

HCMA Position Statement on Gun Violence

The tragic and horrific shooting at Robb Elementary School in Uvalde, Texas, was the 22nd mass shooting of 2022, less than five months into the new year. One week after the tragedy in Buffalo, four years after Marjory Stoneman Douglas, 10 years after Sandy Hook, 23 years after Columbine. The American Medical Association adopted a position identifying gun violence as a public health crisis in 2016. By all measures, gun violence remains a public health crisis in this country.

Consider the statistics:

- ◆ The CDC estimates in 2020, 45,000 people died due to gun violence, a record number.
- ◆ On an average day, 120 Americans are dying from gun violence and firearm-related accidents each year; of which 12 per day are children.
- ◆ Guns are now the leading cause of death for children and teens. They kill more people than HIV, hypertension, and colon cancer.
- ◆ Gunshot wounds cost Americans over 2.8 billion dollars in hospital expenses each year.
- ◆ US gun homicide rate is 26 times that of other high-income countries.

Physicians are in a unique position to assess risk, provide education, and change behaviors related to gun violence. In addition, physicians have an important role to play in advocacy and public opinion. The Hillsborough County Medical Association continues to support the policy of the American Medical Association and over 100 medical associations which calls for:

- ◆ Renewing and strengthening the assault weapons ban, including banning high-capacity magazines.
- ◆ Legislating comprehensive background checks, waiting periods, and registration of all firearms, including completion of required safety courses.
- ◆ Providing for more resources for safety education programs that promote more responsible use and storage of firearms.
- ◆ Increasing access to mental health services, including screening, prevention, and treatment.
- ◆ Supporting “red-flag” laws, targeting individuals who have demonstrated significant signs of potential violence.
- ◆ Training health professionals to respond to those who have a mental illness that might make them more prone to commit violence.
- ◆ Reversing the 1996 legislation which forbids the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using government appropriated funds to conduct research into gun violence.

* Suicides, gang-related incidents and deaths resulting from domestic conflicts are not included. "Deadliest" includes shootings with 10 or more fatalities. Shooters are not included in fatality totals.

Resource: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/19/us/mass-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>

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