Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees:

Every day children and families are impacted by gun violence or firearm injury. CDC data shows that each day more than 7 young people are killed due to gun violence. As pediatricians we 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.

In this update, we examine where we are now, where we have been, and what can we do to PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention at the federal level. One year after gun safety bills failed in the US Senate, pediatricians remain undeterred to keep kids safe. We continue to remember and honor those we have lost and those who have been impacted with a renewed call to action to protect our nation’s children from gun violence.

Our April edition of the AAP SOMSRFT PAVE advocacy update features a federal focus of gun violence prevention with specific areas for action from the AAP Department of Federal Affairs.

Where We Are

One year after the Senate failed to pass key gun violence prevention legislation, pediatricians remain undeterred and continue to advocate to protect children from gun violence. The following are the Academy’s federal priorities:

- **Stronger gun laws**: Enactment of common-sense firearm legislation, including stronger background checks, banning assault weapons, addressing firearm trafficking, and encouraging safe firearm storage
- **Violence prevention programs**: Support for programs addressing the needs of at-risk children and children exposed to violence, including those at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Department of Justice
- **Research**: Funding for gun violence prevention research, including $10 million to support gun violence prevention research at CDC and $20 million to expand the National Violent Death Reporting System to all 50 states
- **Physician counseling**: Protecting the crucial role of physicians in providing anticipatory guidance to patients about the health hazards of firearms
- **Mental health access**: Ensuring children and their families have access to appropriate mental health services, particularly to address the effects of exposure to violence

In 2013, the Senate Appropriations Committee approved a bill with $10 million in funding for research on gun violence at the CDC and a total of $23.6 million to expand the National Violent
Death Reporting System (NVDRS). NVDRS received an $8 million expansion in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2014 budget to just over $11 million.

President Barack Obama’s FY 2015 budget proposal, released last month, included NVDRS expansion to all 50 states and $10 million for gun violence prevention research at the CDC.

**Where We’ve Been**

For more than 20 years, the AAP has supported gun violence prevention research, education and advocacy. Following the tragedy that took place at Sandy Hook Elementary School in December 2012, the Academy led a sustained advocacy effort focused on engaging Congress, the White House, partner organizations, pediatricians, and the public in an effort to enact and improve federal policies aimed at reducing and preventing gun violence.

In April 2013, a critical bipartisan amendment to a larger gun violence prevention bill addressing background checks, mental health, and school safety failed. Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid (D-N.V.) indicated that he would bring the bill back up once the amendment has enough votes to pass, but one year later, no such vote has taken place.

Since then, the AAP has led and signed onto several letters to congressional leaders and the administration, highlighting the importance of gun violence prevention research, mental health access and gun safety reforms.

**Newtown anniversary activities**

On December 10, 2013, the AAP sent a [letter](#) to members of Congress highlighting the importance of taking federal policy action addressing gun violence as a public health issue impacting children. Noting the December 14 anniversary of the 2012 tragedy in Newtown, Conn., the letter urged Congress to find a way forward in addressing this pervasive threat to child health, particularly by: investing in gun violence prevention research; supporting community-based violence prevention programs; expanding access to mental health and substance use disorder screening and treatment; enacting commonsense gun laws; and educating the public.

The AAP sent its letter in coordination with multifaceted efforts on promoting the importance of preventing gun violence centered on the commemoration of the Newtown anniversary, including a [video](#) featuring AAP Immediate Past President Thomas K. McInerny, MD, FAAP, and additional video clips of pediatricians speaking about the importance of gun violence prevention on AAP’s [YouTube channel](#).

The Academy also developed a new website to house the video and additional testimonials from pediatricians who attended the 2013 Legislative Conference to advocate against gun violence, including several SOMSRFT members: [www.aap.org/gunviolenceprevention](#).
What You Can Do

Appropriations decisions are underway, and now is a timely and crucial opportunity to speak up in support of strong CDC research funding and an expansion of NVDRS. The Academy is one of the only national health and medical organizations leading efforts to support strong funding for CDC to conduct gun violence prevention research, and the collective voices of SOMSRFT members can help generate enough momentum to secure the $10 million the President requested in his FY 2015 budget.

To determine who your members of Congress are and how to contact them, visit www.house.gov or www.senate.gov and click on the corresponding “find your representative/senator” boxes to search by name, state or district.

Here are three actions you can take this month to protect children from gun violence:

1) Please consider taking a moment to call or email your federal legislators with the following message:
   - As a medical student/resident/fellow and member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I urge you to please support funding $10 million to the CDC to conduct gun violence prevention research and $23.6 million to expand the National Violent Death Reporting System.
   - Simply stated, gun violence is a public health threat to children. Firearm injuries are one of 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. The United States has one of the highest rates of injuries, suicides and homicides among developed countries.
   - $10 million to CDC to conduct gun safety research is consistent with a report released last year by the Institute of Medicine, and research can save lives, reduce injuries and change behavior. Federal support is essential to better understand the causes of gun violence and the most effective ways to prevent it.
   - The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is an 18-state surveillance system that pulls together information on violent deaths with the aim of developing effective interventions and preventive measures. NVDRS data can help local communities better understand the prevalence and type of violence taking place there and can inform policies aimed at specifically reducing violence in those populations.
   - Please support a $10 million investment for CDC gun violence prevention research and $23.6 million to expand NVDRS. Thank you for all you do for children.

