

April 27, 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 81 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.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 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 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 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

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