




Gun Violence: A Pediatric Health Care Crisis that Demands Physician Advocacy

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Disclosures

- ▶ I have nothing to disclose



Objectives

- ▶ Recognize the impact of gun violence on children and adults in the US
- ▶ Describe evidence-based strategies to prevent gun violence among children and adults in the US
- ▶ Appreciate the steps to becoming a physician advocate



The NEW ENGLAND JOURNAL *of* MEDICINE

SPECIAL REPORT

**The Major Causes of Death in Children and Adolescents
in the United States**

Rebecca M. Cunningham, M.D., Maureen A. Walton, M.P.H., Ph.D., and Patrick M. Carter, M.D.



Table 1. The 10 Leading Causes of Child and Adolescent Death in the United States in 2016, in Order of Frequency.*

Cause of Death	No. of Deaths	Rate per 100,000 (95% CI)	Percent of Deaths
All causes	20,360	26.06 (25.70–26.42)	
All injury-related causes	12,336	15.79 (15.51–16.07)	60.6
Motor vehicle crash	4,074	5.21 (5.06–5.38)	20.0
Firearm-related injury	3,143	4.02 (3.88–4.16)	15.4
Homicide	1,865	2.39 (2.28–2.50)	
Suicide	1,102	1.41 (1.33–1.50)	
Unintentional	126	0.16 (0.13–0.19)	
Undetermined intent	50	0.06 (0.05–0.09)	
Malignant neoplasm	1,853	2.37 (2.27–2.48)	9.1
Suffocation†	1,430	1.83 (1.74–1.93)	7.0
Suicide	1,110	1.42 (1.34–1.51)	
Unintentional	235	0.30 (0.26–0.34)	
Drowning	995	1.27 (1.20–1.36)	4.9
Drug overdose or poisoning	982	1.26 (1.18–1.34)	4.8
Suicide	123	0.16 (0.13–0.19)	
Unintentional	761	0.97 (0.91–1.05)	
Congenital anomalies	979	1.25 (1.18–1.33)	4.8
Heart disease	599	0.77 (0.71–0.83)	2.9
Fire or burns	340	0.44 (0.39–0.48)	1.7
Unintentional	272	0.35 (0.31–0.39)	
Chronic lower respiratory disease	274	0.35 (0.31–0.40)	1.3

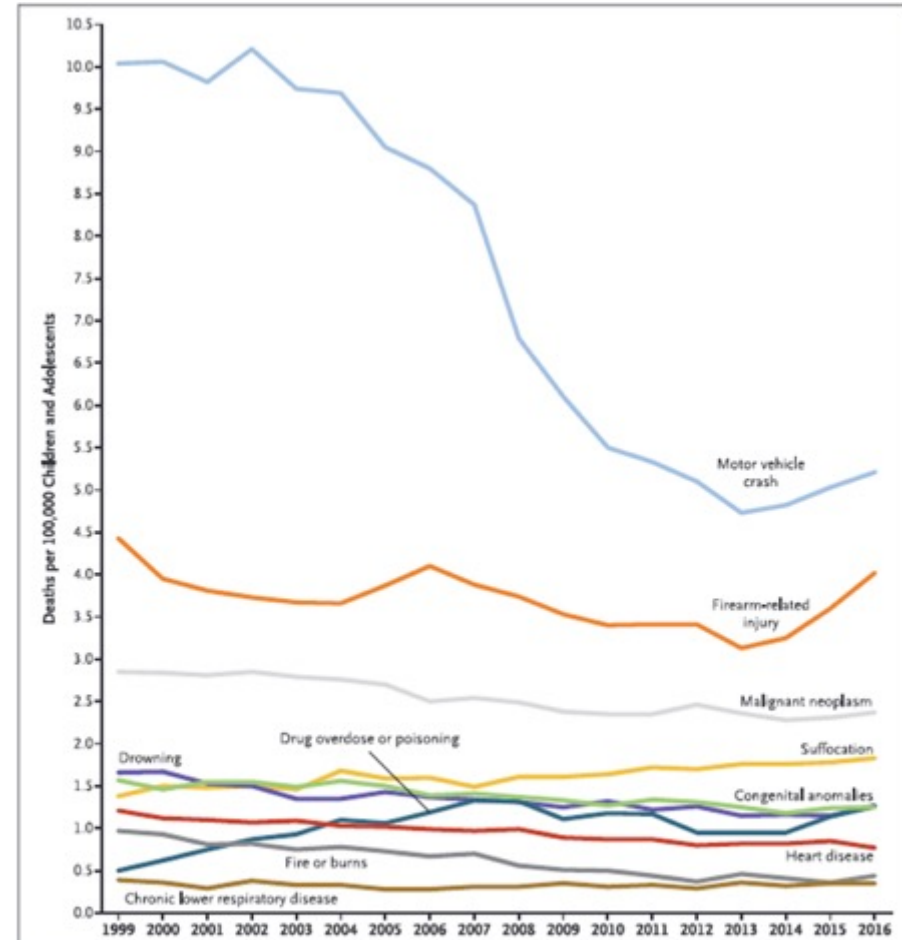
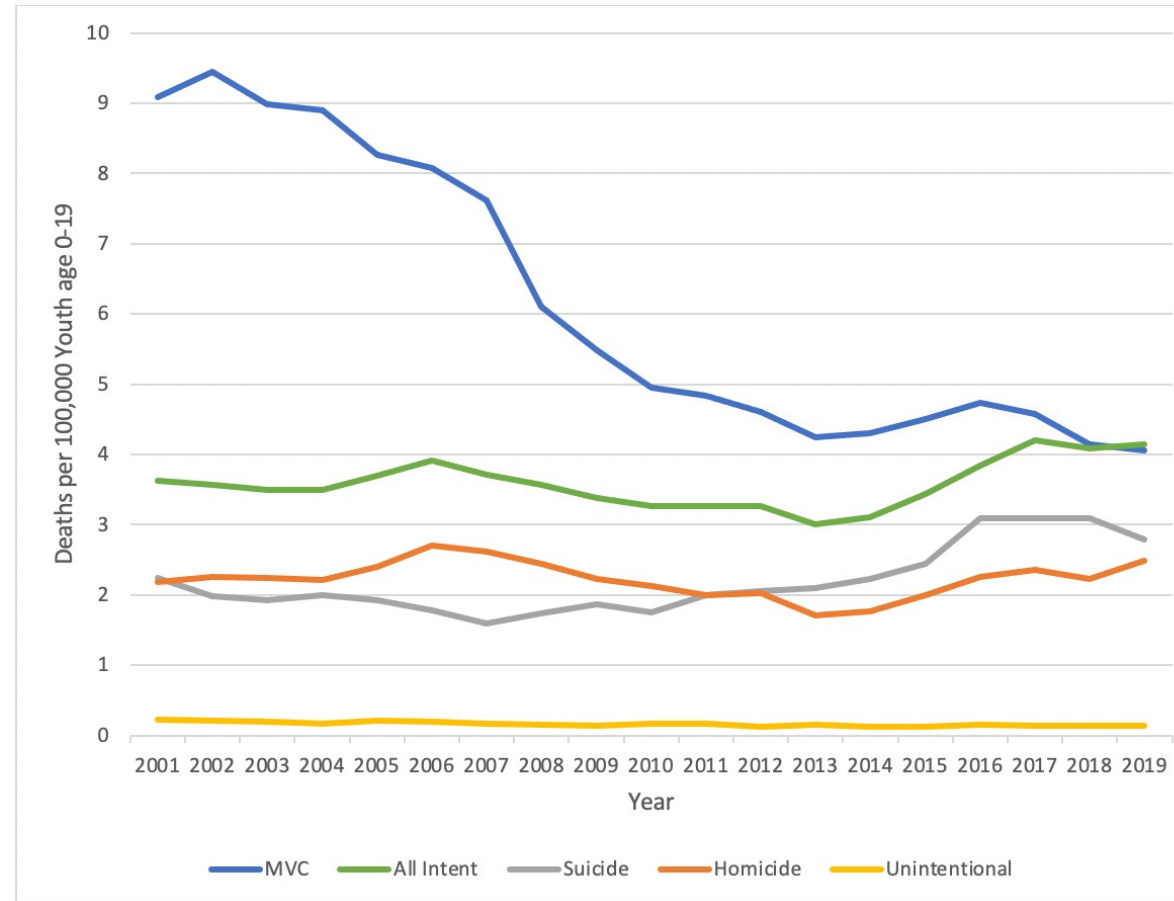