2) Help draw further attention to the importance of NVDRS data and CDC research by writing an op-ed in your local paper. AAP Department of Federal Affairs staff can work with you 1:1 to provide local data from your state or community and guidance from CDC experts to help you customize an op-ed for your local paper. Please email Devin Miller, Advocacy
and Public Affairs Assistant in the AAP’s Washington, DC office, at dmiller@aap.org if you’re interested in writing an op-ed.

3) Share messages on social media using #PAVE to continue to raise awareness about the threat of gun violence in children’s lives. **This week (April 7-11) is National Youth Violence Prevention Week.** Consider contributing with the hashtag the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has designated to frame their activities. Below are some sample posts from CDC (of course feel free to add #PAVE!):

- Twitter posts (Twitter handle: @CDCInjury)
  - Violence is not an inevitable part of growing up. Youth violence can be prevented. #NYVPW [http://go.usa.gov/KzJT](http://go.usa.gov/KzJT)
  - Communities can stop violence among young people before it starts. #NYVPW [http://go.usa.gov/KzJ9](http://go.usa.gov/KzJ9)
  - Bullying is preventable form of youth violence. Empower kids, educators & communities to stop it. #NYVPW [http://go.usa.gov/Kuc3](http://go.usa.gov/Kuc3)

- Additional sample tweets to share throughout the month:
  - Gun safety research can save lives, reduce injuries & change behavior. Pediatricians call on Congress to fund $10 million for @CDCgov #PAVE
  - 1 year after gun safety bills failed in the Senate, pediatricians remain undeterred to keep kids safe #PAVE [http://ow.ly/vrkjM](http://ow.ly/vrkjM)
  - Research is needed to help determine the most effective ways to keep children safe from guns. @CDCgov needs funding to do just that #PAVE

Thank you for all you do for children and for taking the time to advocate on their behalf.

Learn more about Federal Policies to Keep Children Safe by visiting the AAP [Federal Advocacy website](http://www.aap.org/aboutus/advocacy.htm).

**ADVOCATE FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN MINUTES**

For the April edition of **ADVOCATE FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN MINUTES**, we wanted to focus on federal legislative advocacy. This month, we ask you CONTACT YOUR LEGISLATORS with the following instructions:

2) Locate the contact information for 1-3 of your legislators

3) Call or e-mail with the following information:
   a. I am __(name and title)__ and I am a concerned constituent about firearm violence and its impact on children.
   b. As a medical student/resident/fellow and member of the American Academy of Pediatrics, I urge you to please support funding $10 million to the CDC to conduct gun violence prevention research and $23.6 million to expand the National Violent Death Reporting System.
   c. Simply stated, gun violence is a public health threat to children. Firearm injuries are one of 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. The United States has one of the highest rates of injuries, suicides and homicides among developed countries.
   d. Research shows that strong gun policies are effective at reducing injuries, suicides and homicides by keeping guns out of the hands of those most at risk for harming themselves and others. In 2010 alone, firearms contributed to 11,569 injuries, 1,249 homicides and 720 suicides in children under age 18.
   e. Please find a way forward on gun safety legislation, including: reinstating an assault weapons ban, improving background checks, strengthening anti-trafficking laws and promoting safe firearm storage.
   f. Please renew efforts to apply science to gun safety and prioritize evidence-based research to reduce firearm injuries and deaths. $10 million to CDC to conduct gun safety research is consistent with a report released last year by the Institute of Medicine, and research can save lives, reduce injuries and change behavior. Federal support is essential to better understand the causes of gun violence and the most effective ways to prevent it.
   g. The National Violent Death Reporting System (NVDRS) is an 18-state surveillance system that pulls together information on violent deaths with the aim of developing effective interventions and preventive measures. NVDRS data can help local communities better understand the prevalence and type of violence taking place there and can inform policies aimed at specifically reducing violence in those populations.
   h. Please support a $10 million investment for CDC gun violence prevention research and $23.6 million to expand NVDRS. Thank you for all you do for children.

4) We highly recommend including a patient story if you have one.

THAT IS IT! We anticipate 5 minutes to read and get comfortable with these talking points, and 5 additional minutes to look up legislators and call/e-mail. Who knew legislative advocacy is this easy? Further, if your legislator asks you for specific information you do not know, please let them know you can get back to them with it. We would love to help you obtain any information and/or follow-up with your legislators ourselves so please e-mail the PAVE committee as needed.
Please write to us (Christian.pulcini@gmail.com) so we can highlight your efforts in the next e-mail blast! Thank you for all that you do!

**PAVE PROJECT SPOTLIGHT**

The success of any advocacy campaign comes from grassroots support and efforts. The work happening in clinics, communities, residency programs, and medical schools across the country is impressive and appreciated. We want to know what is going on at your school and program! In an effort to share ideas, we will be placing the “spotlight” on a different project each month.

