

# **Safer Homes, Suicide Aware**

## *Program Overview*

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Forefront Suicide Prevention  
December 2019



# Situation – Suicide in Washington



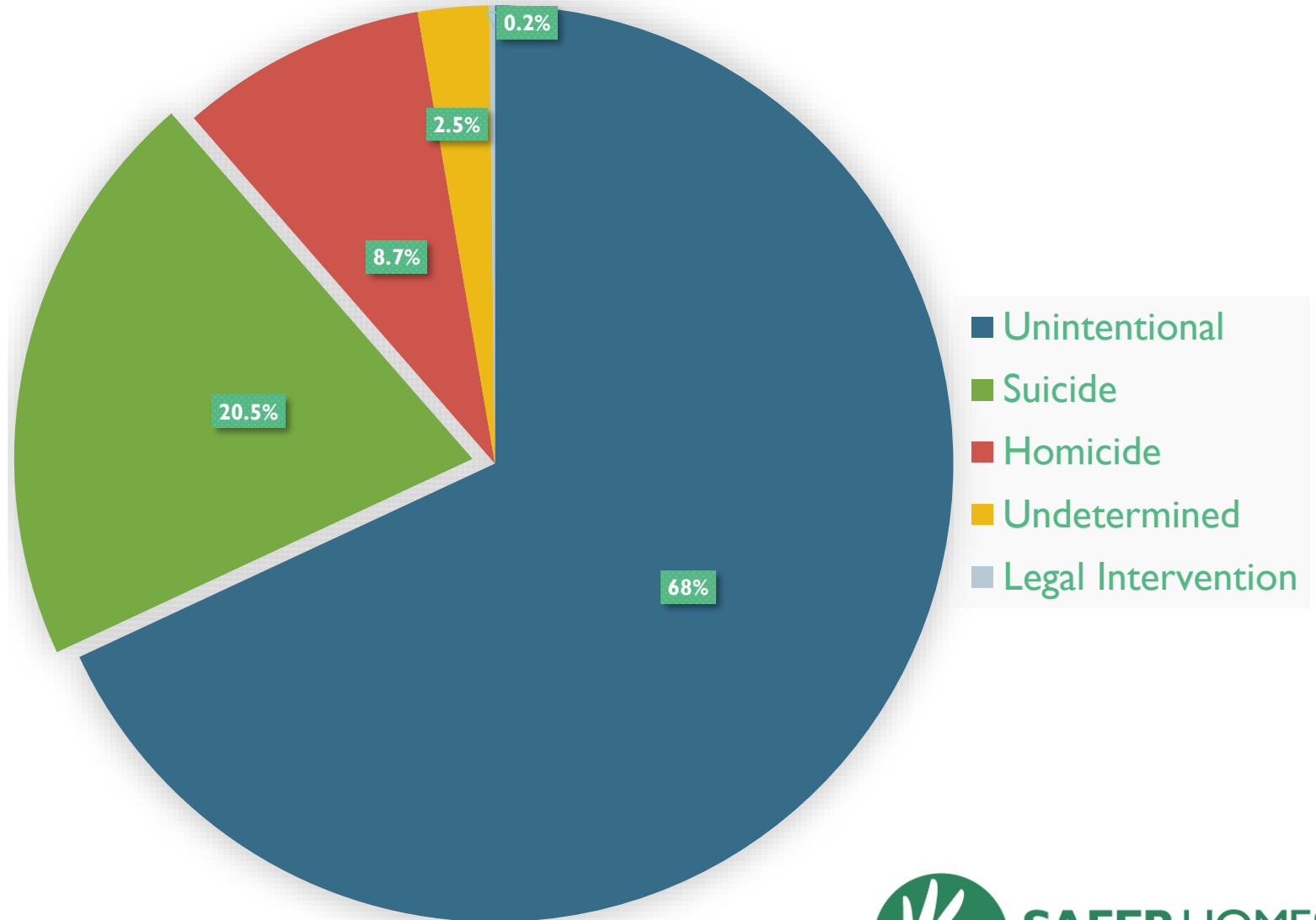
# Overall Deaths in Washington State (2007-2017, CDC WISQARS)

-Suicide represents slightly more than 1 out of every 5 deaths in Washington

-Suicide has gone from being the 10<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in 2017 to being the 8<sup>th</sup> leading cause of death in 2019

-Suicide deaths are significantly more than *twice as common* as homicide deaths in Washington state.