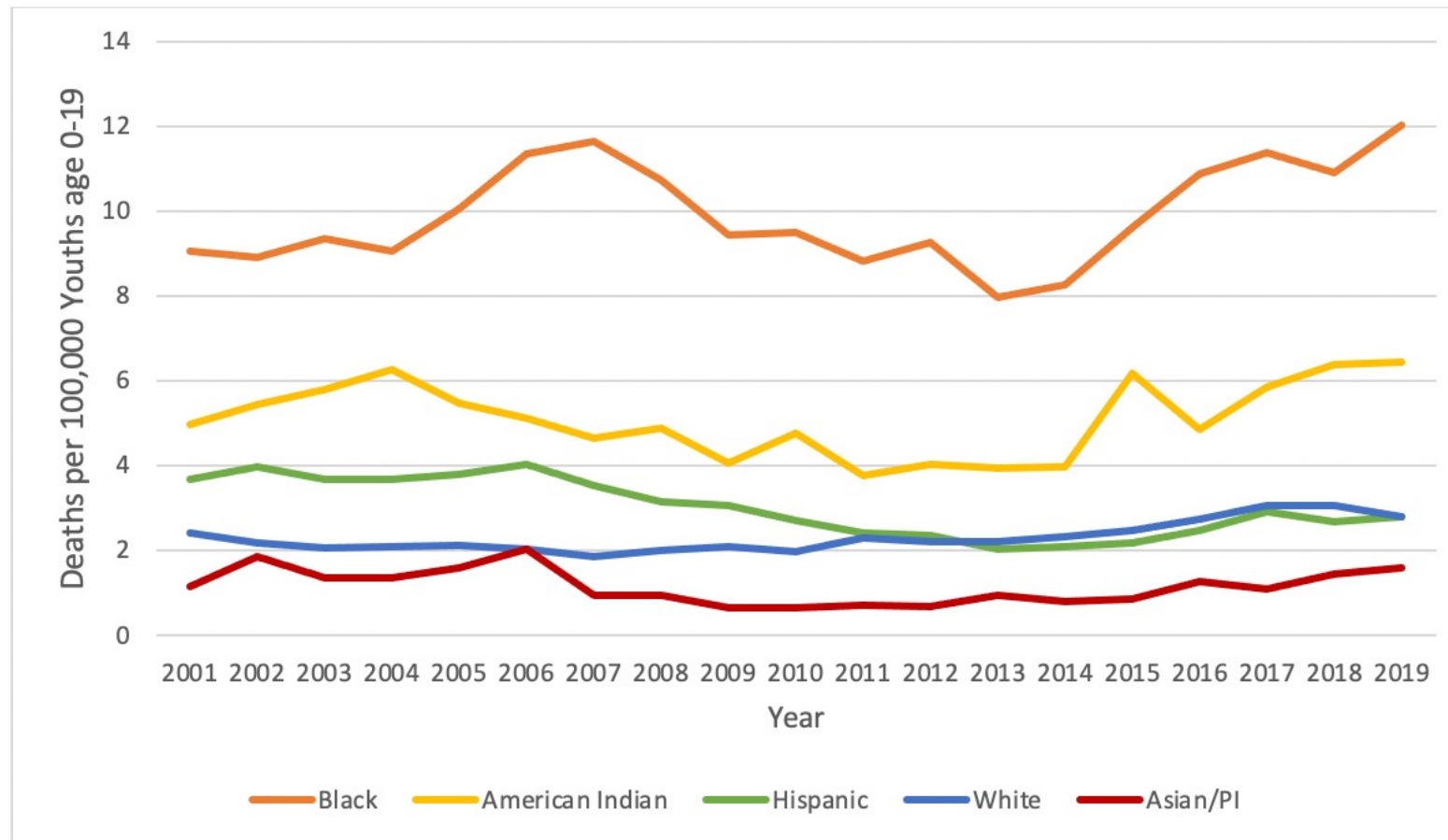
Figure 1. Mortality Rates (Deaths per 100,000 Children and Adolescents) for the 10 Leading Causes of Death in the United States from 1999 to 2016.

Data were obtained from the Wide-ranging Online Data for Epidemiologic Research (WONDER) system of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), known as CDC WONDER,² according to the codes of the *International Classification of Diseases, 10th Revision (ICD-10)*,¹ for the leading causes of death among children and adolescents. Age was restricted to children and adolescents 1 to 19 years of age.

