

RESOLUTION

Subject: Education on the Prevention of Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths

Submitted by: Rachel Safeek, MPH, Jerome Soldo, Suzanne McGee, MD
(University of Louisville School of Medicine)

Referred to: Reference Committee

WHEREAS, approximately 40,000 Americans die and 85,000 more are injured each year due to firearm-related causes, including interpersonal violence, suicide, and accidents¹; and

WHEREAS, the incidence of firearm-related mortality in the U.S. has increased in a 10-year period, from 10.3 deaths per 100,000 in 2007 to 12.0 deaths per 100,000 in 2017¹; and

WHEREAS, there have been 35,664 incidents of documented firearm-related violence so far in 2019, including 262 mass shootings, defined as 4 or more people injured or killed in one event²; and

WHEREAS, notwithstanding mass shooting events, about 100 Americans are killed and hundreds more are injured each day in the United States due to incidents involving firearms³; and

WHEREAS, firearm-related deaths are the second leading cause of death for children in the U.S.³; and

WHEREAS, access to a firearm increases the risk of death by suicide 3-fold, and rates of firearm suicides are highest in states with high firearm ownership³; and

WHEREAS, prevention of avoidable firearm-related injury and death, and treatment of firearm-related morbidity lies within the purview of medicine; and

WHEREAS, physician-led firearm counseling was ruled protected under First Amendment rights by *Wollschlaeger v. Governor, State of Florida*, which invalidated Florida's Firearm Owners' Privacy Act that prevented physicians from asking patients about firearm ownership⁴; and

WHEREAS, two thirds of U.S. non-firearm owners and over 50% of firearm owners believe that physician-led discussions about firearms are at least sometimes appropriate⁵; and

WHEREAS, existing Kentucky Medical Association policy supports efforts that label violence caused by the use of firearms as a public health epidemic; and

WHEREAS, American Medical Association policy H-145.976 advocates for "strategies for counseling patients on safe gun storage and use in undergraduate medical education"; now, therefore, be it

RESOLVED, that the Kentucky Medical Association work with the Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure, the Kentucky Hospital Association, and Kentucky medical schools and residency programs to support evidence-based training for medical students, resident physicians, and teaching physicians to reduce firearm-related morbidity and mortality; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Kentucky Medical Association partner with these organizations to establish best firearm safety practice guidelines for Kentucky medical students and resident and teaching physicians, emphasizing safer firearm storage and handling, evaluating risk of firearm-related suicide, and treating victims of firearm-related violence; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Kentucky Medical Association encourage physicians, when appropriate, to counsel patients on best practices for firearm safety.

References

- ¹ Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, National Center for Health Statistics. Underlying Cause of Death 1999-2017 on [CDC WONDER Online Database](#), released 2018.
- ² Gun Violence Archive. <https://www.gunviolencearchive.org>. Accessed August 7, 2019.
- ³ Everytown for Gun Safety Support Fund. <https://everytownresearch.org/gun-violence-america>. Accessed August 7, 2019.
- ⁴ Parmet W, Smith J, Miller M. Physicians, Firearms, and Free Speech: Overturning Florida's Firearm-Safety Gag Rule. *The New England Journal of Medicine*. 2017. 376:1901—1903.
- ⁵ Betz ME, Azrael D, Barber C, Miller M. Public Opinion Regarding Whether Speaking With Patients About Firearms Is Appropriate: Results of a National Survey. *Annals of Intern Medicine*. 2016. 165:543—550.