## Washington Overall Deaths

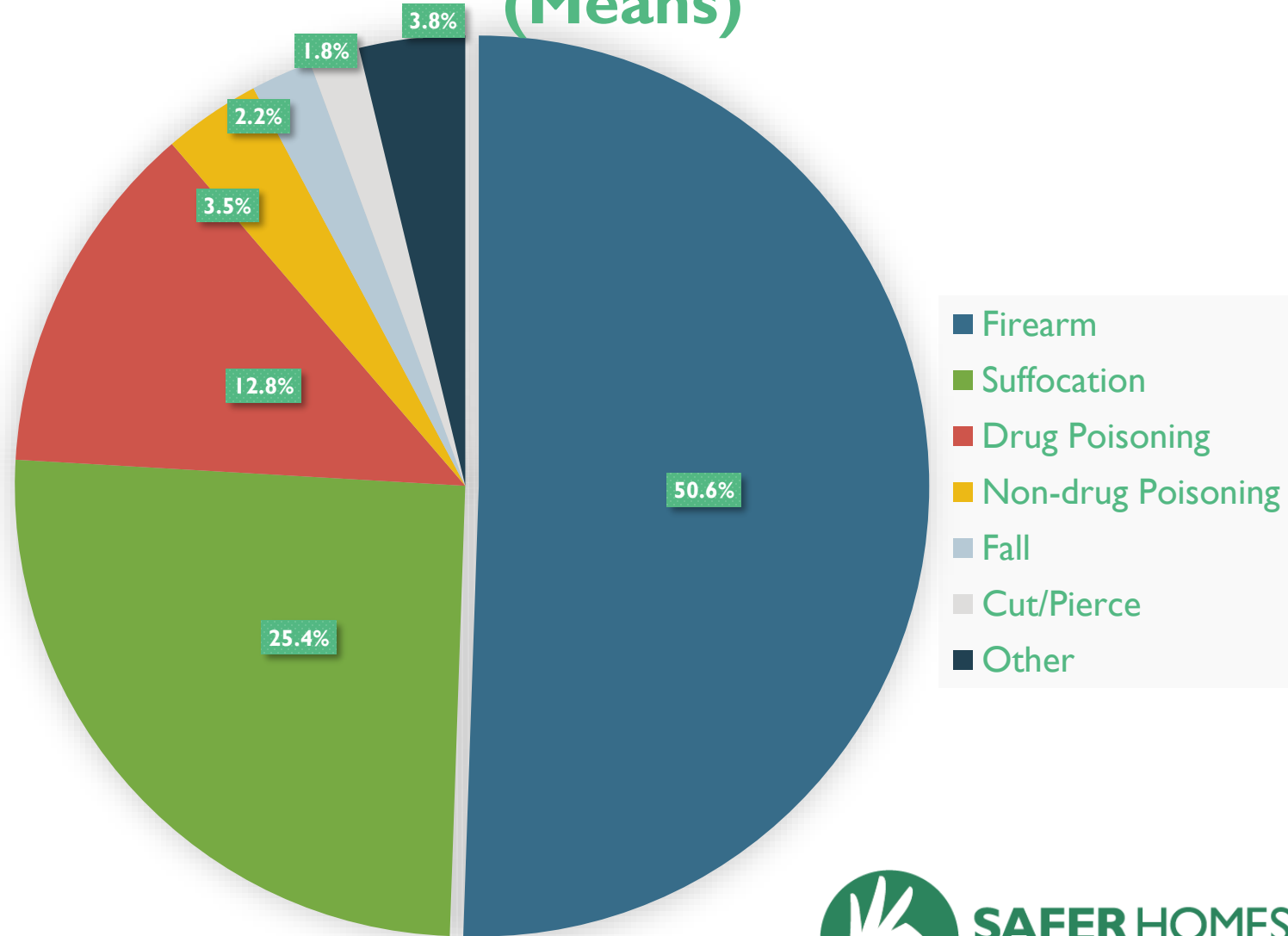


# Suicide Means in Washington State (2007-2017, CDC WISQARS)

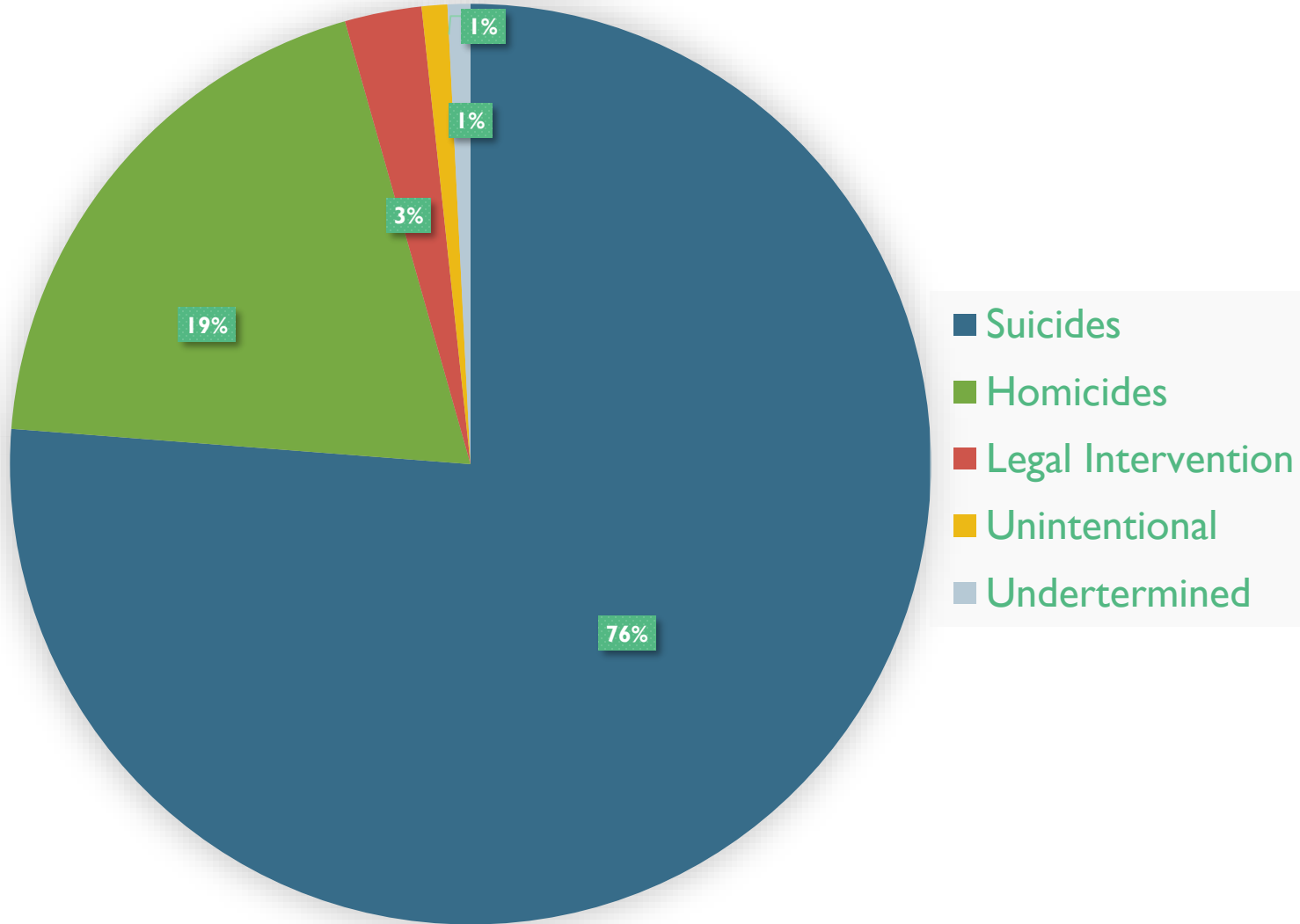
Self-inflicted gunshot represents about half of all suicide deaths in Washington state.