Firearm Injury and Motor Vehicle Collision Mortality Rates from 2001-2019 for US Youth Age 0-19



Firearm Injury Mortality Rates from 2001-2019 for US Youth Age 0-19 by Race/Ethnicity

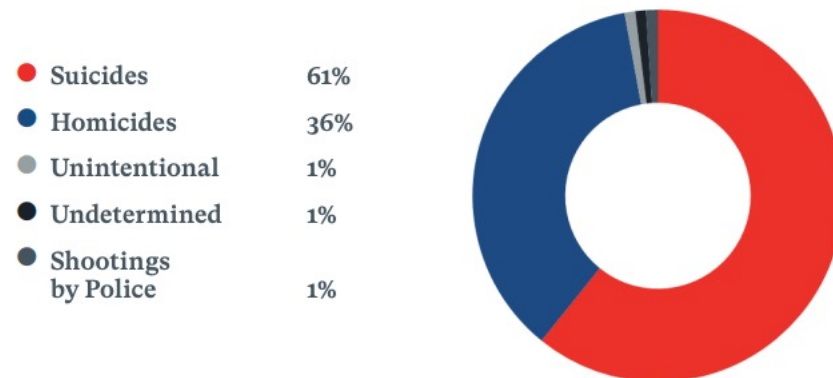


Gun Violence in Ohio

- ▶ Annual deaths: 1529
- ▶ Annual non-fatal injuries: 3552
- ▶ 20th highest rate of gun violence in the US
- ▶ From 2010-2019:
 - ▶ rate of gun deaths increased 34%
 - ▶ rate of gun suicides decreased 28%
 - ▶ rate of gun homicides increased 43%

GUN DEATHS BY INTENT

In Ohio, **61%** of gun deaths are suicides and **36%** are homicides. This is compared to **60%** and **38%** nationwide, respectively.

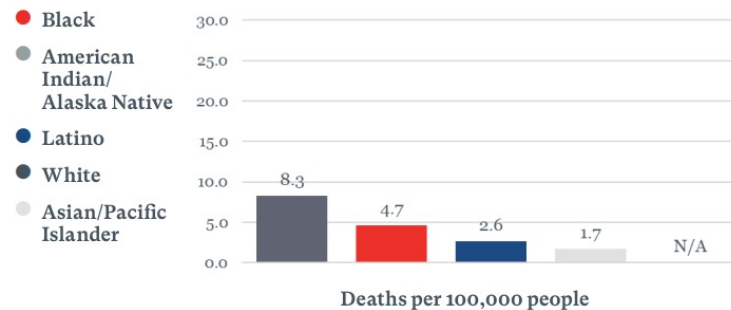


Gun Violence in Ohio

GUN SUICIDES AND SUICIDE ATTEMPTS

Every year, an average of **929** people in Ohio die by gun suicides and **90** are wounded by gun suicide attempts—a rate of **7.5** suicides and **0.8** suicide attempts per 100,000 people. Ohio has the **31st-highest** rate of gun suicides and gun suicide attempts in the US.

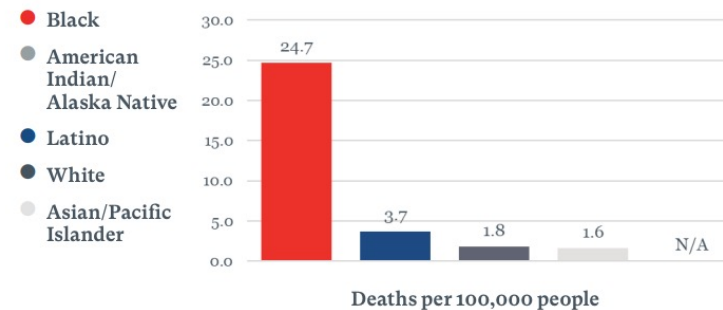
Gun Suicides by Race/Ethnicity in Ohio



GUN HOMICIDES AND ASSAULTS

Every year, an average of **571** people in Ohio die by gun homicides and **1,506** are wounded by gun assaults—a rate of **5.2** homicides and **12.9** assaults per 100,000 people. Ohio has the **20th-highest** rate of gun homicides and gun assaults in the US. In Ohio, **75%** of all homicides involve a gun, compared to **75%** nationwide.

Gun Homicides by Race/Ethnicity in Ohio



The Numbers

- ▶ Firearms are **the leading cause of death for children** in the US
- ▶ When American children are killed with guns the majority are homicides
- ▶ 1/3 of these deaths are suicide
- ▶ Approximately 5% of these deaths are related to unintentional shootings

CDC. National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. Data from 2017.

CDC. National Centers for Injury Prevention and Control, Web-based Injury Statistics Query and Reporting System (WISQARS) Fatal Injury Reports. A yearly average was developed using five years of most recent available data: 2013 to 2017.



The Numbers: Firearm Access

- ▶ 13 million US children live in a household with a gun
- ▶ 4.6 million US children live in a household with at least one loaded, unlocked gun
- ▶ The majority of children in gun-owning households are aware of where their parents store their guns
- ▶ More than 1/3 reported handling their parents' guns
- ▶ 1/4 of these parents did not know that their children had handled the gun in their house

Azrael D, Cohen J, Salhi C, Miller M. Firearm Storage in Gun-Ownning Households with Children: Results of a 2015 National Survey. *J Urban Health*. 2018;95(3):295-304.

Baxley F, Miller M. Parental misperceptions about children and firearms. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*. 2006;160(5):542-547



COVID, Gun Purchases and Gun Violence

- ▶ According to the FBI Background Checks system, gun sales increased significantly in March 2020
 - ▶ 2020 gun sales 1.4x 2019 gun sales
- ▶ Cohen et al used data from Gun Violence Archive and an interrupted time series analysis and found an increased risk of:
 - ▶ 1) firearm injuries in young children (RR=1.90; 95% CI 1.58, 2.29) and
 - ▶ 2) injuries inflicted by young children (RR=1.43; 95% CI 1.14, 1.80)

during the first six months of the COVID-19 pandemic as compared to the pre-COVID study period.

NICS Firearm Checks. https://www.fbi.gov/file-repository/nics_firearm_checks_-_month_year.pdf/view. Accessed 4/12, 2021.

Cohen JS, Donnelly K, Patel SJ, et al. Firearms Injuries Involving Young Children in the United States During the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Pediatrics*. 2021.



