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Health Headlines
Monday April 3 7:34 PM ET

Pediatricians renew call for gun ban

CHICAGO, Apr 03 (Reuters) -- The American Academy of Pediatrics on Monday renewed a call for a ban on handguns and semi-automatic weapons, citing what it said was an epidemic of firearms deaths and injuries among children.

Acting against the backdrop of the recent wave of gun violence in schools, the 55,000-member group also said health care professionals should intervene with parents to warn them about the danger of guns in and out of the home, and to ask parents whether their children have access to firearms.


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"Because firearm-related injury to children is associated with death and severe morbidity and is a significant public health problem, child care professionals can and should provide effective leadership in efforts to stem this

epidemic," the academy said.

The pediatricians made the recommendations in a revised policy statement on firearm-related injuries, renewing what it said was a long-standing call for a ban on handguns and semi-automatic weapons.

The United States, it said, has the highest rate of firearm-related deaths -- including homicides, suicides and accidents -- among industrialized nations.

The group also said guns should be subject to safety and design regulations and tracing and that the entertainment media should reduce the level of gun violence in games, movies and programming.

In a related move the pediatricians also issued an updated policy statement on adolescent suicide, saying doctors should be aware of the risk factors for suicide and routinely ask patients and their families about depression and the availability of firearms in the home.

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