

AMA joins call for action to stem tide of gun violence

NOV 16, 2016

Kevin B. O'Reilly

News Editor

The AMA has joined an advocacy effort, started by leading organizations representing physicians, public health professionals and attorneys, aimed at reducing gun-related deaths and injuries. The document seeks universal background checks on gun purchases, restrictions on the sale of military-style weapons and large-capacity magazines to civilians and more research on how to cut morbidity and mortality involving firearms.

The “call to action,” published in 2015 in *Annals of Internal Medicine*, also seeks the elimination of so-called gun-gag laws that bar physicians from asking their patients about gun ownership and storage. The document, which the AMA House of Delegates endorsed at its 2016 Interim Meeting in Orlando, Fla., also opposes laws that mandate blanket reporting of “patients who are displaying signs that they might cause serious harm to themselves or others may have unintended consequences.” Such statutes can “stigmatize persons with mental or substance use disorders, create a disincentive for them to seek treatment, and undermine the patient–physician relationship.”

The initial signers of the “call to action” were the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, American Psychiatric Association, American Public Health Association and the American Bar Association (ABA). The ABA’s Standing Committee on Gun Violence opined that none of the actions called for would violate the Second Amendment.

“Improper use of firearms has created a public health crisis,” Barbara L. McAneny, MD, the former chair of the AMA Board of Trustees, said in a statement. “Only by collaborating with others in a multidisciplinary approach can we reduce firearm-related injuries and death.”

Delegates also directed the AMA to provide an informational report on activities taken to urge removal of restrictions on federal funding for gun violence research and offer “additional recommendations on any ongoing or proposed upcoming actions.”



More than 33,000 Americans die each year of gun-related violence, accidents and suicides, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Read more news coverage from the 2016 AMA Interim Meeting.