The Risks of Firearm Access

- ▶ Nearly 90% of unintentional gun deaths and injuries in children occur in the home
- ▶ The firearm used in youth suicide comes from the home 9 out of 10 times
- ▶ In incidents of gunfire on school grounds, 78% of shooters under the age of 18 obtained the gun from their home or the home of a friend or relative

Li G, Baker SP, DiScala C, Fowler C, Ling J, Kelen GD. Factors associated with the intent of firearm-related injuries in pediatric trauma patients. *Archives of pediatrics & adolescent medicine*. 1996;150(11):1160-1165.

Grossman et al. Self-inflicted and Unintentional Firearm Injuries Among Children and Adolescents: The Source of the Firearm. *JAMA Pediatrics*. 1999

Everytown for Gun Safety, Gunfire on School Grounds Database. 2013-2018.



More than 60 guns seized from Kirkersville shooter's house



Bethany Bruner
Newark Advocate

Published 11:44 a.m. ET May 17, 2017 | Updated 3:40 p.m. ET May 17, 2017

1-year-old fatally shot by toddler who found unsecured gun, Canton police say

13-year-old boy killed in drive-by shooting in Euclid, police say

Updated: Dec. 13, 2021, 10:32 a.m. | Published: Dec. 13, 2021, 10:32 a.m.

5 Ohio school shootings that shocked local communities

Dayton Shooting Lasted Just 32 Seconds and Left 9 Dead. Here's the Latest on the Tragedy

MIAMI VALLEY NEWS

Toddler, father killed in Trotwood shooting identified

Search for 'monsters' launched after 2 children among 3 killed

"We will find these monsters," police officials said.

Ohio Student Arrested 3 Days After Mich. Shooting, 'Kill List' of Other Students Reported

BY **XANDER LANDEN** ON 12/3/21 AT 4:29 PM EST



Firearm Access and Suicide

- ▶ Firearms are the most lethal method of suicide attempt
 - ▶ >80% case fatality rate compared to 61% for suffocation/hanging, 1.5% for ingestion
- ▶ Overwhelming evidence that the presence of a firearm in the home significantly increases risk for youth suicide
 - ▶ Systematic review found access to firearms has a pooled risk of >3x for completed suicide

Spicer et al. Suicide Acts in 8 States: Incidence and Case Fatality Rates by Demographics and Method. American Journal of Public Health. 2000

A. Knopov et al. Household gun ownership and youth suicide rates at the state level, 2005–2015
Am J Prev Med 2019.

Anglemeyer et al. The Accessibility of Firearms and Risk for Suicide and Homicide Victimization Among Household Members. Annals of Internal Medicine. 2014



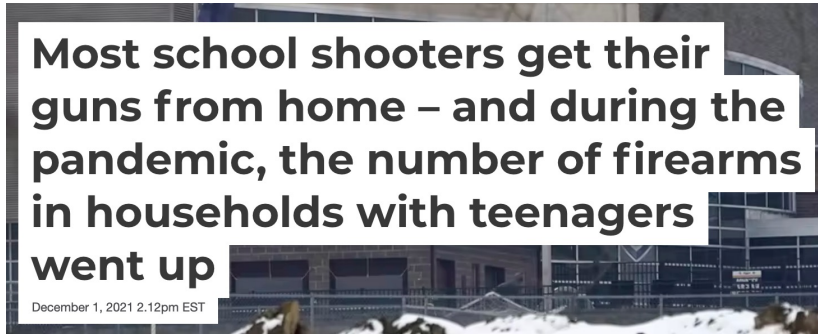
Firearm Access and School Shootings

- ▶ While school shootings represent a fraction of pediatric firearm injuries and deaths, from 2013 to 2019, there were 549 incidents of gunfire on school grounds
 - ▶ Of these, 347 occurred on the grounds of an elementary, middle, or high school, resulting in 129 deaths and 270 people wounded
- ▶ In a study analyzing 41 incidents of targeted school violence from 2008 through 2017 finding that of the 25 incidents that involved firearms, 76 percent of shooters acquired the gun(s) used in the incidents from their home or that of a relative

National Threat Assessment Center, "Protecting America's Schools: A US Secret Service Analysis of Targeted School Violence" (US Secret Service, Department of Homeland Security, 2019), <https://bit.ly/2U7vnwa>.



Firearm Access and School Shootings



Op-Ed: The powerful message behind charging the parents in the Michigan school shooting

Be SMART about gun safety to help stop school shootings

Most school shooters get their guns from their home or the homes of friends or family. The SMART program on how to safely store guns could help save lives.

By Letters to the Editor | Dec 9, 2021, 3:00pm CST

SCHOOL CLIMATE & SAFETY

More Schools Are Reminding Parents to Secure Their Guns



By [Stephen Sawchuk](#) — December 08, 2021 ⌚ 9 min read

LAW

Michigan's gun laws are shaping the question of accountability in school shootings

December 6, 2021 · 5:10 AM ET

Heard on [Morning Edition](#)

Medical Monday: Addressing gun safety as school violence continues nationally, locally

Carly Swisher **Dec 13, 2021** Updated **1 hr ago** 🗨️ 0



Prevention



Prevention Strategies: Firearm Access

- ▶ Preschool aged children, observed 1 week after informational intervention where they were told not to play with guns (“just say no”)
 - ▶ No difference in gun-playing behavior
- ▶ 4-7 year old children went through a week-long skills based gun safety training program
 - ▶ Just as likely as children with no training to approach or play with a handgun
- ▶ 4-5 year old children in two different gun safety programs
 - ▶ Able to verbally repeat gun safety message
 - ▶ Could not demonstrate gun safety skills in real-life assessments

Hardy MS, Armstrong FD, Martin BL, Strawn KN. A firearm safety program for children: they just can't say no. *J Dev Behav Pediatr.* 1996;17(4):216-221.

Hardy MS. Teaching firearm safety to children: failure of a program. *J Dev Behav Pediatr.* 2002;23(2):71-76.

Himle MB, Miltenberger RG, Gatheridge BJ, Flessner CA. An evaluation of two procedures for training skills to prevent gun play in children. *Pediatrics.* 2004;113(1 Pt 1):70-77.



Prevention Strategies: Responsible Storage

- ▶ Responsible storage is storing a gun **LOCKED, UNLOADED** and **SEPARATE** from ammunition
- ▶ Responsible storage is associated with decreased risk of firearm suicide and unintentional firearm injury among children
- ▶ Households with locked firearms and separate locked ammunition:
 - ▶ 78% lower risk of self-inflicted firearm injuries
 - ▶ 85% lower risk of unintentional firearm injuries

Grossman DC, Mueller BA, Riedy C, et al. Gun storage practices and risk of youth suicide and unintentional firearm injuries. *JAMA : the journal of the American Medical Association*. 2005;293(6):707-714.

