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## News for Immediate Release

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### **Auditor General DePasquale Visits Einstein Trauma Unit, Calls for Action on His Proposals to Curb Firearms Violence and Save Lives**

**PHILADELPHIA** – Highlighting the critical role medical professionals play in saving the lives of shooting victims, Auditor General Eugene DePasquale today toured the trauma unit at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia and urged action on his proposals to reduce gun violence.

“This hospital treats more shooting victims in a month than many other facilities see in an entire year,” DePasquale said. “We’ve got to find a way to stop the cycle of violence.”

DePasquale was joined on the tour by Dr. Elizabeth Datner, Chair of Emergency Medicine at Einstein Medical Center Philadelphia, and spoke with emergency and trauma intervention staff. DePasquale said he will work with their team to craft additional recommendations to save lives and reduce costs to society.

In November, DePasquale released a special report on firearm safety outlining ways for Pennsylvania to work within existing laws to curb deaths and injuries stemming from firearms.

“More than 1,500 Pennsylvanians died as a result of firearms in 2016 – an average of four funerals held each and every day,” DePasquale said. “Over the past decade, firearm-related injuries cost Pennsylvania taxpayers about \$1.5 billion in health care costs.”

DePasquale’s report, “[A Safer Pennsylvania: A Community Approach to Firearm Safety](#),” contains 12 recommendations:

1. The state should work to expand access to mental health care, especially in rural communities.
2. The stigma of seeking mental health help must end; to do that, the state should mount a culturally responsive public awareness campaign.
3. Engage medical doctors and train all physicians, especially primary care physicians, to screen patients for risks of firearm violence.
4. Engage licensed firearms dealers in looking for red flags in customers who might potentially use a firearm for suicide.
5. The Pennsylvania Game Commission should expand its hunter education program section on firearm safety and create a voluntary training program on safe firearm usage and storage.
6. Encourage all firearm owners to voluntarily use safe storage best practices, such as locking unloaded firearms in a safe and storing ammunition away from firearms.
7. The state should continue to support hospital-based violence intervention programs and behavioral health resources in hospitals so they can be fully responsive to the violence they treat and ensure that unresolved trauma will not contribute to retaliation or suicide.

8. The state should support communities in organizing violence prevention efforts proven to be effective. The Pennsylvania Commission on Crime and Delinquency's Gun Violence Reduction Initiative is a good example of that support.

9. The governor should sign an executive order requiring Pennsylvania State Police to issue quarterly and monthly reports on firearms traced from crimes to help track lost and stolen guns as well as firearm-related criminal activity.

10. The state should secure funding to increase Pennsylvania's participation in a national network that uses bullets to connect multiple crimes to single firearms.

11. Sheriffs and other law-enforcement officials who issue concealed-carry permits should thoroughly check applicants' references and backgrounds before approving applications and consider prosecuting those who provide false information.

12. Pennsylvania State Police should implement the Lethality Assessment Program, which connects victims of intimate partner violence to local domestic violence programs, statewide.

DePasquale said none of his proposals would impact the constitutional rights of firearms owners.

To review the special report on firearm safety, visit [www.paauditor.gov](http://www.paauditor.gov).

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