Firearm-involved suicides represent roughly the same percentage of deaths at both the state and federal level.

## Washington Suicide Deaths (Means)



# Washington Firearm Deaths



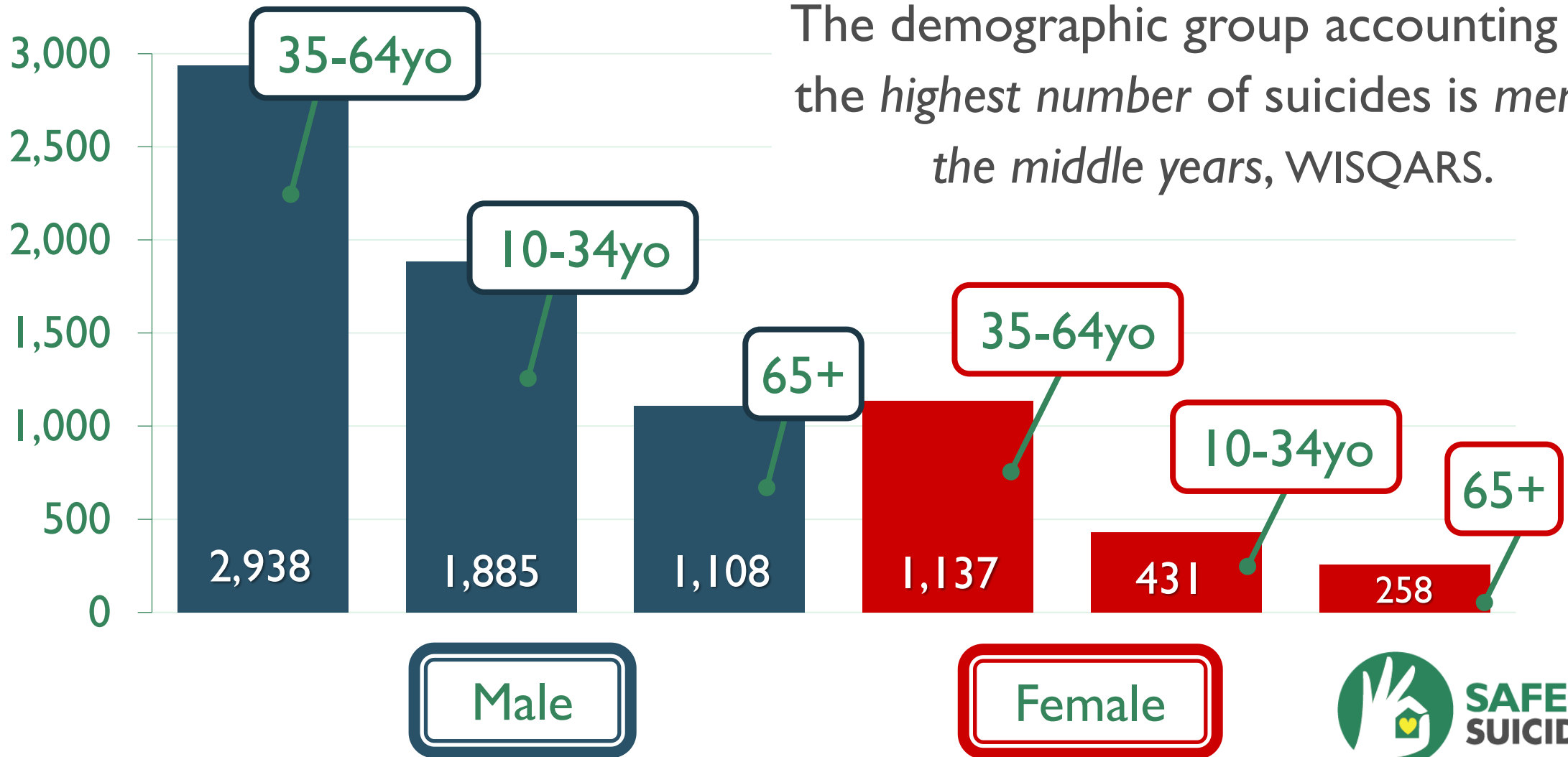
## Total Firearm-involved Deaths in Washington State 2007-2017, CDC WISQARS

-Homicide in this dataset includes *both* outright murder *and* legitimate self-defense (Washington state does not track self-defense instances by private citizens)

