Feb. 22, 2018: Advocacy spotlight on Action to address gun violence is long overdue

Action to address gun violence is long overdue

Last week in Parkland, Florida, 17 students and teachers were murdered. Yet another mass killing. More than a dozen others were seriously injured. The pervasiveness of gun violence and the weapons used in these crimes have changed the way we live. In movie theaters, places of worship, offices, restaurants, night clubs and schools, people today make clear note of escape routes. Schools, including the one attacked yesterday, regularly practice for active shooter situations.

And in emergency departments and trauma centers, we struggle with much more complicated, dangerous injuries inflicted by lethal ammunition fired by military-grade weapons.

At the 2016 AMA Annual Meeting, which began the day after the deadly shooting at the Pulse Nightclub in Orlando, physicians from across the country and at every stage in their career spoke about treating gunshot victims and the scale of violence we are experiencing today. Their stories resonate as much today as they did nearly two years ago.

Gun violence in America today is a public health crisis, one that requires a comprehensive and far-reaching solution. That is the determination of the AMA House of Delegates. With more than 30,000 American men, women and children dying from gun violence and firearm-related accidents each year, the time to act is now.

Today, more than ever before, America's physicians must lend their voice and their considerable political muscle to force lawmakers to examine this urgent health crisis—through federally funded research—and take appropriate steps to address it. We are not talking about Second Amendment rights or restricting your ability to own a firearm.

We are talking about a public health crisis that our Congress has failed to address. This must end.

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