Gun Owner Groups, Health Professionals Team up to Prevent Suicides

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Firearms stakeholders and public health practitioners across the country are collaborating on efforts to prevent gun-related suicide. What started as a partnership between a New Hampshire gun shop owner and public health professionals in 2009 has spread to more than 20 states, with projects that aim to promote awareness about suicide risk and reduce access to firearms for individuals who are suicidal. For example, Utah has included suicide prevention in its concealed carry permit curriculum, Nevada now displays suicide prevention information at gun shows, and national-level organizations are working to develop suicide prevention materials for gun owners. While members of the gun community and health field may differ in their views on firearm laws, they have an equal stake in preventing suicide, according to Catherine Barber, director of the Harvard T.H. Chan School of Public Health’s Means Matter project. “It really doesn’t matter what your political ideology is or whether you’re an avid gun rights supporter,” she said. “When it comes to preventing firearm suicides, there’s tremendous common ground.”

Spark Extra! Watch the SPARK Talk, Common Ground: Reducing Gun Access.

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