

February 21, 2019

Chairman Richard Shelby
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Vice Chairman Patrick Leahy
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Chairman Roy Blunt
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, DC 20510

Ranking Member Patty Murray
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human
Services, Education, and Related Agencies
U.S. Senate Committee on Appropriations
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Chairmen Shelby and Blunt, Vice Chairman Leahy, and Ranking Member Murray:

As you consider appropriations for Fiscal Year (FY) 2020, **the undersigned 166 national, state, and local medical, public health, and research organizations write to ask you to provide \$50 million in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to conduct public health research into firearm morbidity and mortality prevention.**

In 2017, there were over 39,000 U.S. firearm-related fatalities.¹ Federally funded public health research has a proven track record of reducing public health-related deaths, whether from motor vehicle crashes, smoking, or Sudden Infant Death Syndrome. This same approach should be applied to increasing gun safety and reducing firearm-related injuries and deaths, and CDC research will be as critical to that effort as it was to these previous public health achievements. The foundation of a public health approach is rigorous research that can accurately quantify and describe the facets of an issue and identify opportunities for reducing its related morbidity and mortality.

We were heartened by U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Secretary Alex Azar's February 2018 comments clarifying that the Dickey Amendment does not prohibit CDC from funding gun violence prevention research. As you know, the Dickey Amendment was a 1996 amendment to a federal spending bill indicating that the CDC could not advocate for or promote gun control. This language created a chilling effect on public health research on firearm morbidity and mortality prevention at the federal level. Despite the amendment sponsor's later statement that he never intended to undermine public health research, the practical effect has been just that: CDC has not funded needed research into important issues including the best ways to prevent unintended firearm injuries and fatalities among women and children; the most effective methods to prevent firearm-related suicides; the measures that can best prevent the next shooting at a school or public place; and numerous other vital public health questions.

Our groups strongly urge the Senate to provide CDC with \$50 million specifically for firearm morbidity and mortality prevention research as part of FY 2020 appropriations. If provided on an annual basis, this funding could support the creation of 10 to 20 new large multi-year studies each year (or even more single-year studies) and the rebuilding of a research community that has shrunk in the decades since the Dickey Amendment. Robust research on motor vehicle crashes and subsequent legislation has helped save hundreds of thousands of lives through public health interventions, including seat belts and other safety features. The same

approach can help reduce gun violence in our communities, including ensuring CDC is able to adequately fund research into this public health priority.

Our organizations stand ready to work with you to support this critical effort. Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

National Organizations:

AASA, The School Superintendents Association
Academic Pediatric Association
AFFIRM Research
American Academy of Allergy, Asthma & Immunology
American Academy of Family Physicians
American Academy of Neurology
American Academy of Nursing
American Academy of Pediatrics
American Anthropological Association
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry
American Association of Colleges of Nursing
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy
American Association of Neurological Surgeons
American College of Emergency Physicians
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
American College of Physicians
American College of Surgeons
American Educational Research Association
American Medical Association
American Medical Student Association
American Medical Student Association
American Medical Women's Association
American Nurses Association
American Osteopathic Association
American Pediatric Society
American Pediatric Surgical Association
American Psychiatric Association
American Psychological Association
American Public Health Association
American Society for Clinical Pathology
American Society of Pediatric Nephrology
American Society of Pediatric Otolaryngology
American Sociological Association
American Thoracic Society
American Trauma Society
Association of Accredited Public Health Programs
Association of American Medical Colleges
Association of Asian Pacific Community Health Organizations

Association of Departments of Family Medicine
Association of Family Medicine Residency Directors
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs
Association of Pediatric Program Directors
Association of Population Centers
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials
Association of Women's Health, Obstetric and Neonatal Nurses
Big Cities Health Coalition
Brain Injury Association of America
Catholic Health Association of the U.S.
Child Injury Prevention Alliance
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia
Children's Defense Fund
Children's Hospital Association
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service
Congress of Neurological Surgeons
Consortium of Social Science Associations
Council on Pediatric Subspecialties
Council on Social Work Education
Doctors for America
Emergency Nurses Association
Families USA
Futures Without Violence
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBTQ Equality
Healthy Teen Network
International Association of Forensic Nurses
National Alliance to Advance Adolescent Health
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health
National Association of Community Health Centers
National Association of County and City Health Officials
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners
National Association of School Nurses
National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence
National Hispanic Medical Association
National League for Nursing
National Prevention Science Coalition to Improve Lives
National Women's Health Network
North American Primary Care Research Group
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition
Pediatric Endocrine Society
Pediatric Orthopaedic Society of North America
Pediatric Policy Council
Pediatric Trauma Society
Population Association of America
Prevention Institute

Psychiatrists for Gun Violence Prevention
Safe States Alliance
School-Based Health Alliance
Scoliosis Research Society
Society for Academic Emergency Medicine
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine
Society for Advancement of Violence and Injury Research
Society for Developmental and Behavioral Pediatrics
Society for Pediatric Anesthesia
Society for Pediatric Pain Medicine
Society for Pediatric Research
Society for Prevention Research
Society for Public Health Education
Society for Social Work and Research
Society of General Internal Medicine
Society of Teachers of Family Medicine
Society of Thoracic Surgeons
Trust for America's Health
Zero to Three

State and Local Organizations:

Alaska Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 2
American Academy of Pediatrics - California Chapter 3
American Academy of Pediatrics Georgia Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Colorado Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Orange County Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, Rhode Island Chapter
American Academy of Pediatrics, South Carolina Chapter
Arizona Public Health Association
Arkansas Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Arkansas Public Health Association
California Chapter 1, American Academy of Pediatrics
Children's Hospital of Wisconsin
Colorado Public Health Association
Connecticut Public Health Association
DC Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Delaware Academy of Medicine / Delaware Public Health Association
Doctors for America, New York Chapter
Doctors for America, Washington State Chapter
Florida Chapter - American Academy of Pediatrics
Hawaii Public Health Association
Hezekiah Beardsley Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Idaho Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Illinois Public Health Association
Indiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics

Iowa Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Kentucky Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Louisiana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Maine Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Maryland Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Massachusetts Public Health Association
Michigan Chapter American Academy of Pediatrics
Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Mississippi Public Health Association
Missouri Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Montana Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Nevada Public Health Association
New Hampshire Pediatric Society
New Hampshire Public Health Association
New Jersey Public Health Association
New York State American Academy of Pediatrics
North Carolina Pediatric Society
Ohio Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Ohio Public Health Association
Oklahoma Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Oregon Pediatric Society
Oregon Public Health Association
Pennsylvania Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Public Health Association of Nebraska
Rhode Island Public Health Association
Seattle Children's
Texas Pediatric Society
Utah Public Health Association
Virginia Chapter, American Academy of Pediatrics
Washington Academy of Family Physicians
Washington Coalition to Protect our Patients
West Virginia Chapter of the American Academy of
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wisconsin Public Health Association

ⁱ https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm