

## **Public health's role in the prevention of war and promotion of peace**

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**TOPIC/TARGET AUDIENCE:** violence and injury prevention specialists, social epidemiologists, public health policy analysts, public health advocates

**ABSTRACT:** War causes death, injury, destruction of health infrastructure and the environment, and diverts vital resources. The positions and policies of WHO and APHA on war, the concept of social determinants of health, and practice ethics mandate that public health professionals engage in preventing war and promoting peace. Due to militarism, a pervasive but often unrecognized cause of war, the preparation for war receives disproportionate funding that could be directed to societal priorities such as health, education and alternative energy. The Working Group on Primary Prevention of War, a multi-disciplinary and international outgrowth of APHA's Peace Caucus, proposed 60 competencies, emphasizing ending militarism, to prevent war and promote peace. The competencies are designed to incorporate in public health professional curricula, research and advocacy. Group members have conducted research in conflict zones, organized workshops, published journal articles, and in 2017, Cambridge University Press published their guide book to health professionals' engagement in the prevention of war and promotion of peace. This presentation will summarize the health effects of war, provide a rationale for and identify competencies for public health's role in preventing war and promoting peace, illustrate possible public health interventions by describing activities of the Working Group.

**OBJECTIVE(S):** By the end of this presentation, public health learners will be able to:

1. Formulate a justification for public health to engage in efforts to prevent war and promote peace.
2. Compare the US spending on the military with alternative public health uses of equivalent funding.
3. List at least four public health competencies for preventing war and promoting peace.
4. Identify at least two sources of information about public health's role in preventing war and promoting peace.

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