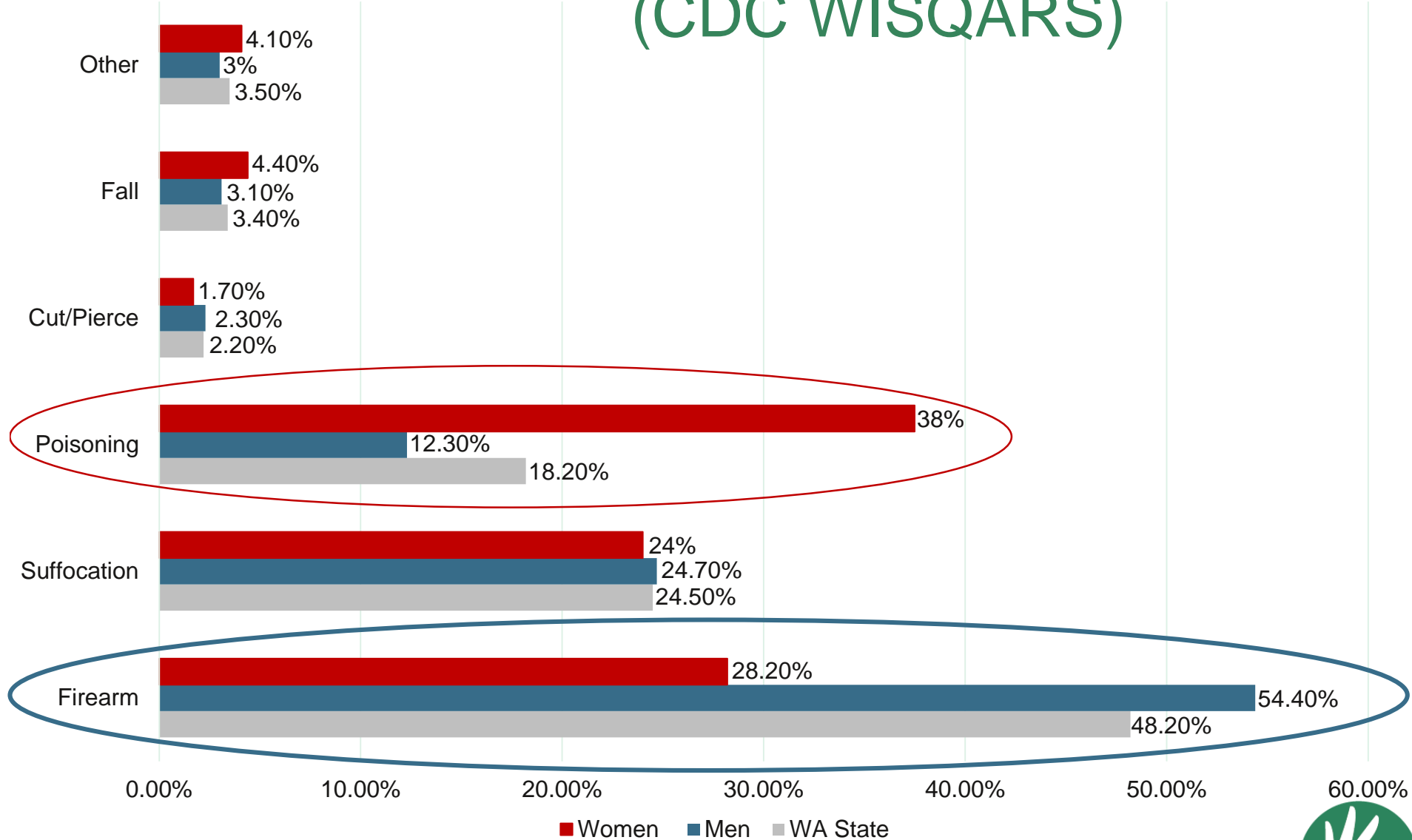
-Firearm deaths (and injuries) from acts of negligence, carelessness, and accidents account for less than a full percent of all firearm-related deaths and are at a near-historic low

# Suicide Data: Age & Gender

Washington State, 2011-2017



# Suicide Means, 2011-2017 Washington (CDC WISQARS)



# Safer Homes and Veterans



**Veteran suicides account for nearly 20% of US adult suicides**



**Great majority involve firearms: 66-69% of male veteran suicides involve firearms compared to 56% of US male suicides generally**



**Around half of all veterans own a firearm - a higher percentage than in the general population\***

Trends in Veteran Use of Firearms and Veteran Suicides

\*Veterans Suicide Prevention Program (2016); Cleveland et al (2017)



# Mission – Increase Means Safety



# Background: What is Safer Homes, Suicide Aware?

1. A public awareness campaign that:
  - ✓ *Educates the public about suicide risks*
  - ✓ *Encourages secure storage of medications and firearms*
  - ✓ *Provides free locking and storage equipment*
  - ✓ *Meets people where they are (in the community)*
  - ✓ *Aims to prevent suicide through means safety*
2. Customized suicide prevention training for specific audiences
  - ✓ *Military*
  - ✓ *Veterans*
  - ✓ *Medical professionals*
  - ✓ *Firearm retailers/instructors*



# Firearms culture and suicide care

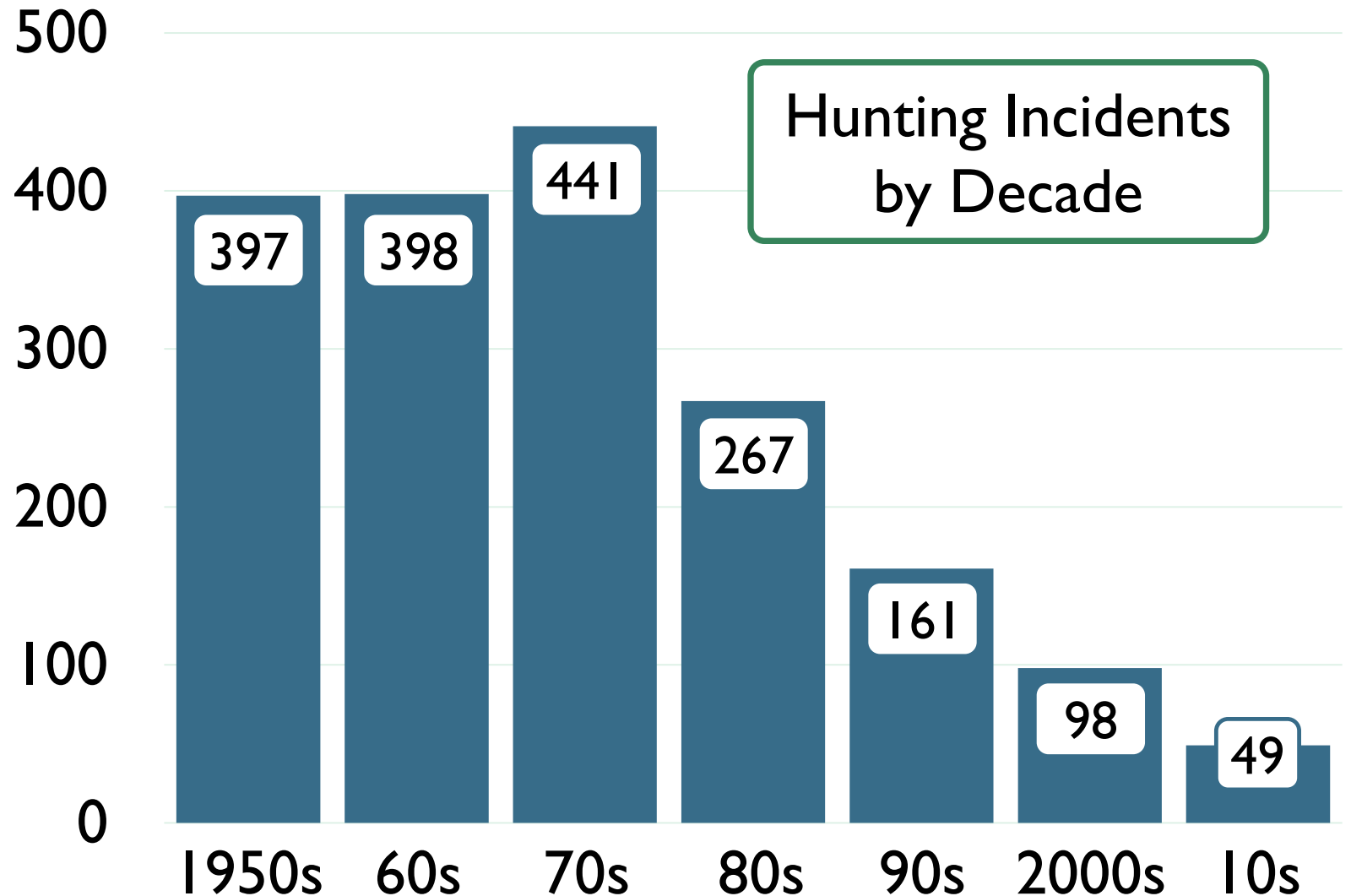
## Values: Safety, Protection, Responsibility



