



Allegany County Library System  
31 Washington Street, Cumberland, MD 21502  
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## PRESS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Title: **Allegany County Library System Partners with Local Behavioral Health Authority to Distribute Free Gun Safety Locks**

Cumberland, MD– The Allegany County Library System (ACLS) is pleased to announce a partnership with the Allegany County Health Department - Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA) to distribute free gun safety locks to residents of Allegany County. This initiative aims to promote gun safety and reduce the rates of suicide and self-harm in the community.

“Safety is everyone’s main concern, and this project and collaboration is a fantastic idea. Utilizing the library to reach all parts of Allegany County is a great way to ensure these vital resources are accessible to everyone,” said Allegany County Sheriff, Craig Robertson.

Starting Monday, March 24, gun safety lock kits will be available at all ACLS branches for residents of Allegany County, 18 years and older. The goal of this project is to provide a life-saving resource that can prevent unintentional shootings and provide critical moments of pause for those in crisis.

Gun safety locks will be available free of charge, with no proof of age or residency required. The only information recorded is the household zip code. Residents may request up to two locks per household per day, with additional locks available on subsequent visits. Please note that weapons should NOT be brought into the library. Lock installation assistance is provided through instructional materials and videos included with the locks.

Gun safety locks are an important tool in preventing gun-related accidents, suicides, and self-harm. The library has long been a trusted resource in the community, collaborating with the Allegany County Health Department to distribute masks, test kits, and more.

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Between 2018 and 2023, for every 100,000 hospital emergency department visits made by Allegany County residents, 752 of them had complaints related to self-harm and/or suicide. This far exceeds the statewide average of 289/100,000 visits. This is one of the highest rates in the state, according to the Chesapeake Regional Information System for Patients (CRISP). Additionally, rural areas like Allegany County see higher rates of suicide, with firearms being the leading method. The project comes as part of a proactive approach to combat these alarming statistics.

Each gun safety lock kit includes one (1) gun safety lock, with 988 (the national mental health crisis hotline) information clearly displayed on the lock; two (2) keys for locking and unlocking the device; instructions (in English, Spanish, and French) on how to use the device; and a wallet card with 988 contact information and suicide warning signs.

If further assistance is needed, individuals can contact the LBHA at 301-759-5070 or via email at [achd.bhso@maryland.gov](mailto:achd.bhso@maryland.gov). These safety locks will be available at all ACLS locations, and the LBHA will also provide locks at their office located at the Allegany County Health Department, 12501 Willowbrook Rd, Cumberland, MD.

The Allegany County Library System and Local Behavioral Health Authority encourage all eligible residents to take advantage of this important safety resource. Together, our community can reduce the risk of gun-related accidents and support the community's well-being.

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