Parikh K, Silver A, Patel SJ, Iqbal SF, Goyal M. Pediatric Firearm-Related Injuries in the United States. *Hosp Pediatr*. 2017;7(6):303-312.



How can Pediatricians Help?

- ▶ Brief physician counseling combined with distribution of a cable gun lock is effective in increasing safe storage of home firearms
- ▶ Educational interventions targeting adults and including distribution of cable gun locks are the most likely to be effective
- ▶ AAP recommends pediatricians routinely screen for access to firearms and counsel about risk reduction
- ▶ On ASK day, June 21, the first day of summer, the AAP reminds parents to ensure their kids are safe by asking about gun safety and storage

Barkin SL, Finch SA, Ip EH, et al. Is office based counseling about media use, timeouts, and firearm storage effective? Results from a cluster-randomized, controlled trial. *Pediatrics*. 2008;122

Parikh K, Silver A, Patel SJ, Iqbal SF, Goyal M. Pediatric Firearm-Related Injuries in the United States. *Hosp Pediatr*. 2017;7(6):303-312.

Manuteaux et al. Association of Increased Safe Household Firearm Storage With Firearm Suicide and Unintentional Death Among US Youths. *JAMA Pediatrics* 2019.

ASK
ASKINGSAVESKIDS

1 in 3 homes with children in America have guns, many unlocked or loaded.

17,500 children and teens are injured or killed each year due to gun violence.

ASK:
Is there an unlocked gun where my child plays?

IF THE ANSWER IS "NO"
that's one less thing you have to worry about.

IF THE ANSWER IS "YES"
make sure all guns are stored unloaded and locked, ideally in a gun safe, with ammunition locked separately.

If there are any doubts about the safety of another home, invite the kids to your house instead.

Hiding guns is not enough. Just talking to kids is not enough. Kids are curious and if they find guns they're likely to play with them.

For more information on how to keep your kids safe visit WWW.ASKINGSAVESKIDS.ORG.

Sources:
Johnson R, Copeland L, Ruffolo C. Firearm Ownership and Storage Practices, U.S. Households, 1980-2000: A Systematic Review. *ASPM* 2004;27:2:179-192.
Yearly average, most recent 5 years of data retrieved from CDC, NCHS, WISQARS (online). (retrieved 2015 Apr 15). <http://www.cdc.gov/ipeds/research/>



Prevention Strategies: Physician Counseling

- ▶ The majority of health care providers agree they should provide firearm counseling, but they report many barriers:
 - ▶ lack of time
 - ▶ inadequate training
 - ▶ uncertainty of the effect
- ▶ A recent study demonstrated poor pediatric resident documentation of screening for firearm access in patients with suicidal ideation or homicidal ideation
- ▶ Another recent study demonstrated low rates of firearm screening and safe storage counseling by pediatric residents in the inpatient setting

Webster DW et al. Firearm injury prevention counseling; a study of pediatricians' beliefs and practices. Pediatrics. 1992

Naureckas Li C et al. Screening for access to firearms by pediatric trainees in high-risk patients. Academic Pediatrics. 2019.

Monroe KK et al. Firearms screening in the pediatric inpatient setting. Hospital Pediatrics. 2020.



Prevention Strategies: Physician Counseling

- ▶ A 2019 study showed that when prompts for firearm screening and smoke alarms were added to the Electronic Health Record (EHR), pediatricians and residents were significantly less likely to document firearm screening than smoke alarm counseling
- ▶ A 2020 study assessed the impact of a firearm safety counseling workshop on pediatric resident knowledge, self-efficacy and self-reported practice patterns
 - ▶ In pre-post analysis they found participants were 5x more likely to counsel their patients on firearms (6 months post compared to pre)
 - ▶ Reported greater comfort in asking about firearms

Stipelman CH et al. Home gun safety queries in well-child visits. JAMA Pediatrics. 2019.

McKay S et al. Addressing Firearm Safety Counseling: Integration of a Multidisciplinary Workshop in a Pediatric Residency Program. Journal of GME. 2020



BE SMART

The logo features the word "BE" in a white circle above the word "SMART" in large white letters. The letter "I" in "SMART" is replaced by a white silhouette of a person.

BE SMART

SECURE

**all guns in
your homes
and vehicles**

MODEL

**responsible
behavior**

ASK

**about
unsecured
guns in
other homes**

RECOGNIZE

**the role
of guns
in suicide**

TELL

**your peers
to Be SMART**

BE SMART

S

**Secure all guns in your
homes and vehicles**

- 13 million households with children contain at least one gun.¹
- One study found that the majority of children in gun-owning households knew where the gun was stored.²
- Store guns locked and unloaded, store ammunition separately.
- Hiding a gun is not “securing” a gun.

1. Azrael D, et al. Firearm storage in gun-owning households with children: Results of a 2015 national survey. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2018.

2. Baxley F, et al. Parental misperceptions about children and firearms. *Archives of Pediatrics & Adolescent Medicine*. 2006.



BE SMART

M

**Model responsible
behavior**

- It is always an adult's responsibility to prevent unauthorized access to guns, not a curious child's responsibility to avoid guns.
- Make it part of the normal safety conversation you have with your children.
- Keep the language simple; for example: "If you see a gun, don't touch it. Tell an adult right away."

A woman with dark hair, wearing a white button-down shirt and blue jeans, is talking on a black smartphone. A young boy with dark hair, wearing a white t-shirt, is looking up at her. They are in a room with a white chair and a blue cabinet in the background.

A

**Ask about unsecured
guns in other homes**

- Make it part of your general safety conversation you have when sending your child to a new home.
- Try email or text.
- 4.6 million U.S. children live in a household with at least one loaded, unlocked gun.¹

1. Azrael D, et al. Firearm storage in gun-owning households with children: Results of a 2015 national survey. *Journal of Urban Health*. 2018.

Email Example:

That is precious. What sweet boys. Would Thursday the 20th after school work for you? I was thinking, swimming and ice cream/ hotdogs at the pharmacy. Does Henry have any allergies and is he ok to swim?

Yes! The 20th sounds great. Unfortunately I will be working downtown that day so won't be able to join but so appreciate the invite. Thanks for your questions. Henry is a good swimmer- he is very independent in the water. He has no allergies and loves hot dogs! One other question I always ask is if there are any unsecured guns in the home.