April’s spotlight shows the progress of our Section wide project inspired by District IX medical student representative, Christine Thang, MS3, David Geffen School of Medicine at UCLA. At the NCE in October, numerous medical students, residents, and fellowship trainees took part in the SOMSRFT 2013-2014 advocacy project by writing about their experiences with gun violence on bricks which were then added to an emblematic road as we worked together to literally and figuratively pave the road toward a safe future for our nation’s children. Last month, our project travelled to the American Academy of Pediatrics Annual Leadership Forum (ALF), where Academy leaders from Chapters, Councils, Committee, and other Sections helped us continue to PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention by sharing their experiences with gun violence while also providing ideas of how we can continue to advocate for firearm injury prevention. The photos below show members of the SOMSRFT executive team laying bricks and a before and after of the road.
Help us add to the banner: send SOMSRFT’s PAVE team paper bricks with experiences of gun violence or firearm injury prevention from your personal perspective or from colleagues at your school or program. You can email the information to jraymond@aap.org to be written on a paper brick for you OR you can send your paper brick to American Academy of Pediatrics, ATTN: Julie Raymond, 141 Northwest Point Blvd, Elk Grove Village, IL 60007.

**SOCIAL MEDIA ADVOCACY FOR FIREARM INJURY PREVENTION**

Use social media for advocacy by engaging with the AAP SOMSRFT Twitter and Facebook accounts. Throughout the campaign we will be working to remember and honor those affected by gun violence, and raise awareness about the public health issue of firearm injury in social media.

We need your help: follow us, like us, tweet or post what is happening at your programs, and retweet or repost our social media advocacy efforts. #PAVE #KeepKidsSafe #PutKids1st. To raise awareness that approximately seven young people die each day from gun violence, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, change your profile pic to the PAVE logo on the 7th of each month.

**POETRY FOR PREVENTION**

We will continue to feature a poetry piece in each of our monthly PAVE advocacy updates, share pieces on SOMSRFT’s social media accounts, and among other platforms showcase submissions our website.

We are accepting submissions for poems written by you, pediatricians in training. The poem must have a firearm injury or gun violence prevention focus, but is otherwise open to your own creativity. Feel free to submit a poem in any format and creativity is encouraged: free verse, haiku, limerick (appropriate for pediatric advocate audiences of course), sonnet, etc. Please send your entries to PAVE Tri-Chair, Lisa Costello at costello.lisa@gmail.com

**April Poetry for Prevention:**

Last April federal gun safety bills did not pass
This April pediatricians in training advocate amass
Keeping kids safe is what we hold dear
Our message for legislators is sincere

To learn how to prevent firearm injury best
Gun safety research we must invest

In order to protect kids across our nation
Please enact common-sense firearm legislation

Undeterred one year later
Pediatricians urge Congress even greater

WHAT WE’RE READING, TWEETING, & WATCHING
• Bay Area pediatrician Dr. Ricky Choi examines the nexus of guns and public health in this National Physicians Alliance blog post.
• Physician “Gag Laws” and Gun Safety by Florida Chapter AAP President, Mobeen H. Rathore, MD, CPE via American Medical Association (AMA) virtual mentor.
• Washington, D.C. pediatrician Dr. Sanjeev K. Sriram discusses why “The Surgeon General Does Not Need the NRA's Approval” in this Huffington Post article.
• An op-ed published in the Chicago Tribune by Mark Rosenberg, MD, FAAP, on protecting children from gun violence.
• Nerissa Bauer (@NerissaBauer): 4/2/14, 8:17 AM: Gun injuries cause death at 2x cancer rate, 5x heart disease #PAVE @AAPSOMSRFT @IND_AAP #putkids1st
• Nazima Z (@nazimmy): 3/25/14, 1:30 PM: TIL: A child is killed or injured by a firearm every 30 minutes. 33% of US homes have a gun, half don’t lock it up #TPSAvocacyDay14 #PAVE
• SCAAP (@SC_AAP): 3/15/14, 6:47 PM: .@JamiePoz gives S/O to #PAVE woot! @AAPSOMSRFT AAPALF #putkids1st #tweetiaticians
• Centers For Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) Grand Rounds: Preventing Youth Violence.
• David Chen, MD, a med-peds resident in Wilmington, Delaware, describes the impact gun violence has on children in his community in this AAP video.

As we remember the past, examine the present, and look forward to the future, we are reminded of the impact of gun violence each day. We each come from different places and backgrounds, with different stories and perspectives, but together we are helping to PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention through various projects across all AAP districts. As members of the American Academy of Pediatrics, we are one team, a unified voice undeterred from the goal to keep kids safe.

#Forkids

Pediatricians Against Violence Everywhere Advocacy Team

Thanks:
Thank you Jamie Poslosky and Devin Miller from the AAP Department of Public Affairs as well as numerous staff members from the AAP Department of Federal Affairs for providing the federal focus of our April advocacy update and for their ongoing advocacy on behalf of our members and children.
Thank you Christian Pulcini for helping us be advocate in minutes each month.