**Washington Dept.  
of Fish and Wildlife**

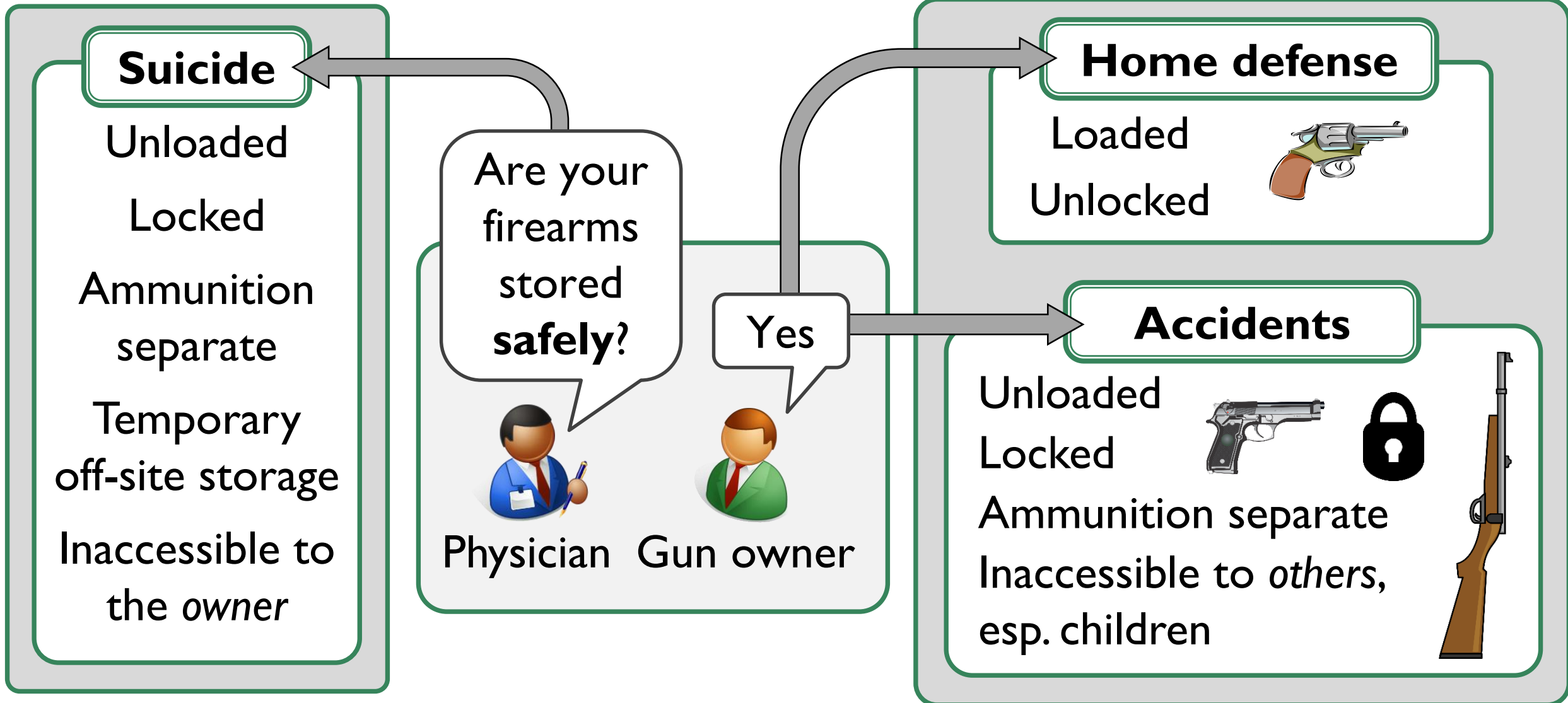
**Washington  
Hunter Ed Course**

*“Since 1957, we have  
learned one very  
important lesson:  
All hunting incidents  
can be prevented!”*



# Firearms culture and suicide care

Values, Beliefs and Practices: What is “safety”?





