

HCMA Position Statement on Gun Violence
November 2019

The tragic shooting at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School, in Parkland FL, was the 30th mass shooting* of 2018. The American Medical Association has adopted a position identifying gun violence as a public health crisis. By all measures, gun violence is a public health crisis in this country.

Consider the statistics:

- ◆ The CDC estimates that in 2016, over 38,000 people died and more than 80,000 people were injured by a firearm in America, whether by homicide or suicide.
- ◆ Guns kill more people than HIV, hypertension, and colon cancer.
- ◆ Gunshot wounds cost Americans over 2.8 billion dollars in hospital expenses each year.
- ◆ 30,000 American men, women, and children are dying from gun violence and firearm-related accidents each year.
- ◆ On an average day, more than 100 Americans die from gun violence and firearm-related accidents.

Physicians are in a unique position to assess risk, provide education, and change behaviors related to gun violence. In addition, physicians have an important role to play in advocacy and public opinion. The Hillsborough County Medical Association supports the policy of the AMA and over 100 medical associations which calls for:

- ◆ Renewing and strengthening the assault weapons ban, including banning high-capacity magazines.
- ◆ Legislating comprehensive background checks, waiting periods, and registration of all firearms, including completion of required safety courses.
- ◆ Providing for more resources for safety education programs that promote more responsible use and storage of firearms.
- ◆ Increasing access to mental health services, including screening, prevention, and treatment.
- ◆ Supporting “red-flag” laws, targeting individuals who have demonstrated significant signs of potential violence.
- ◆ Training health professionals to respond to those who have a mental illness that might make them more prone to commit violence.
- ◆ Reversing the 1996 legislation which forbids the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention from using government appropriated funds to conduct research into gun violence.

* Suicides, gang-related incidents and deaths resulting from domestic conflicts are not included. "Deadliest" includes shootings with 10 or more fatalities. Shooters are not included in fatality totals.

Resource: <https://www.cnn.com/2019/08/19/us/mass-shootings-fast-facts/index.html>
November 23, 2019