There are no unsecured guns in the home. I haven't done a lot of these play dates. I'm glad you asked that question. It will be something I remember.



BE SMART

R

**Recognize the role of
guns in suicide**

- Most people who attempt suicide do not die — unless they use a gun.¹
- 85% of suicide attempts with a gun result in death—a much higher fatality rate than any other means of self-harm.¹
- This contributes to the fact that 40% of child suicides involve a gun.²
- Nearly half of those who survive a suicide attempt report spending 10 minutes or less deliberating before the actual attempt.¹

1. Everytown for Gun Safety, Disrupting Access: Addressing Firearm Suicide in the U.S. 2018.

2. CDC, Fatal Injury Reports. 2013-2017.

THE NUMBERS

**A survey of high school
students found that**

17%

**had seriously considered
attempting suicide
within the last year.¹**

**And one study
showed that**

41%

**of adolescents in gun-owning
households report having
“easy access” to the guns
in their home.²**

1. Kann L, et al. Youth Risk Behavior Surveillance — United States. 2017.

2. Simonetti JA, et al. Psychiatric comorbidity, suicidality, and in-home firearm access among a nationally representative sample of adolescents. *JAMA Psychiatry*. 2015.



BE SMART

T

**Tell your peers
to Be SMART**

- Your voice and all voices are critical.
- Research shows that law enforcement, the military, and hunting or outdoor groups are particularly effective at communicating safe storage practices.¹
- Someone hears the Be SMART message every 21 minutes.

1. Crifasi CK, et al. Storage practices of US gun owners in 2016. *American Journal of Public Health*. 2018.

MUSC doctors will ask questions about guns in the home with new safety campaign

BY MARY KATHERINE WILDEMAN MKWILDEMAN@POSTANDCOURIER.COM

JUL 2, 2018



MUSC physician Annie Andrews started an effort to encourage fellow pediatricians to open more conversations about gun safety with their patients' parents. Wade Spees/Staff

BUY NOW

WADE SPEES

Improving the Frequency and Documentation of Gun Safety Counseling in a Resident Primary Care Clinic

Kelsey A.B. Gastineau, MD; Cassandra L. Stegall, DO; Laura K. Lowrey, MD; Barbra K. Giourgas, MD; Annie Lintzenich Andrews, MD, MSCR

Date	Intervention
Jan-May 2018	Baseline time period
May 2018	Be SMART lecture
June 2018	Resident initial survey
June 2018	Parent Safety Survey Resident follow-up survey Wear Orange Day
July 2018	Be SMART roll-out in PPC clinic
March 2019	EHR prompt added
June 2019	Wear Orange Day
July 2019	New intern class
October 2019	Email reminder prompt to residents
Weekly	Informal in-person reminders

1. Is there a gun in the home or vehicles? Yes/No

2. Is the gun stored locked, unloaded and separate from ammunition? Yes/No

3. Was a gunlock or other additional gun safety information such as Be SMART materials provided? Yes/No

a. If yes, what additional materials were provided:

Figure 3. EHR prompt for firearm safety screening questions. EHR indicates Electronic Health Record.

Gastineau KAB et al. Improving the Frequency and Documentation of Gun Safety Counseling in a Resident Primary Care Clinic. Academic Pediatrics. Epub 2020

Improving the Frequency and Documentation of Gun Safety Counseling in a Resident Primary Care Clinic

Kelsey A.B. Gastineau, MD; Cassandra L. Stegall, DO; Laura K. Lowrey, MD; Barbra K. Giourgas, MD; Annie Lintzenich Andrews, MD, MSCR

