Whereas, The ongoing tragedy of gun violence in the United States has been labeled a public
health crisis by the AMA and others, with huge attendant financial costs to hospitals, health
systems, insurers, and many others; and

Whereas, In 2016, more than 38,000 deaths were caused by firearms; and

Whereas, The economic burden of firearm death and injury is substantial, reaching
approximately $229 billion in aggregate costs and representing about 1.4 percent of U.S. gross
domestic product for costs associated with health care, criminal justice, loss of income, pain,
suffering and loss of quality of life; and

Whereas, Some companies are working on gun safety technologies, such as magazine
discharge mechanisms, and indicators that show a gun is loaded, to reduce the danger of
firearms for gun owners and their families; there is also federal legislation to require all gun-
makers in five years to retrofit guns with personalization technology that would only allow the
owners to shoot the guns; and

Whereas, It has been well established that the gun industry and gun advocacy groups, such as
the National Rifle Association, have successfully fought virtually any proposed safety features,
regulatory proposals, or epidemiological research that could lessen gun-related accidents and
violence; and

Whereas, The federal government holds manufacturers to strict safety standards regarding
almost every consumer product built within U.S. borders, such as toys, cars and medications –
which allows consumers to reasonably assume that the products we buy and use every day are
safe. But with guns, there are no federal regulations regarding the safety standards of firearms
produced within the U.S. – an oversight in consumer protection that often proves deadly; and

Whereas, From 2005-2010, 3,800 people were killed and more than 95,000 injured (42,000
under the age of 25) from unintended shootings that could have been prevented through better
gun safety standards and safety testing for mechanical defects; and

Whereas, Public health organizations have produced many evidence-based materials and
recommendations to lessen gun-related harms, but many experts believe that, as with the
tobacco industry in the past, the gun industry escapes true responsibility and liability for the
harms and costs caused by their products; therefore be it
RESOLVED, That our American Medical Association advocate for gun safety features, including but not limited to mechanical or smart technology, to reduce accidental discharge of a firearm or misappropriation of the weapon by a non-registered user; and support legislation and regulation to standardize the use of these gun safety features on weapons sold for non-military and non-peace officer use within the U.S.; with the aim of establishing manufacturer liability for the absence of safety features on newly manufactured guns. (Directive to Take Action)

Fiscal Note: Not yet determined

Received: 04/29/19

RELEVANT AMA POLICY

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; Reaffirmation: I-18

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.

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.