# Execution – Interventions & Trainings



# Safer Homes Conversation



**S**ignpost to get attention, ask permission

**A**ssess storage practices, ask questions

**F**act(s) about suicide

**E**xpect and validate emotion

**R**ecommend based on individual circumstances



# Progress to Date: Safer Homes By the Numbers




- Program launched on 10 Sept. 2017
- Events since July 2018 (green indicates gun shows):
  - July 2018 – **Everett** (126 participants)
  - Aug. 2018 – **Walla Walla** (117)
  - Oct. 2018 – **Sultan** (12)
  - Nov. 2018 – **JBLM** (89) & **Puyallup** (186)
  - Dec. 2018 – **Vancouver** (148)
  - Jan. 2019 – **Chehalis** (49)
  - Mar. 2019 – **Moses Lake** (48) & **Olympia** (34)
  - Apr. 2019 – **Omak** (40)
  - May 2019 – **Republic** (155)
  - June 2019 – **Kennewick** (24)
  - July 2019 – **Naval Station Everett** (39)
  - Aug. 2019 – **Oak Harbor** (25)
  - Sept. 2019 – **Phoenix, AZ** (46)
  - Oct. 2019 – **Lynden** (41), **Bremerton** (33), & **Renton** (8)
  - Nov. 2019 – **Spokane** (60) & **Issaquah** (13)
  - Dec. 2019 – **Seattle** (161)

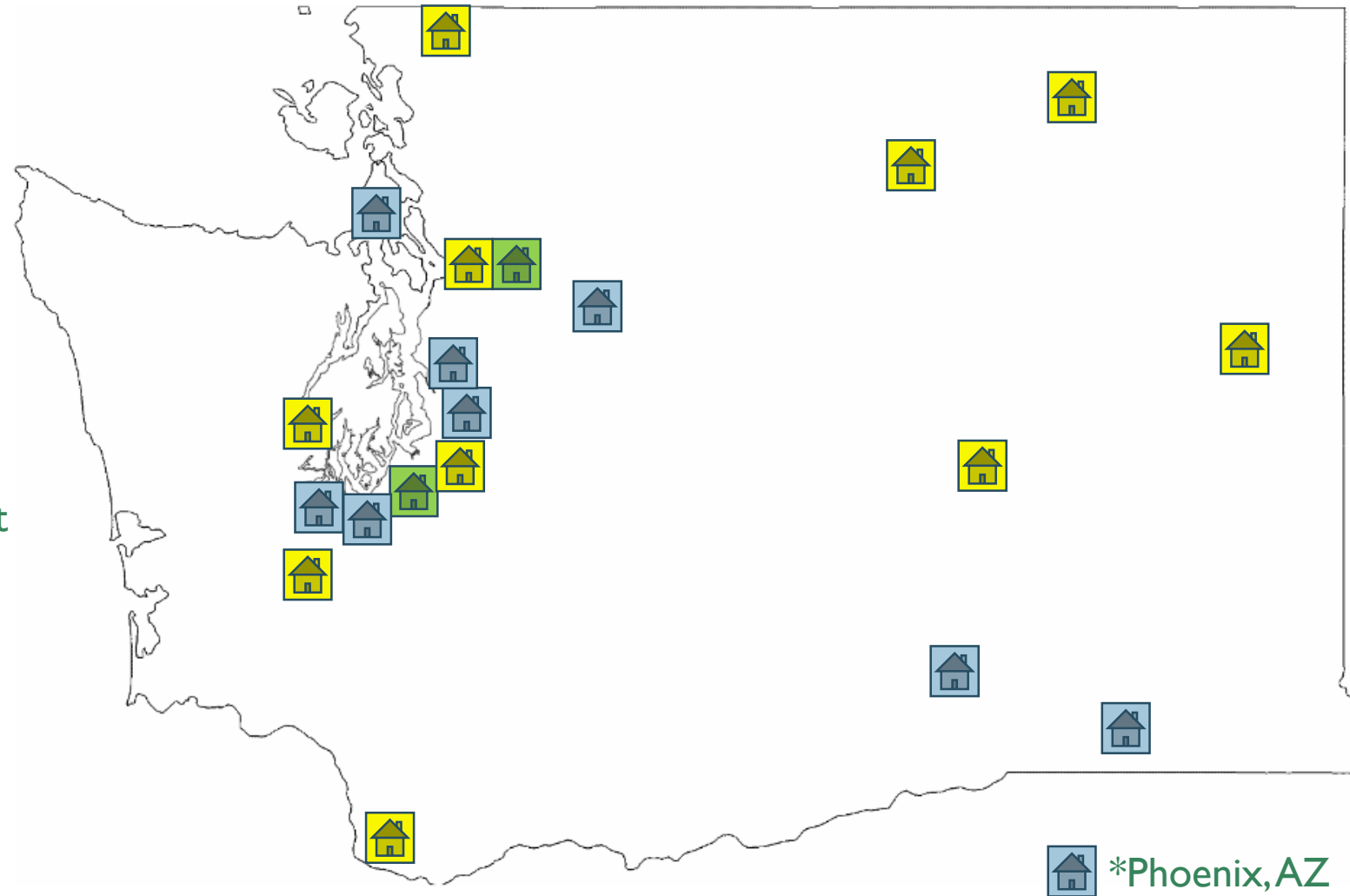




# SAFER HOMES COMMUNITY EVENTS



-  SH gun show event
-  SH military event
-  SH community event





# Progress to Date: Safer Homes By the Numbers

- Program launched on 10 Sept. 2017
- Trainings & briefings since July 2018 (green indicates trainings for the WDVA):
  - July 2018 – **Bellingham** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training)
  - Aug. 2018 – **Wenatchee** (Serving Those Who Served conference) & **Walla Walla** (National Night Out)
  - Sept. 2018 – **Seattle** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training) & **Seattle** (Irreverent Warriors' Seattle Silkies Hike)
  - Nov. 2018 – **Seattle** (UW School of Social Work veterans' LEARN training) & **Bothell** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training)
  - Jan. 2019 – **Puyallup** (WDVA Peer Corps), **Seattle** (WDVA Peer Corps) & **Ocean Shores** (Roanoke Conference)
  - Apr. 2019 – **Spanaway** (Rotary Club), **Puyallup** (Kevin Hines community event), & **Wenatchee** (Community Health Worker conference)
  - May 2019 – **Everett** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training)



