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**NEWS RELEASE**

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**I'LL HAVE AN "EXTRA SHOT" HAS A NEW MEANING:**

**HEALTH ADVOCATES PROTEST STARBUCKS OPEN-CARRY GUN POLICY**

Los Angeles, CA – May 12, 2010 – The Violence Prevention Coalition of Greater Los Angeles (VPC LA) and its members will join with other violence prevention coalitions to protest Starbucks' "open carry" gun policy in their stores. **In protest of the policy, violence prevention and public health advocates will be speaking out in Los Angeles on May 12, 2010 at 1 pm at 1000 North Alameda in the Joshua Tree Room.**

"The VPC and those impacted daily by gun violence are concerned about our communities' safety," said Connie Rice, Civil Rights Attorney and member of the VPCLA Ambassadors Council, "Starbucks stores portray themselves as good neighbors. Good neighbors do not risk the health and safety of their community by allowing unsafe practices."

The "open carry" movement has been convening groups of followers to meet at restaurants and coffee shops in neighborhoods across the country armed with pistols, revolvers, and ammunition hanging from their belts in plain sight. While California Pizza Kitchen and Peet's Coffee and Tea quickly announced strict "no guns" policies, Starbucks has continued to allow its open carry policy, putting thousands of Starbucks patrons at risk.

"The rate of carnage due to gun violence remains at epidemic levels. In 2006, 1,113 people were killed with a firearm in Los Angeles County alone. Firearms are

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the leading cause of death for the populations between 15-34 years of age. Guns are lethal and do not belong in family friendly stores” said Billie Weiss, Associate Director for the Southern California Injury Prevention Research Center.

The display of these lethal weapons at family, youth-friendly locations creates a very unhealthy atmosphere for children, youth and families because guns and children are a dangerous combination. Children are often not able to distinguish a toy from a real gun and seeing adults walking around with guns desensitizes them to the dangers of a loaded gun. Following the May 12 event, the VPC and its affiliates will be holding protests at Starbucks stores throughout Los Angeles County, San Bernardino and Riverside Counties to show the community opposes these policies, too.

The Violence Prevention Coalition is a network of community based organizations and individuals, public agencies, and individuals dedicated to addressing violence with a public health approach. For more information, visit [www.vpcgla.org](http://www.vpcgla.org).

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