

TITLE: Gun Violence as a Public Health Crisis

WHEREAS so far in the year 2016, over 23,000 incidents of gun violence have led to nearly 6,000 deaths¹; and,

WHEREAS there were 372 mass shootings (4 or more people injured or killed) in the US in 2015, killing 475 people and wounding 1,870²; and,

WHEREAS there were 64 school shootings in 2015³; and,

WHEREAS on June 12, 2016, a gunman wielding an assault rifle and handgun opened fire in the Orlando nightclub Pulse, killing at least 50 and wounding at least 53, making this the worst mass shooting in United States history; and,

WHEREAS in April 2015, 7 physician organizations (the American Academy of Family Physicians, American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Emergency Physicians, American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, American College of Physicians, American College of Surgeons, and American Psychiatric Association) as well as the American Public Health Association and the American Bar Association called for policies to reduce firearm-related injuries and deaths, noting these to be a major public health problem⁴; and,

WHEREAS In 1996, Congress passed the so-called Dickey amendment as a rider to the Labor-Health and Human Services-Education Appropriations bill, with language stating that the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention could not fund research that would “advocate or promote gun control,” and the language has remained in each subsequent annual funding bill; and,

WHEREAS in April 2016, a coalition of 141 medical organizations sent a letter to four senior members of the House and Senate Appropriations Committees urging them to restore funding for gun violence research at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention; and,

WHEREAS in 2013, our AMA passed a number of policies, most notably H-145.997, which discussed aspects of firearms and their impact on the public health, yet since that time there have been no significant studies of gun violence as a public health crisis, its epidemiology, or methodologies to intervene to reduce injury and death from firearms, especially regarding mass shootings; therefore be it

RESOLVED that our AMA immediately make a public statement that gun violence represents a public health crisis which requires a comprehensive public health response and solution; and be it further,

RESOLVED that our AMA actively lobby Congress to lift the gun violence research ban.

¹ Source: gunviolencearchive.org

² BBC News: <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-us-canada-34996604>

³ *ibid*

⁴ Weinberger SE *et al.* Firearm-Related Injury and Death in the United States. *Annals of Internal Medicine.* 2015; 162(7): 513-516.