RESOLUTION NO. 2018-4569

A RESOLUTION OF THE TACOMA-PIERCE COUNTY BOARD OF HEALTH URGING INVESTMENT IN RESEARCH AND SYSTEMS THAT GUIDE FIREARM INJURY PREVENTION EFFORTS

WHEREAS, firearm injuries and exposure to firearm violence create significant physical, emotional and economic harm to our communities and constitute a public health problem; and

WHEREAS, in 2016, firearms caused 39,000 fatalities and 116,000 non-fatal injuries nationwide, 686 fatalities in Washington, and 105 fatalities in Pierce County; and

WHEREAS, firearms are a major cause of premature death, especially among young people; premature death has a significant effect on Pierce County’s Health Rankings from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation; and

WHEREAS, significant health disparities in firearms injuries and death exist including: more than half of homicide victims are young men—two-thirds of whom are black—and black children and teens are 14 times more likely than white children and teens to die by firearms; and

WHEREAS, the three core functions of public health (assessment, policy development and assurance) rely on data, research and evidence to inform policies and practices to keep people healthy and safe; a public health approach led to reduced motor vehicle injuries and death; and

WHEREAS, in 1975, the United States Department of Transportation started gathering and publicly tracking motor vehicle death data, which allowed researchers to use qualitative data to inform public health policy to reduce the incidence of motor vehicle deaths; and

WHEREAS, the CDC has an interactive calculator, Motor Vehicle Prioritizing Interventions and Cost Calculator for States (MV PICCS), to help transportation decision makers prioritize effective motor vehicle injury prevention interventions by calculating the number of injuries and fatalities prevented, implementation costs, and considers the available state resources; and

WHEREAS, the per capita traffic fatality rate fell 31 percent from 2000 to 2013; and

WHEREAS, in 1996, U.S. Congress passed the Dickey Amendment to the Omnibus Consolidated Appropriations Bill of 1997 that specified “none of the funds made available for injury prevention and control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) may be used to advocate or promote gun control,” causing a 96 percent drop in firearm injury prevention research funding from 1996 to 2012; and

WHEREAS, professional organizations like the American Public Health Association and the National Association of County and City Health Officials adopted policies to recognize firearm injury and death as a major public health problem in the United States; and
WHEREAS, in 2013, a Presidential Memorandum directed the CDC and scientific agencies to conduct research into the causes and prevention of firearm violence, based on legal analysis that such research is not prohibited by any appropriations language; and

WHEREAS, the American Medical Association adopted a policy in 2016 to declare firearm-related violence in the United States a public health crisis that requires a public health response and solution; and

WHEREAS, Secretary of Health and Human Services Alex Azar’s congressional testimony in Feb. 2018 and subsequent language in the Omnibus continuing resolution in March 2018 clarified the CDC can research firearm injury prevention, but no federal funds were appropriated; and

WHEREAS, in 2018, national medical, health, public health and research organizations asked federal lawmakers to support firearm injury prevention research and public health surveillance funding; now therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health calls on state and federal lawmakers to fund research for the causes and prevention of firearm injury at least at the same rate allocated to similar injury-related causes of death; and further be it

RESOLVED, that the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health calls on state and federal lawmakers to ensure the databases and systems necessary for research and public health surveillance are available and publicly accessible.

\[Signature\]
Rick Talbert  
Chair, Board of Health

September 5, 2018  
Date of Adoption

ATTEST:  
\[Signature\]
Patricia Darden  
Clerk, Board of Health
# Board of Health Action Request

## REGULAR AGENDA
Resolution No. 2018-4569

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<tr>
<th>Requesting Division</th>
<th>Presenter</th>
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<tr>
<td>Environmental Health</td>
<td>Jessica Gehle, Environmental Health Division Director</td>
<td>253-798-4444</td>
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### Preparation of an Agenda Request/Resolution for the Board of Health meeting.

**Date:** September 5, 2018

### Request Summary
A resolution of the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health urging investment in research and systems that guide firearm injury prevention efforts.

