



Endorsing the AAP Statement on Gun Violence: A Letter to Our Members

We are sure that you were as shocked and saddened as we were following the school shooting in Parkland, Florida on February 14 that resulted in the deaths of 17 individuals, 14 of whom were children or young adults. We encourage you, as a healthcare provider who cares about the well-being of children, to become informed and advocate on behalf of reducing gun violence.

PPAG acknowledges that gun violence poses a significant public health threat to children. The American Academy of Pediatrics' (AAP) Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention Executive Committee has described that 1 in 4 injury deaths in adolescents/young adults aged 15-19 years is firearm related¹. Furthermore, hospitalizations for nonfatal firearm assaults cost an average of \$24,353 in direct medical costs¹. PPAG recognizes the work published by our colleagues at the AAP regarding firearm related injuries in children.

PPAG also endorses the statement released by the AAP following the school shooting in Parkland advocating for stronger state and federal laws related to gun safety². Furthermore, PPAG stands by our colleagues at the AAP by endorsing their statement "Addressing Gun Violence³," which provides recommendations such as trigger locks for firearms and safely storing guns in a manner where children cannot access them. We strongly encourage the members of PPAG to read the recommendations made by the AAP (available in reference 1 listed below).

We know this is a controversial subject. Taking a stance on this topic does not strictly conform to our mission as an organization. There was significant debate among the Board of Directors, and this was not a unanimous decision. Our organization has a responsibility to public health and the opportunity to be bold and stand at the front of a wave that could shift public policy, making children safer at home and in schools. We hope that our actions will inspire other pediatric organizations to follow suit and endorse the statements from the AAP.

As always, we hope that you will reach out to any of our board members if you have questions, comments, or concerns.

Respectfully,

PPAG Board of Directors

References:

1. Council on Injury, Violence, and Poison Prevention Executive Committee. Firearm related injuries affecting the pediatric population. *Pediatrics* 2012;130(5):e1416-e1423. Available at: <http://pediatrics.aappublications.org/content/130/5/e1416.full>.
2. American Academy of Pediatrics. AAP Statement on School Shooting in Parkland, Florida; February 15, 2018. Available at: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/about-the-aap/aap-press-room/pages/floridashooting.aspx>.
3. American Academy of Pediatrics. Addressing Gun Violence. Available at: <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/aap-health-initiatives/Pages/Unintentional-Injury-in-State.aspx>