Resolution: 214
(I-18)

Introduced by: Wisconsin

Subject: A Public Health Case for Firearm Regulation

Referred to: Reference Committee B
(Francis P. MacMillan, Jr., MD, Chair)

Whereas, Firearm deaths are a leading cause of preventable suicide, homicide, injury and
disability in the USA; and

Whereas, In the USA in 2016, there were on average 97 firearm deaths per day, 35,476 total, two thirds of which were suicides affecting mostly young black men and older white men; and

Whereas, In the ten years ending in 2016, deaths from firearms totaled more than the cumulative deaths of American soldiers in WW II; and

Whereas, The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution specifies, “A well-regulated militia being necessary to the security of a free state, the right of the people to keep and bear arms shall not be infringed;” and

Whereas, A militia is “generally an army or some other fighting organization of non-professional soldiers, citizens of a nation, or subjects of a state, who can be called upon for military service during a time of need … ;” and

Whereas, The Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution literally mandates that such militia be “well-regulated;” and

Whereas, Firearm regulation that does not violate the Second Amendment to the U.S. Constitution is not difficult to imagine; and

Whereas, A recent state-of-the-art systematic review of firearm regulation in the USA showed that firearm regulation was generally associated with decreased rates of firearm homicides; and

Whereas, In that same review, laws that particularly strengthened background checks and permit-to-purchase are associated with firearm homicide reductions of 29-40%; and

Whereas, The U.S. Congress in 1996 inserted language into the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention appropriation bills that essentially prevented it from conducting and funding firearm-related research; and

Whereas, Firearms are exceedingly efficient and lethal killing instruments easily classifiable as extremely hazardous to the health of the public; and

Whereas, U.S. physicians have begun to organize to promote firearm legislation and regulation suggesting the time for action by organized medicine has arrived; therefore be it
RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association support a public health approach to
evidence-based firearm laws and regulations that do not conflict with the Second Amendment to
the U.S. Constitution (New HOD Policy); and be it further

RESOLVED, That our AMA oppose barriers to firearm safety. (New HOD Policy)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 09/25/18

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

Firearm Safety and Research, Reduction in Firearm Violence, and Enhancing Access to Mental Health Care H-145.975
1. Our AMA supports: a) federal and state research on firearm-related injuries and deaths; b) increased funding for
and the use of state and national firearms injury databases, including the expansion of the National Violent Death
Reporting System to all 50 states and U.S. territories, to inform state and federal health policy; c) encouraging
physicians to access evidence-based data regarding firearm safety to educate and counsel patients about firearm
safety; d) the rights of physicians to have free and open communication with their patients regarding firearm safety
and the use of gun locks in their homes; e) encouraging local projects to facilitate the low-cost distribution of gun
locks in homes; f) encouraging physicians to become involved in local firearm safety classes as a means of
promoting injury prevention and the public health; and g) encouraging CME providers to consider, as appropriate,
inclusion of presentations about the prevention of gun violence in national, state, and local continuing medical
education programs.
2. Our AMA supports initiatives to enhance access to mental and cognitive health care, with greater focus on the
diagnosis and management of mental illness and concurrent substance use disorders, and work with state and
specialty medical societies and other interested stakeholders to identify and develop standardized approaches to
mental health assessment for potential violent behavior.
3. Our AMA (a) recognizes the role of firearms in suicides, (b) encourages the development of curricula and training
for physicians with a focus on suicide risk assessment and prevention as well as lethal means safety counseling, and
(c) encourages physicians, as a part of their suicide prevention strategy, to discuss lethal means safety and work with
families to reduce access to lethal means of suicide.
Citation: Sub. Res. 221, A-13; Appended: Res. 416, A-14; Reaffirmed: Res. 426, A-16; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 28, A-
18; Reaffirmation: A-18; Modified: CSAPH Rep. 04, A-18

Firearms as a Public Health Problem in the United States - Injuries and Death H-145.997
Our AMA recognizes that uncontrolled ownership and use of firearms, especially handguns, is a serious threat to the
public’s health inasmuch as the weapons are one of the main causes of intentional and unintentional injuries and
deaths. Therefore, the AMA: (1) encourages and endorses the development and presentation of safety education
programs that will engender more responsible use and storage of firearms;
(2) urges that government agencies, the CDC in particular, enlarge their efforts in the study of firearm-related injuries
and in the development of ways and means of reducing such injuries and deaths;
(3) urges Congress to enact needed legislation to regulate more effectively the importation and interstate traffic of all
handguns;
(4) urges the Congress to support recent legislative efforts to ban the manufacture and importation of nonmetallic, not
readily detectable weapons, which also resemble toy guns; (5) encourages the improvement or modification of
firearms so as to make them as safe as humanly possible;
(6) encourages nongovernmental organizations to develop and test new, less hazardous designs for firearms;
(7) urges that a significant portion of any funds recovered from firearms manufacturers and dealers through legal
proceedings be used for gun safety education and gun-violence prevention; and
(8) strongly urges US legislators to fund further research into the epidemiology of risks related to gun violence on a
national level.
Citation: CSA Rep. A, I-87; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. I-93-50; Appended: Res. 403, I-99; Reaffirmed A-07;
Epidemiology of Firearm Injuries D-145.999
Our AMA will: (1) strongly urge the Administration and Congress to encourage the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to conduct an epidemiological analysis of the data of firearm-related injuries and deaths; and (2) urge Congress to provide sufficient resources to enable the CDC to collect and analyze firearm-related injury data and report to Congress and the nation via a broadly disseminated document, so that physicians and other health care providers, law enforcement and society at large may be able to prevent injury, death and the other costs to society resulting from firearms.
Citation: Res. 424, A-03; Reaffirmation A-13; Modified: CSAPH Rep. 1, A-13; Reaffirmation: A-18

Data on Firearm Deaths and Injuries H-145.984
The AMA supports legislation or regulatory action that: (1) requires questions in the National Health Interview Survey about firearm related injury as was done prior to 1972; (2) mandates that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention develop a national firearm fatality reporting system; and (3) expands activities to begin tracking by the National Electronic Injury Surveillance System.
Citation: (Res. 811, I-94; Reaffirmed: CSA Rep. 6, A-04; Reaffirmation A-13)

Removing Restrictions on Federal Funding for Firearm Violence Research D-145.994
Our AMA will provide an informational report on recent and current organizational actions taken on our existing AMA policies (e.g. H-145.997) regarding removing the restrictions on federal funding for firearms violence research, with additional recommendations on any ongoing or proposed upcoming actions.
Citation: Res. 201, I-16

Gun Regulation H-145.999
Our AMA supports stricter enforcement of present federal and state gun legislation and the imposition of mandated penalties by the judiciary for crimes committed with the use of a firearm, including the illegal possession of a firearm.
Citation: Sub. Res. 31, I-81; Reaffirmed: CLRPD Rep. F, I-91; Amended: BOT Rep. I-93-50; Reaffirmed: Res. 409, A-00; Reaffirmation A-07; Reaffirmed: BOT Rep. 22, A-17; Modified: Res. 401, A-17

Gun Violence as a Public Health Crisis D-145.995
Our AMA: (1) will immediately make a public statement that gun violence represents a public health crisis which requires a comprehensive public health response and solution; and (2) will actively lobby Congress to lift the gun violence research ban.
Citation: Res. 1011, A-16; Reaffirmation: A-18