Hello Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees:

Every child has the right to live in a safe home, play in the safety of others’ homes and live without fear of firearm injury.

This statement is at the heart of our section’s annual advocacy campaign: P.A.V.E. (Pediatricians Against Violence Everywhere) the Way to Firearm Injury Prevention.

Gun violence is a public health issue that profoundly affects children. Pediatricians see the devastating effects of firearms firsthand in the form of suicides and homicides, and by treating those who have been exposed to gun violence at school, in the community or at home. Personal stories as well as the recent tragedies in Newtown, Connecticut and Aurora, Colorado have galvanized pediatricians to address gun violence and firearm injury prevention through advocacy.

According to the Center for Disease Control, firearm injury is in the top three causes of death among youth, causing twice as many deaths as cancer, five times as many as heart disease, and 15 times as many as infections. Pediatricians routinely advocate and educate parents regarding the importance of car seats, bike helmets, seat belts, child abuse and drowning prevention, and should also counsel about firearm injury prevention. This is not a political issue-- not about “gun control” or “gun rights,” firearm injury prevention is about keeping kids and teens safe.

The SOMSRFT has created and compiled numerous resources for use at the clinic, community, state, and federal levels to address three main areas of advocacy with the goal of keeping kids and teens safe:

- Support common sense firearm legislation that protects kids
- Provide education and research about firearms
- Expand mental health screening and access to treatment

P.A.V.E. also aims to highlight that approximately seven kids/teens die each day from gun violence, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. To raise awareness of this sobering statistic, we encourage you to organize an event, send an email, engage on social media or have an advocacy day on the seventh day of every month from November 2013 to October 2014. We will be sending a monthly email on the seventh of each month, which highlights a different part of this issue and our project.

We encourage you to share your ideas and engage in social media advocacy by liking the AAP SOMSRFT Facebook fan page, https://www.facebook.com/AAPSOMSRFT, posting projects from your institutions and following the section’s efforts on Twitter @AAPSOMSRFT, #PAVE, #PutKids1st, #KeepKidsSafe. Consider changing your profile picture to our PAVE logo.

P.A.V.E. the way to firearm injury prevention is the latest advocacy project initiated by the SOMSRFT Executive Committee. Each year, the committee selects an issue affecting children and members advocate for change by creating projects at the grassroots, state and national levels. Successful
campaigns have included initiatives on early childhood literacy (Read. Lead. Succeed!), the importance of speaking up for kids at the ballot box (I care for kids and I vote), immunizations and obesity.

We hope this year’s campaign will have a far-reaching impact on firearm injury prevention that will be seen for years to come. Look forward to your program’s AAP delegate to give a presentation about this year’s campaign at an upcoming noon or morning conference. We hope they will lead you in a meaningful discussion to plan a unique advocacy project addressing firearm injury prevention at your hospital!

Please visit our website to learn more about P.A.V.E. (Pediatricians Against Violence Everywhere) the Way to Firearm Injury Prevention: [http://www2.aap.org/sections/ypn/r/advocacy/PAVE.html](http://www2.aap.org/sections/ypn/r/advocacy/PAVE.html)

Feel free to contact one of the PAVE tri chairs (Shana, Ashley, Lisa), your District or Assistant District Coordinator, or a member of our Medical Student Subcommittee with any questions or ideas.

Together with your efforts at the clinic, community, state, and federal levels we will PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention!

For kids,

PAVE Advocacy Committee