# Progress to Date: Safer Homes By the Numbers

- Trainings & briefings since July 2018 (continued):
  - Jun. 2019 – Coupville (Island County Public Health Dept.), Seattle (VA Puget Sound Black Veterans' Support Group) & Wenatchee (WA Firearms Tragedy Prevention Network)
  - Jul. 2019 – Kennewick (WDVA Serving Those Who Served Conference)
  - Aug. 2019 – **Olympia** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training) & **Ellensburg** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training)
  - Aug. 2019 – Vancouver (Clark County Public Health)
  - Sept. 2019 – **Seattle** (Puget Sound VA), Phoenix, AZ (Gun Rights Policy Conference), **Tacoma** (American Lake VAMC), Seattle (King County Medical Society), **Renton** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training) & Seattle (HIPRC CAP Meeting)
  - Oct. 2019 – **Port Angeles** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training), **Tacoma** (American Lake VAMC nurses) & **Olympia** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN)
  - Nov. 2019 – **Olympia** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training), Richland (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training) & **Spokane** (WSALPHO Safer Homes presentation)
  - Dec. 2019 – **Lakewood** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training) & **Vancouver** (WDVA Peer Corps LEARN training)

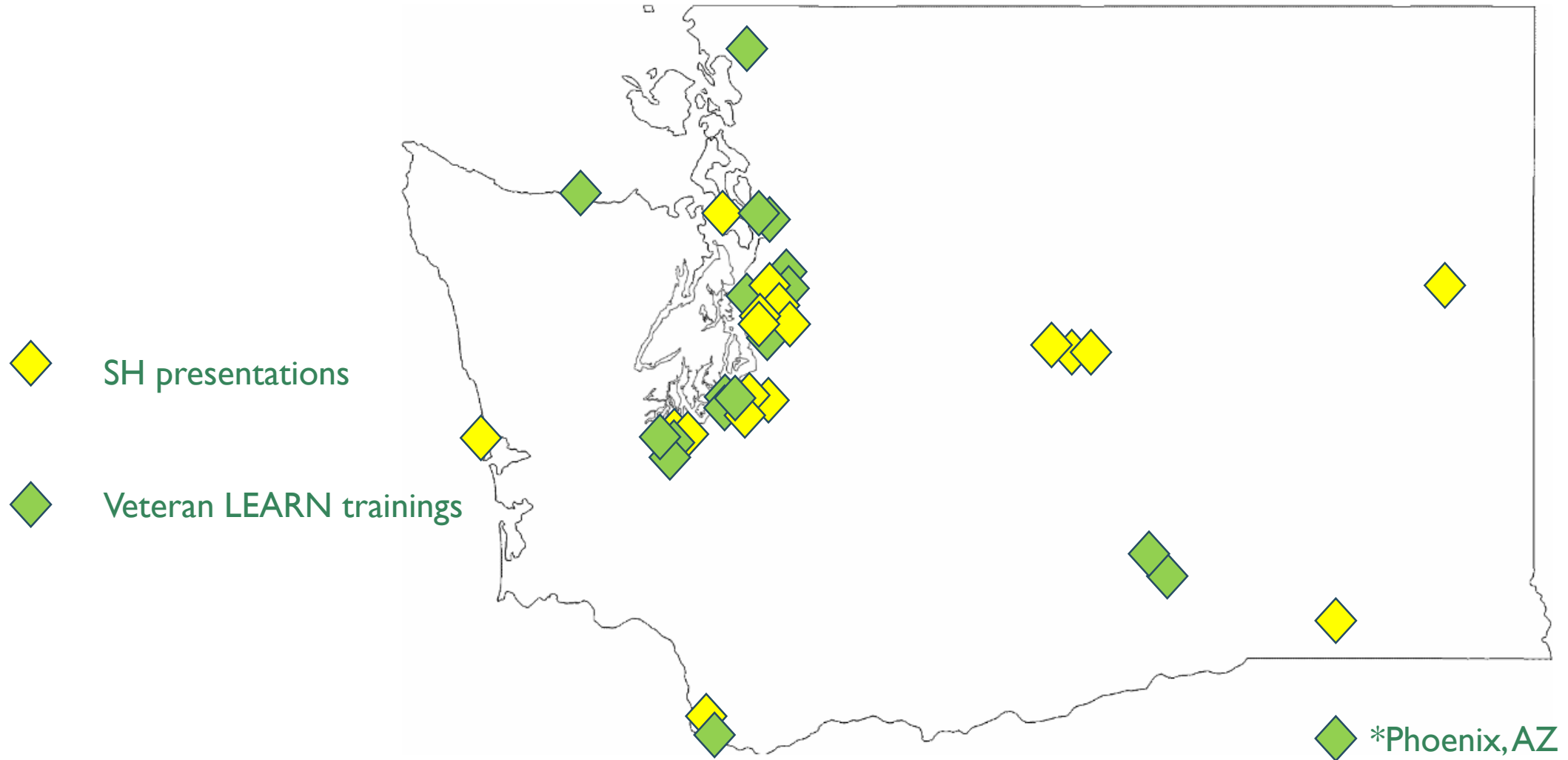


**VETERANS  
PEER CORPS**

*"Serving Those Who Served"*



# Community LEARN<sup>®</sup> Trainings



# Safer Homes Evaluation

- IRB (Institutional Review Board) approval granted 9 Nov 2018 for revised study to evaluate effectiveness of Safer Homes, Suicide Aware
- Evaluation assesses:
  - ✓ Knowledge of suicide prevention
  - ✓ Knowledge of most often used means in suicides (i.e., firearms)
  - ✓ Confidence in helping someone at risk for suicide
  - ✓ Behavioral change in safely storing medications
  - ✓ Behavioral change in safely storing firearms
  - ✓ Receptivity to Safer Homes program
- Evaluation timeline:
  - *Safer Homes event*
  - *~4 weeks post-event:*
    - Initial email re-evaluation sent
  - *~6 weeks post-event:*
    - Telephone calls to those who do not respond to the email
  - *~8 weeks post-event:*
    - Second attempt to contact by phone



# Preliminary Pre/Post Assessment Data

- 804 pre-assessments and 188 post-assessments completed (23.4% response rate)
- Response rates have dramatically increased since January (+30%) given:
  - Dedicated resources follow-up calls after survey reminders (Reduction in backlog of calls from Fall 2018)
  - Surveys and calls happening closer to time of engagement
  - Incentive offered for participation (starting in Spring 2019)
- 75% of post-respondents were men; 19% active duty, 24% prior service, 56% no military
- Initial post-responses show an increase in locking behavior