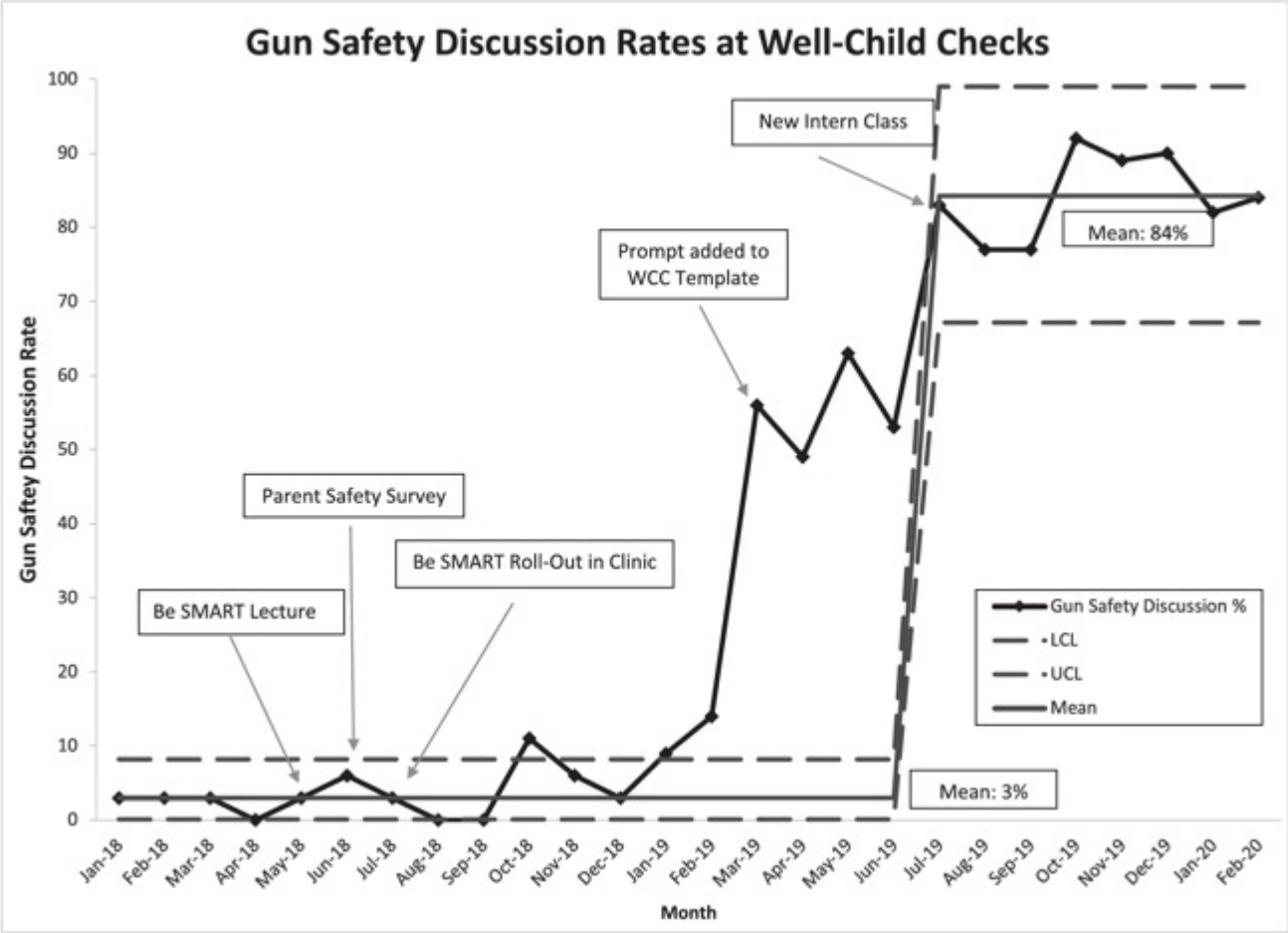


Figure 4. Statistical process control chart. LCL indicates lower confidence limit; UCL, upper confidence limit; and WCC, well-child check.



Be SMART in the Schools

- ▶ Partnered with school nursing
- ▶ Presentations to all school nurses, principals and SROs
- ▶ Be SMART postcards distributed to every student in the district
- ▶ Parent informational nights
- ▶ Gun locks in the schools
- ▶ Be SMART linked on district website
- ▶ Individual school events



Legislative Solutions: Do They Work?

- Secure storage laws are an important tool for reducing child gun deaths.
- These laws mandate that gun owners secure firearms when they are not in the owner's possession.
- There is currently no federal law specifically addressing secure storage. 23 states and DC have some form of gun storage law that holds gun owners accountable when children can or do access an unsecured gun.
- Virginia's law applies if a child is likely to access an unsecured gun.

OHIO ▾ **D**

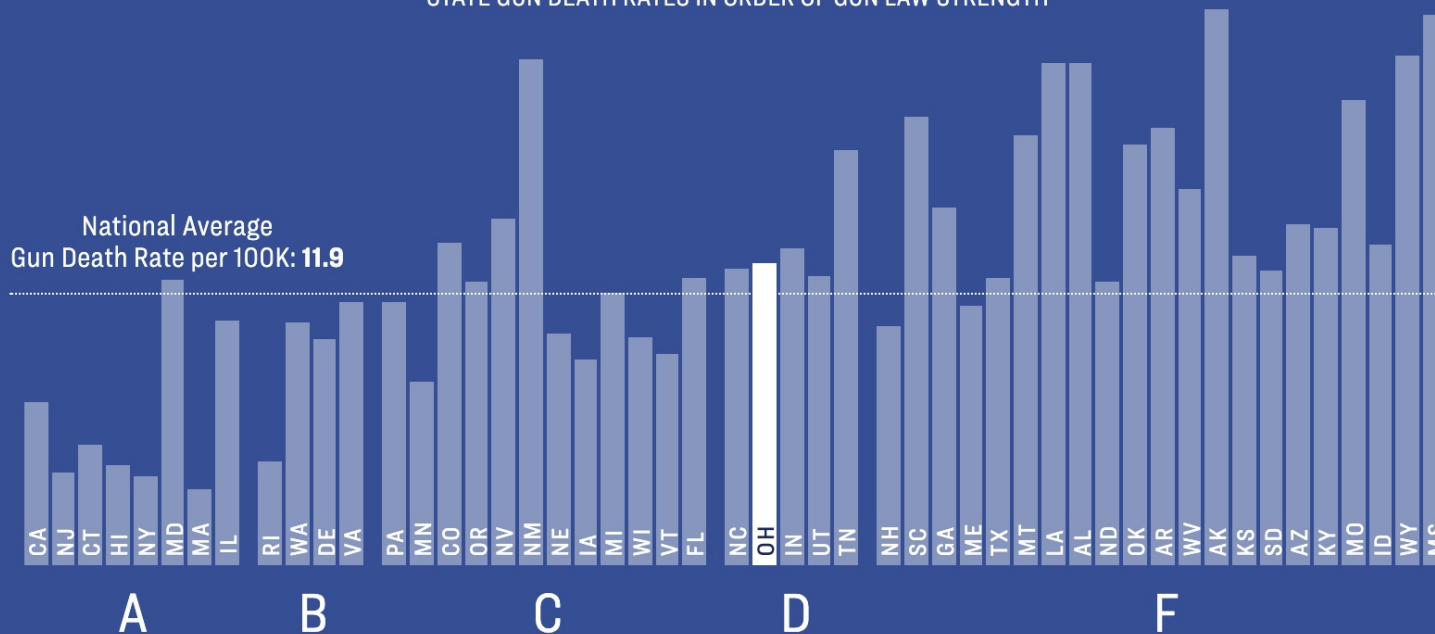
Gun Law Strength: **25** OF 50 STATES

Gun Death Rank: **22** OF 50 STATES

Stronger Gun Laws, Fewer Gun Deaths

STATE GUN DEATH RATES IN ORDER OF GUN LAW STRENGTH

National Average
Gun Death Rate per 100K: **11.9**



Cumulative Impact of Multiple Policies

- Studies assessing the relationship of firearm laws and firearm mortality by state have found that stronger laws ***collectively*** are associated with lower firearm mortalities and injuries

Simonetti JA, Fowhani-Rahbar A, Mills B, Young B, Rivara FP. State Firearm Legislation and Nonfatal Firearm Injuries. AJPH. 2015;105(8):1703-09.

