

59 Tristate Hospitals Unite for “It Doesn’t Kill to Ask” Child Gun Safety Campaign

Coalition encourages families to ask about gun access and safety measures

With firearms remaining the leading cause of injury and death in children, the nation’s largest regional collaboration of health systems, representing 59 hospitals in Philadelphia, Southeastern Pennsylvania, Delaware and Southern New Jersey, is kicking off the year with a public service campaign that encourages a community approach to protecting children from unlocked guns.

HospitalsTogether.com is the new name and website for the coalition’s ongoing multi-media campaign called “It Doesn’t Kill to Ask.” The campaign empowers caregivers, parents and community members to speak up about safe gun storage in homes a child might visit, providing actionable tools and new resources to aid in the process. Research and data show the importance of asking about unlocked guns where children may be present and that gun safety requires a comprehensive approach to prevention, including community education, outreach and advocacy.

A fundamental part of prevention is normalizing conversations about gun storage. The campaign comes at a time when an average of [13 children](#) die from guns every day, making guns the [leading cause](#) of death in children in the U.S. According to Brady United Against Gun Violence, nearly 5 million children live in homes with unlocked or unsupervised guns, and last year there were at least 377 unintentional shootings by children resulting in 145 deaths.

In Philadelphia, newly elected Mayor Cherelle Parker has declared a citywide public safety emergency, calling for comprehensive plans to address the most difficult public health issues facing our communities today, including gun safety.

Through a refreshed series of broadcast, print and digital public service educational messages, along with the newly launched HospitalsTogether.com website, the campaign highlights that access to unlocked guns may lead to death, suicide and violence, making it more likely children will die from guns than cancer or automobile accidents. The website provides tips on how to have a conversation with other parents and families about safely stored firearms and encourages making this conversation as normal as asking about pets or food allergies before a playdate.

The tristate health systems represent the nation’s largest regional collaboration addressing critical public health issues on an ongoing basis. Together, they are committed to tackling the most difficult public health issues that often result in serious and avoidable health consequences and offering messages of prevention and safety, hope and healing. The founding members of HospitalsTogether.com, along with their hospitals, thousands of outpatient sites and hundreds of thousands of physicians, nurses and other clinical and support staff, are dedicated to making a positive difference in the health of their communities.

Given the importance of the gun safety public service message across the region, these hospitals and health systems are united in facing this crisis together. They first came together in 2020, when encouraging masking during the pandemic and leading other efforts to help protect public health in local communities. Most recently, they decided to formalize their efforts with the new

name for their collaboration and website, calling their collaboration HospitalsTogether.com to demonstrate their commitment to joining forces for the public good.

Impetus for the “It Doesn’t Kill to Ask” campaign and other public service campaigns comes from over 100 healthcare marketing and communications executives meeting regularly for over a decade, sharing knowledge, experience, best practices and resources, knowing they can accomplish more together. Founded and led by national healthcare leader [Rhoda Weiss, Ph.D.](#), the expanded coalition partnered with Northwell Health, New York State’s largest health system, in leading the gun safety effort.

About Us: HospitalsTogether.com unites organizations from throughout the tri-state region to create awareness of ongoing public health crises. Health systems in the collaborative include Children’s Hospital of Philadelphia, ChristianaCare, Jefferson Health, Main Line Health, Nemours Children’s Health, Penn Medicine, Prime Healthcare, Redeemer Health, St. Christopher’s Hospital for Children, Temple Health, Tower Health, Trinity Health Mid-Atlantic and Virtua Health. Together they represent 59 area hospitals, tens of thousands of community-based outpatient programs and hundreds of thousands of physicians, nurses and other clinical and support staff and volunteers.