



COVID-19 and its Impact on Communities of Color

Top Line: Root causes of gun violence will be exacerbated by COVID-19.

Description: Just as gun violence disproportionately impacts communities and people of color, current data suggests COVID-19 disproportionately impacts communities of color.¹ We know that the root causes that perpetuate gun violence – such as poverty², underfunded public housing³, under-resourced public services⁴, and underperforming schools⁵, are exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic and because of this, communities of color will continue to be adversely impacted. It is imperative to approach this public health crisis through a lens that promotes health equity.

As part of our effort to educate individuals on COVID-19 and its impact on communities of color we hosted a webinar Monday, April 20 with public health experts. To help shine the light on this important conversation we enlisted the help of the following people:

- **Dr. Devin Horton**, Graduate Diversity for STEM Disciplines, UC-Davis
- **Dr. Keisha Pollack Porter**, Professor of Health Policy & Management, Johns Hopkins University
- **Dr. Shani Buggs**, Postdoctoral Fellow with the Violence Prevention Research Program, UC-Davis
- **Joshua Horwitz**, Executive Director of the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence
- **Lauren Footman**, Community Engagement Coordinator of the Educational Fund to Stop Gun Violence

The highlights from the webinar are:

- There are many myths around COVID-19, with respect to where it originated, how it can be contracted and who is more susceptible to contract it. However, it is imperative to seek information from credible sources, such as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.⁶

¹ COVID-19 in Racial and Ethnic Minority Groups. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/need-extra-precautions/racial-ethnic-minorities.html>

² Kennedy BP, Kawachi I, Prothrow-Stith D, Lochner K, & Gupta V. (1998). Social capital, income inequality, and firearm violent crime. *Social science & medicine*.

³ US Department of Housing and Urban Development. (2000). *In the crossfire: The impact of gun violence on public housing communities*.

⁴ Bieler S, Kijakazi K, La Vigne N, Vinik N, & Overton S. (2016). *Engaging communities in reducing gun violence*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

⁵ Bieler S, Kijakazi K, La Vigne N, Vinik N, & Overton S. (2016). *Engaging communities in reducing gun violence*. Washington, DC: Urban Institute.

⁶ Coronavirus (COVID-19). Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/index.html>



- Communities of color are impacted by structural inequalities rooted in racism that impact health outcomes.
- Root causes of gun violence are exacerbated by COVID-19 and can create conditions to perpetuate these cycles of violence.
- Violence prevention outreach workers have been deemed essential in some cities such as Newark, New Jersey and Stockton, California⁷. During COVID-19 they are still mediating conflict, providing supplies to communities, and serving as credible messengers about COVID-19.

Like, COVID-19, gun violence is a multifaceted challenge that demands a holistic set of solutions. To stop the cycles of daily gun violence and address health inequities, we recommend decision makers:

- Use a racial equity lens when allocating resources and understand the disproportionate impact communities of color will face during this pandemic;
- Address structural inequities such as trauma, poverty, income inequality, underperforming schools, and under-resourced public services on an ongoing basis;
- Continue or begin funding community-based intervention and prevention programs that are led by the communities most impacted by gun violence; and
- Pass legislation to limit access to deadly weapons.

The [2:00 minute promo](#) and the [full webinar](#) can be found at the [YouTube page for the Coalition to Stop Gun Violence](#).

⁷<https://www.arnoldventures.org/stories/street-outreach-workers-should-be-deemed-essential/>