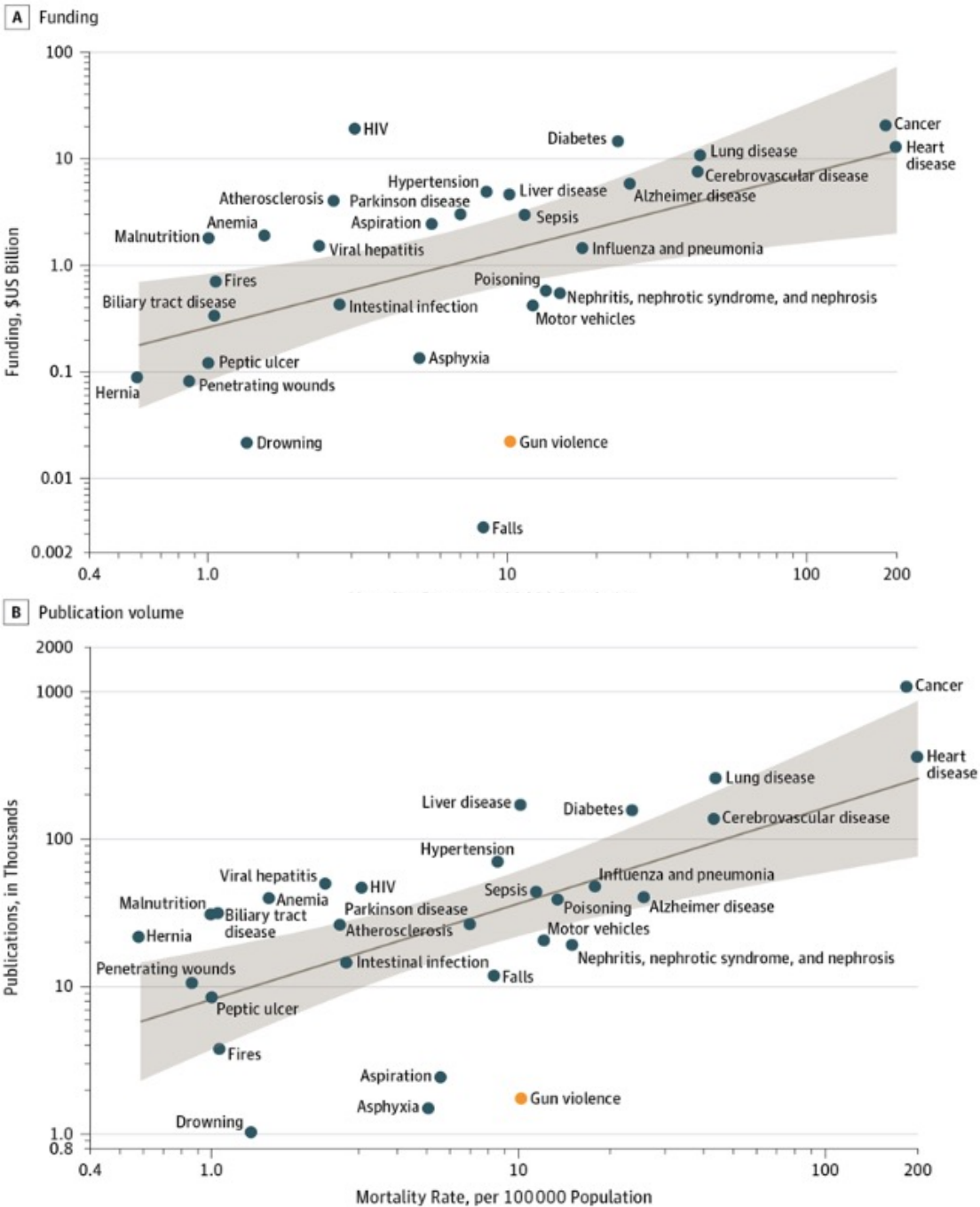
Fleeger EW, Lee LK, Monuteaux M, Hemenway D, Mannix R. Firearm Legislation and Firearm-Related Fatalities in the United States. JAMA Intern Med. 2013; 173(9): 732-740.

Lee J, Moriarty KP, Tashjian DB, Patterson LA. Guns and states: Pediatric firearm injury. J Trauma Acute Care Surg. 2013; 75(1): 50-53.

Tashiro J, Lane RS, Blass LW, Perez EA, Sola JE. The effect of gun control laws on hospital admissions for children in the United States. J Trauma Acute Care Surg. 2016; 81:254-60.

Safavi A et al. Children are safer in states with strict firearm laws: A National Inpatient Sample study. J Trauma Acute Care Surg. 2014;76:146-151.





Advocate for Proportionate Funding & Research

Relative to the mortality rate 2004-2015 firearm violence had:

- 1.6% predicted funding
- 4.5% predicted publication volume

Relative to sepsis firearm violence had:

- 0.7% funding
- 4% publication volume

Becoming an Effective Advocate



Becoming a Physician Advocate

Find your passion.

- ▶ It might find you. Listen to it.
- ▶ It needs to be authentic.
- ▶ Passion can grow as you learn more about the issue.

Do your research.

- ▶ Read the literature.
- ▶ Find experts and follow them.
- ▶ You do not need an advanced degree.
- ▶ You need your experience, a willingness to learn, and your voice.



Becoming a Physician Advocate

Start small.

- ▶ **Do something small everyday.**
- ▶ **Be thoughtful in your approach.**
- ▶ **Community advocacy v. legislative advocacy.**

Partner with community organizations.

- ▶ **Find local organizations.**
- ▶ **Create partnerships.**
- ▶ **They need your voice and you need their support.**



Becoming a Physician Advocate

Find your allies and your challengers.

- ▶ **Look at your institution, your field, in elected positions.**
- ▶ **Anticipate challengers and work diligently to find common ground.**
- ▶ **Be respectful.**
- ▶ **What is motivating their position?**
- ▶ **Stick to the facts. Keep your patients at the heart of what you are doing.**

Stay focused and disciplined.

- ▶ **Do not quiet the anger and frustration you feel, that is your fuel.**
- ▶ **Build momentum and build your team.**
- ▶ **Passion is contagious.**



Becoming a Physician Advocate

Align advocacy with your other work.

- ▶ **QI projects, health services research to inform the policy debate.**
- ▶ **Develop an advocacy curriculum.**
- ▶ **Identify trainees interested in advocacy and mentor them.**
- ▶ **Use your unique skillset to further your cause.**

Work with your employer.

- ▶ **Search for common ground.**
- ▶ **You have first amendment rights.**
- ▶ **Educate the leaders at your institution.**
- ▶ **Use professional organization statements to support your position.**



Becoming a Physician Advocate

Leverage social media.

- ▶ **It is a powerful tool to amplify your voice.**
- ▶ **It will help you identify allies.**
- ▶ **Bring positive attention to your institution.**
- ▶ **It will take time to find your voice.**
- ▶ **Use consistent messaging.**
- ▶ **Keep in professional.**
- ▶ **Opinions my own.**
- ▶ **Beware of disinformation.**
- ▶ **Ignore the trolls.**



“Anger that is motivated by compassion or a desire to correct social injustice, and does not seek to harm the other person, is a good anger that is worth having”

-The Dalai Lama



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