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MMA Releases Statement on Gun Violence

3/8/2018

Since the Valentine's Day shooting at a Parkland, Fla., school, the country has debated and discussed the issue of gun violence in new and meaningful ways. The MMA is no different and on March 3 the association's executive committee approved a public statement on the topic, pulling together past policy approved by the MMA's board as well as an expansion consistent with AMA policy.

"The topic of gun violence has been deliberated by the MMA many times over the years," said MMA Board Chair Randy Rice. "We felt, as do many other organizations, that after the Parkland shooting it was time to formally call this for what it is – a public health crisis."

Here is the statement, which was shared with the media, in its entirety.

MMA Statement on Gun Violence (March 2018)

Gun violence and firearm-related accidents kill more than 30,000 Americans each year. In Minnesota, there were more than 400 firearm-related deaths in 2016. The recent and relentless mass shootings, as well as the daily toll associated with gun violence and accidents, demand a response.

The Minnesota Medical Association (MMA) considers gun violence a public health crisis and calls on policymakers at the state and national levels to step up and protect our health and safety. The MMA supports common-sense changes to gun laws that will promote safe and responsible gun ownership, including criminal background checks on all purchases and transfers/exchanges of firearms; enforcement of laws that will hold sellers accountable when they sell firearms to prohibited purchasers; investment in improved data collection, analysis, and research on firearm injury prevention; and, a renewal and strengthening of the assault weapons ban, including banning high-capacity magazines.

The MMA also renews its call for improved access to and coverage of comprehensive mental health services. Most individuals with mental illness are not violent. It is important, however, to encourage and support the identification of individuals at risk for violence or self harm. Physicians and other health care providers also have a responsibility to talk to patients about responsible firearm ownership and safe storage in the home.

Few threats to our health and safety can be eliminated, but failure to intervene in the face of this significant epidemic is not an option.

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