### Background Information / Comments
A public health, evidence-based approach is needed to reduce the number and impact of firearm related injury and death. Currently, there is insufficient research into such an approach due to a lack of funding at all levels of government. This resolution calls on federal and state lawmakers to increase funding for research into causes of and effective interventions for firearm related injury and death.

### Health Lens Analysis Tool
**Note:** Health Lens Analysis Tool must be completed and uploaded to the BOH Resolution documents library.

**Recommended Board of Health Action**
Approve Resolution No. 2018-4569

List all materials attached as backup information for the request.

### Health Lens Analysis Tool
**Note:** All documents listed above must be uploaded to the BOH Resolution documents library.

### Finance Information/Additional Revenue

<table>
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### Source of Revenue

| Federal: |
| State: |
| Pierce County: |
| City of Tacoma: |
| Other: |
| **Total:** $0.00 |

### Additional Expenditure

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### Program Name

### Program Division Director Approval

### Business Support Services Approval

### Director of Health Approval
Name of Proposed Policy or Decision

Resolution No. 2018-4569: A Resolution of the Tacoma-Pierce County Board of Health urging investment in research and systems that guide firearm injury prevention efforts.

Health Lens Analysis Questions

1. What is this proposal trying to accomplish?
This resolution formalizes and communicates the Board of Health’s support for federal and state lawmakers to allocate more funding for research into firearm-related injury and death by agencies such as the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. It also communicates the Board’s support for creation of a national firearm injury database.

2. Which groups of people will be most affected by this proposal?
Impacts from this proposal are minimal to all groups because it is a call for funding and research that does not prescribe any specific action.

Positive affected:
Findings from the research this resolution encourages would have the greatest potential benefits for:
1. People of color, especially black men, who are much more likely to be victims of firearm violence.
2. Young people, for whom suicide is a major cause of premature death.
3. Women, who are disproportionately the victims of domestic violence.

Negatively affected:
None

3. Which groups of people who may be affected have you consulted when developing the proposal? Who have you not consulted that might be affected?

Consulted with:
None

Have not consulted with:
Health Department staff did not consult with anyone outside the Department about the specifics of this resolution.

4. How would this proposal improve or impair the social conditions of the community?
Firearm violence is deeply traumatic for communities as well as individuals. In addition to the direct effect of death or injury, firearm violence causes community-wide trauma that impairs social connections, social/political engagement, community resilience, and community members’ sense of efficacy. Research into efforts to reduce firearm violence could lead to evidence-based interventions that would reduce
violence and improve community social conditions. It is difficult to quantify these potential benefits due in part to the current lack of research.

5. How would this proposal improve or impair the economic conditions of the community?

Firearm violence also causes community-wide trauma that perpetuates cycles of intergenerational poverty, unemployment and community disinvestment. Research into efforts to reduce firearm violence could lead to evidence-based interventions that would reduce violence and improve community economic conditions.

6. How would this proposal improve or impair the environmental conditions of the community?

Firearm violence further causes community-wide trauma that makes public places and infrastructure, such as parks, unsafe and unused. Research into efforts to reduce firearm violence could lead to evidence-based interventions that would reduce violence and improve built environment conditions, which are critical to health and equity.

7. What are some possible unintended negative health effects of this proposal?

If lawmakers answer this call, it is possible they would shift funding away from other important public health research efforts rather than allocating additional funding for firearms research. As written, the resolution does not specify that firearm research funding should be in addition to current funding for other research efforts.

8. What actions do we need to take to ensure this proposal supports health in Pierce County? Whom might you need to work with to accomplish these actions?

As written, the resolution doesn’t require any specific actions. However, it could be the basis for future actions to support firearm research funding. Such actions might include communications with state and federal lawmakers and/or testimony on proposed legislation. If funded, future research efforts might require the Health Department to work with the agencies conducting this research, including the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and WA Department of Health.

9. What actions will be taken to strengthen this proposal’s support of health in Pierce County?

| No change (please explain:) | This resolution is an important first step toward enabling the Department to be the reliable, objective source of information about the public health effects of firearms. As the resolution shows, more research is needed to identify and implement evidence-based interventions to reduce firearm related injury and death, which requires greater funding and coordination. |

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Date of Policy Review (8/21/2017)
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