<b>Percent of respondents who ...</b>	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>
Have a firearm at home	89%	87%
Keep all firearms locked up	52%	68%
Were interested in firearm locking equipment	92%	N/A
Have medications at home	91%	91%
Had all medications locked up	19%	21%
Were interested in medication locking equipment	48%	N/A



# Preliminary Pre/Post Assessment Data, continued

- Initial post-assessment responses show a decrease in confidence to help someone at risk for suicide – possibly highlighting the increased understanding of suicide as a complex issue
- Post-assessment responses highlight increased understanding that most firearms deaths are suicides

<b>Percent of respondents who ...</b>	<b>Pre</b>	<b>Post</b>
Are confident they could help someone at risk for suicide	79%	66%
Think suicide can be prevented	87%	84%
Disagreed that if someone wants to die by suicide there is nothing they he/she can do to stop it	75%	74%
Agreed that most firearms deaths are suicides	31%	44%

# Admin & Logistics – Answering the call





# Distributed Products

**Liberty HD-50 Key Vault**



**(Handgun lockbox with security tether)**





# Distributed Products

## MSE International Life Jacket



Polycarbonate clamshell for tube-fed shotguns (LJ-3) and AR-pattern rifles (LJ-4)\*



\*MSE Int'l. LJ-4 will be replaced by a more versatile AR-pattern rifle product in 2020

# Distributed Products

## SaferLock Rx (medication lockbox)



## Mallinckrodt Industries Medication Disposal System



# By the Numbers

- Formally interacted with 1,473 individuals at SH events
- Traveled to at least 75 locations across the state, logging 10,603.8 miles
- 56 completed online training
- Trained between 374 and 400 people in the LEARN model of suicide prevention
- Distributed the following equipment across the state:
  - 1018 pistol safes
  - 242 shotgun “Life Jacket” locks
  - 218 AR-pattern rifle “Life Jacket” locks
  - 955 medication lockboxes
  - 9+ full cases of Mallinckrodt medication disposal kits





# Command & Signal – Leadership & Organization



# Task Force & Forefront program

- Safer Homes Task Force
  - Created by state statute in 2016
  - Composition outlined by RCW 43.70.445
  - Two subcommittees\*
    - Pharmacy
    - Firearms
    - \*Also now including construction industry
  - Collaborative approach; only work in areas with common ground
- Safer Homes, Suicide Aware
  - Program of Forefront Suicide Prevention
  - Carries out objectives & implements strategies discussed/decided by Task Force (with input)
  - Funded in part by state legislature, mainly by grant funding from the Boeing company



# Safer Homes Inspires New Partnerships





# Safer Homes Team

- Program Coordinator
  - Brett Bass
- Research Assistant
  - Morgan Meadows
- Participant Contact Specialist
  - Katrina Handler
- MSW Practicum
  - Dr. Sam Powers
- Data Analysis/Epidemiologist
  - Anne Massey (HIPRC)

- Forefront Suicide Prevention Center Director
  - Dr. Jenn Stuber\*
- Forefront Suicide Prevention Director of Programs & Partnerships
  - Dr. Jessica Gallus\*\*

\*Safer Homes Task Force co-chair

\*\*Outgoing: Last day is 3 Jan. 2020



# Closing Notes



Do Young  
People Live  
In or Visit  
Your Home?

## LOCK UP

For their protection,  
do not allow children  
& teens unsupervised,  
unauthorized  
firearm access

## LIMIT

Only firearm owner or  
designee should  
access keys  
and combinations

## CHOOSE

Carefully select  
a safe storage device  
for home-defense  
firearm with fast  
access for only you

**82%** OF TEENS WHO DIE BY SUICIDE WITH A GUN USE A FAMILY MEMBER'S FIREARM

Concerned  
About  
Yourself, Friend  
Or Family  
Member?

## HOLD

Give a trusted  
individual keys and  
combinations

## TRANSFER

Ask a friend or relative  
to hold firearms in  
an emergency  
temporary transfer

## CALL

The National Suicide  
Prevention Lifeline  
**1-800-273-8255**  
Veterans Press 1  
Crisis Text: 741-741



**SAFER HOMES  
SUICIDE AWARE**

**YOU CAN SAVE A LIFE**  
[SaferHomesCoalition.org](http://SaferHomesCoalition.org)



# Future Plans for Safer Homes

- Update & improve survey tool
- Directly map survey questions to components of the interaction with participants
- Hire additional Safer Homes program staff to focus on:
  - Firearms industry communication
  - Firearms industry materials distribution & development
  - Retailer & instructor participation in suicide prevention training
  - Event support
  - Online content management
  - Working with ranges & FFLs to create a state- or region-wide communication tool to allow quick & efficient alerts to industry of possibly suicidal customers
  - Collaboration with program manager to allow for equipment distribution & data collection *online*
- Formalize event venue selection criteria w/emphasis on staff & volunteer support
- Lead Forefront's 'basecamp' model of inspiring, supporting, and partnering with community groups around the state (particularly in rural areas)
- Better position key program staff to be able to serve the entirety of the state of Washington
- Select, order, and distribute new locking equipment for AR-pattern rifles
- Strive for more parity between generic community events and gun shows to study demographic, behavior-change, and response differences
- Continue refining firearms & veterans cultural competency training with the intent to create a CE/CME-accredited 3-6 hour training module for providers
- Publish detailed analysis & evaluation of 2018-2019 Safer Homes survey data

# Lessons Learned

- Work collaboratively with diverse stakeholders
- *Messenger* is just as important as *message*
- Be prepared for frustrating (and sometimes confusing) push-back
- Contacting participants is *time-intensive*
- Incentives need to be priced at a point that actually motivates people

- QUESTIONS?
- COMMENTS?
- CONCERNS?

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**SAFER  
HOMES**  
**SUICIDE AWARE**

#stickit2suicide with us

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