



March 17, 2011

Dear Colleague:

The Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs (BDAP) is urging our treatment and prevention professionals to take a formal stand against the release of an upcoming video game developed by Checkerboard Studios called "School Shooter: North American Tour 2012."

The purpose of the video game is to kill unarmed students on a school campus. Players use weapons modeled after those used in the shootings at Columbine High School and Virginia Tech, with the goal of preventing school shootings by satisfying violent urges in its players, according to the game's creator. Players have the option of committing suicide in the game at the end of their shooting spree. A clip of the game can be viewed here: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5R4_mYYBO3s and additional information about the game's creator, Checkerboard Studios, can also be viewed: <http://checkerboarded.com/schoolshooter/>.

The impending release of this game is already generating a great amount of concern among education professionals, as well as law enforcement and suicide prevention organizations. Given the increase of school shootings within the last decade, the release of this video game is particularly harmful to the efforts of schools and communities working towards decreasing violence and suicide rates.

We feel this is a serious threat to the health and safety of students and campuses. Acts of violence and suicide are linked to alcohol and substance use. We believe this game does not contribute to a safe learning environment, especially if students are experiencing any pre-existing mental health issues. As part of our mission, BDAP advocates for stronger prevention policies and this would include supporting efforts to prevent this harmful and dangerous video game from being released.

We strongly encourage you and your organization to contact your local, state, and federal representatives with your concerns.

We thank you for your time and effort.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Robin L. Rothermel". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large loop at the end.

Robin L. Rothermel
Director
Bureau of Drug and Alcohol Programs