

MAKING THE CASE FOR INJURY & VIOLENCE PREVENTION POLICY THROUGH PARTNERSHIPS

INSIGHTS FROM THE SOUTHEAST AND SOUTHWEST (SE/SW) REGION



PARTNERSHIPS ENABLE PROGRESS

When direct advocacy isn't allowed, IVP professionals can still engage in policy and influence change by supporting partners with data and expertise.

SE/SW Policy In Action

Policy forum participants emphasized several effective partnerships that significantly advanced policy initiatives within their states.

LOUISIANA



- **Domestic Abuse Fatality Review:** In 2021, the Louisiana Department of Health collaborated with the Louisiana Coalition Against Domestic Violence to draft a bill to formally establish a Domestic Abuse Fatality Review Panel. With leadership support, they included language that protects the IVP program by ensuring that activities would not be mandated if funding were unavailable. The bill passed, demonstrating the importance of strategic language and partnerships in achieving policy success.
- **Child Access Prevention Study Resolution:** In the 2025 Legislative session, a study resolution passed that asks the Louisiana Department of Health to summarize child firearm-related mortality data, evidence around child access prevention laws, and recommendations for Louisiana. Due to an ongoing partnership with the New Orleans Health Department, who worked directly with legislators on a proposed bill and then the final study resolution, the Louisiana Department of Health's injury and violence prevention team was consulted beforehand on the language and feasibility of leading the study resolution.
- **Child Passenger Safety:** Changes to child passenger safety laws in 2019 were introduced following recommendations from the Louisiana Child Death Review panel, which included highway safety and law enforcement partners. Because the proposal came from a multidisciplinary group, rather than solely the health department, it gained stronger traction and support. The legislation successfully passed as one of the strongest (at the time) CPS laws in the US.

TENNESSEE



- **Youth Sports Safety (Safe Stars Initiative):** In partnership with Vanderbilt University and led by Dr. Alex Diamond, an evidence-based youth sports safety program was adopted by 82 schools and eventually passed into law without direct involvement from the Tennessee Department of Health. This illustrates how partners can lead policy changes that are later integrated into state responsibilities.

NORTH CAROLINA



- **NC Safe Campaign:** Following grassroots support and broad stakeholder alignment, the NC CFTF's dedication to protecting children ages 0-17 from injuries and deaths caused by unsecured firearms ultimately led to the statewide NC Safe campaign housed at the NC Department of Public Safety (NCDPS) in 2023. Beginning in 2017, the NCDHHS IVPB provided subject matter expertise and staffing support to the NC CFTF's series of meetings focused on safe firearm storage in 2017. Despite multiple years of bipartisan legislative support, the state budget did not include the task force's funding recommendation for a coordinator to work with communities on safe firearm storage education and events. With the financial support of the Division of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, part of NCDPS, the statewide campaign provides education with specific messaging for gun owners, parents, healthcare providers, and schools along with information on obtaining free or reduced cost gun locks.
- **Longstanding Participation in the NC Child Fatality Task Force:** Recognizing the limitations on direct advocacy, staff from the NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) Injury and Violence Prevention Branch (IVPB) have served as expert, non-voting members of the state's Child Fatality Task Force, a legislative study commission. IVPB's ongoing involvement has informed policy discussions around topics such as child passenger safety, impaired driving, overdose prevention, suicide prevention, and youth mental health by providing valuable data and evidence-based prevention insights over time.
- **Local Capacity Building:** Recognizing their limited role in state-level advocacy, NCDHHS IVPB partnered with the University of North Carolina Injury Prevention Research Center to build community capacity through training academies and policy workshops. For example, a 2020 Academy educated community teams about family-friendly workplace policies (FFWPs) like paid leave and their role in violence prevention. Participants also learned how to communicate about these policies' importance and benefits to families, communities, and businesses. The Academy empowered participants to engage with local businesses, community leaders, and elected officials, and to advocate for establishing FFWPs.

Public health professionals can effectively contribute to policy development- even within organizational constraints- by working through coalitions, empowering partners, and strategically sharing expertise and data. These examples illustrate that setting up for success requires good timing, trust, persistence, and the right partnerships.