

April 30, 2018

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) 2019, **the undersigned 83 national 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 2016, there were over 38,000 U.S. firearm-related fatalities.<sup>1</sup> 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 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 2019 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,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Nursing  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Academy of Family Physicians  
American Anthropological Association  
American Association of Child & Adolescent Psychiatry  
American Association of Colleges of Nursing  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists  
American College of Physicians  
American College of Preventive Medicine  
American College of Surgeons  
American Educational Research Association  
American Medical Women's Association  
American Nurses Association  
American Organization of Nurse Executives  
American Osteopathic Association  
American Pediatric Society  
American Pediatric Surgical Association  
American Psychiatric Association  
American Psychoanalytic 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 for Accredited Public Health Programs  
Association of American Medical Colleges  
Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs  
Association of Medical School Pediatric Department Chairs  
Association of Nurses in AIDS Care  
Association of Schools and Programs of Public Health  
Association of State and Territorial Health Officials  
Brain Injury Association of America  
Child Injury Prevention Alliance  
Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Commissioned Officers Association of the U.S. Public Health Service

Consortium of Social Science Associations  
Council of State and Territorial Epidemiologists  
Council on Social Work Education  
Doctors for America  
Families USA  
Futures Without Violence  
GLMA: Health Professionals Advancing LGBT Equality  
Healthy Schools Network  
Healthy Teen Network  
International Association of Forensic Nurses  
National Association for Children’s Behavioral Health  
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 Black Nurses Association  
National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence  
National Health Care for the Homeless Council  
National Health Law Program  
National Hispanic Medical Association  
National League for Nursing  
National Physicians Alliance  
National Prevention Science Coalition  
National Register of Health Service Psychologists  
National Safety Council  
National Women’s Health Network  
North American Society for Pediatric Gastroenterology, Hepatology and Nutrition  
Pediatric Endocrine Society  
Pediatric Infectious Diseases Society  
Pediatric Policy Council  
Physicians for a National Health Program  
Prevention Institute  
Safe States Alliance  
School-Based Health Alliance  
Scoliosis Research Society  
Society for Adolescent Health and Medicine  
Society for Pediatric Research  
Society for Public Health Education  
Society for Social Work and Research  
Society of General Internal Medicine  
Society of Thoracic Surgeons  
Trust for America’s Health  
Zero to Three

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<sup>i</sup> [https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm\\_mortality/firearm.htm](https://www.cdc.gov/nchs/pressroom/sosmap/firearm_mortality/firearm.htm)