

Gunlock Distribution for Lethal Means Reduction

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Background

Lethal Means Reduction is about putting **time** and **distance** between people who are experiencing suicidality and ways for them to take their own life.

Firearms are the most lethal means of suicide, so proper storage is very important, starting with putting gunlocks on every firearm. From 1999-2020, 51% of suicide deaths in Cortland County were by firearm.

The Cortland City Police Department had a large supply of gunlocks to offer free to the community but no staff to distribute them. The SPEAK UP Cortland Suicide Prevention Coalition took up distribution.

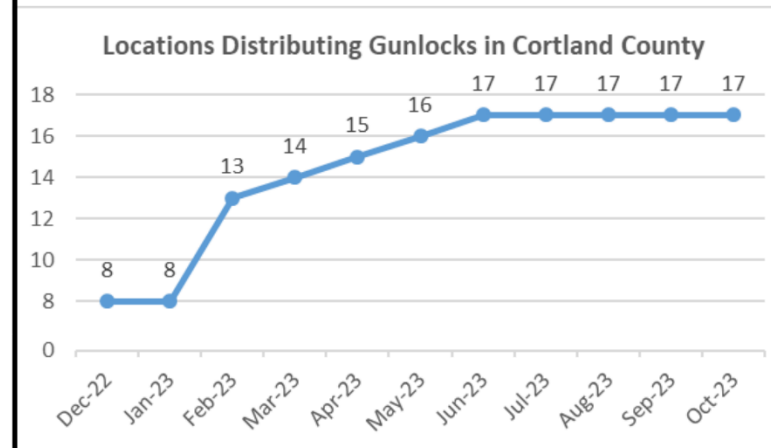
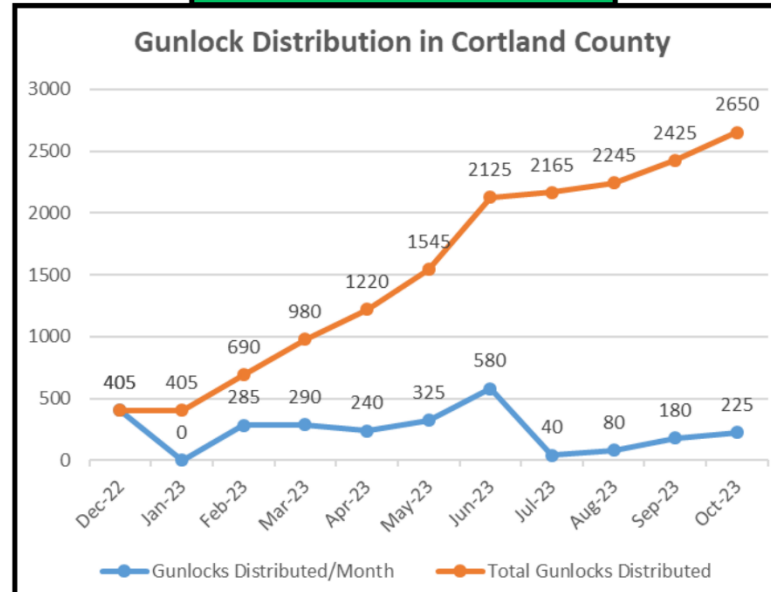
Methods

Two barriers: Who is going to do it? How are we going to track it?

A passive distribution model was developed using a "Gunlock Liaison" at community locations where unattended bins with gunlocks allowing people to take what they need. Liaisons have a larger supply and make sure the bins are filled. Monthly check-ins make sure their larger supply is stocked.

Distribution data is tracked by how often locations are restocked and how many gunlocks they received. This prevents liaisons from having to keep count themselves, lessening their workload.

Data



Results

The Cortland County Community Health Improvement Plan made a goal to distribute 2,000 gunlocks in 2023. SPEAK UP Cortland met this goal in September.

Some key distribution locations were local libraries and clinics. Village libraries allowed access to gunlocks for people in more rural areas. Clinics, including a pediatrician's office, began asking patients if there were firearms in their home and offering the patient gunlocks.

Before this, gunlocks were only available by request from local law enforcement and departments. Now, there are many opportunities for people throughout Cortland County to access simple firearm safety devices for free.

Recommendations

SPEAK UP Cortland developed this model to reach as many community members as possible with the lowest burden on staff. One coordinator with access to a large supply of gunlocks is able to supply many locations with minimal time and effort.

Once locations are found and bins have been made, sustainability of the program is very easy to do, taking only 2-3 work-hours per month. This model was shared and replicated in Syracuse, NY by Prevention Network CNY.