 4,300 Emergency Department and Hospitalization visits to Maryland hospitals by residents due to firearm-related injuries.²

Anne Arundel County recognized gun violence as an epidemic in 2019, and the Department of Health has led the distribution of suicide prevention and conflict resolution literature to gun and gun ammunition shops in the county after the passage of County Bill 108-21 in 2021. A compliance check in 2024 for approximately 30 shops in the county demonstrated most were in compliance with this law. Between April 2022-July 2024, the Department of Health distributed over 88,000 pamphlets to shops in the county.

Public health is at the forefront of addressing gun violence, and Anne Arundel County has prioritized this work which included redirecting our staffing resources. Evaluation of similar efforts have found that firearm retailers have been able to identify, support and provide resources for firearm customers in crisis.³ Ensuring the resources needed in local jurisdictions for the approximately 500 licensed firearm dealers in Maryland would be critical to successful implementation for this bill.

¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. National Vital Statistics System, Mortality 2018-2023 on CDC WONDER Online Database, released in 2024. Data are from the Multiple Cause of Death Files, 2018-2023, as compiled from data provided by the 57 vital statistics jurisdictions through the Vital Statistics Cooperative Program. Accessed at <http://wonder.cdc.gov/ucd-icd10-expanded.html> on Feb 12, 2025 5:04:49 PM

² Data from Maryland HSCRC Outpatient and Inpatient Files, 2023

³ Wright-Kelly E, Buck-Atkinson JT, Betz ME, Little K, Little JS, Kingston BE, Sigel E, Arredondo-Mattson S. Firearm businesses as partners in suicide prevention: a cross-sectional study of the Gun Shop Project in Colorado, USA. Injury prevention. 2024 Jul 15. <https://injuryprevention.bmj.com/content/early/2024/07/15/ip-2023-045178.abstract>

Ensuring Maryland residents have the information needed to safely navigate through a crisis is a simple action that can save a life.. Providing this information will improve the safety of gun retail customers and our communities. For all of these reasons, I respectfully request a **FAVORABLE** report on House Bill 713.