



A National Public Health Week Call to Action: Let's Use a Public Health Approach to Address Gun Violence

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In 1964 the Surgeon General released a report titled “Smoking and Health” concluding that cigarette smoking is a major cause of lung cancer. The report was a top news story, and led to laws requiring warnings on cigarette packages and bans on advertising. Since then, additional Surgeon General reports focused on secondhand smoke and new tobacco distribution systems, such as e-cigarettes, again resulting in changes to law.

Although it took roughly half a century after the first report for public understanding to follow, smoking rates have declined by more than 50%, decreasing both lung cancer and lung cancer death rates. In addition, [tobacco companies settled a lawsuit with states](#) to recover billions of dollars in healthcare costs attributed to tobacco.

In June of last year Surgeon General Vivek Murthy declared firearm violence a public health concern. Was the 2024 Surgeon General Advisory declaring gun violence a public health problem poised to do the same thing?