MSCS COLLOQUIUM

Data to Inform Policies to Reduce Gun Violence Involving Civilians and Police

Daniel Webster, ScD, MPH, Bloomberg Professor of American Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

Abstract: There were about 40,000 deaths due to gunshots in the United States in 2018 including about 1,000 civilians shot by law enforcement officers. More than half of civilians fatally shot by police were reported to have a firearm in their possession. Policies that reduce the availability of firearms to people who have a history of violent or dangerous behavior could reduce the incidence of all forms of gun violence, including police shootings. In a series of studies that use synthetic control and difference-in-difference estimates from regression analyses to estimate the independent effects of comprehensive background check laws and laws requiring firearm purchasers to receive licenses to purchase firearms, we find that purchaser licensing is associated with reductions in the diversion of firearms for criminal use, firearm-related homicides and suicides, fatal mass shootings, and law enforcement officers shot in the line of duty. New data show that states with strong firearm purchaser licensing laws have rates of civilians fatally shot by law enforcement that are one half as high as that of states with comprehensive background checks without licensing requirements and one fourth as high as in states with no licensing or comprehensive background checks.

Bio: Daniel Webster, ScD, MPH is the inaugural Bloomberg Professor of American Health at the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health where he directs the Center for Gun Policy and Research and serves as co-lead of the Violence Prevention Workgroup of the Bloomberg American Health Initiative. Dr. Webster is one of the nation's leading experts on the prevention of gun violence and has published widely on gun policy, street outreach and violence interruption programs, youth violence, intimate partner violence, suicide, and substance abuse. He is the lead editor and a contributor to *Reducing Gun Violence in America: Informing Policy with Evidence and Analysis* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2013). Dr. Webster's research has informed policies to reduce gun violence at the local, state, and federal level. His research has examined the effects of handgun purchaser licensing, comprehensive background checks, firearm restrictions stemming from domestic violence restraining orders and convictions for misdemeanor violence, state regulations over firearms dealers, and child access prevention laws.

Monday, October 26, 3:30 pm