Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees:

Participating in a social media candlelight vigil for Newtown; writing op-eds and letters to the editor; screening for firearms during well child visits; and developing advocacy projects at residency programs in every AAP district are a few examples of the powerful roles pediatricians in training are playing to create meaningful impact that works to prevent gun violence and firearm injury.

Each New Year brings the promise of opportunity -- providing a chance to act with the hope to improve. Isaac Abt, MD, the first AAP President, said: “It should be our aim to discover neglected problems and, so far as in our power, to correct evils and introduce reform.” This month we provide information “to discover” your state’s laws and opportunities to “introduce reform” by advocating for common sense firearm legislation that protects kids and teens at the chapter and state level. As we begin a New Year, we hope you will pledge to get involved or continue to engage in our collective efforts to PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention.

Our January edition of the AAP SOMSRFT PAVE advocacy update comes from Katie Crumley, State Government Affairs Analyst in the AAP Division of State Government Affairs.

**WHAT’S YOUR STATE’S STANCE ON FIREARMS**

2013 marked the first year in over a decade that states have made significant progress to enact laws aimed at reducing gun violence prevention. Over 2000 gun violence prevention bills were introduced in state legislatures in 2013. Though most of these bills failed to pass out of legislative committee, these bills represent the start of a new age in gun violence prevention efforts. New vocal grassroots organizations like [Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense in America](https://momsdemandaction.org) have formed in response to the Newtown tragedy demanding that legislators enact legislation that protects children from gun violence. Pediatricians, as child health and development experts, play an important role in efforts to protect children.

New gun laws enacted in 2013 include:

- **Universal Background Checks**
  Colorado, Connecticut, Delaware, Maryland, and New York passed universal background check bills, requiring that all sales of firearms take place through a licensed dealer who can perform a background check prior to the sale of the firearm.

- **Assault Weapons/High Capacity Magazine Ammunition Bans**
  Connecticut, Maryland, and New York passed bills that banned high capacity magazine ammunition sales and expanded their states’ existing assault weapons bans to include more weapons.
• **Mental Health Restrictions**
  California, Connecticut, Maryland, New York, and New Jersey all passed bills that strengthened mental health restrictions on firearm purchases.

• **Safe Storage**
  California strengthened its safe storage laws. California will now require that guns be stored locked and unloaded when the owner is aware that anyone - not just a child - who is legally prohibited from possessing a firearm is present, such as convicted felons or those with mental health conditions.

Unfortunately, despite this progress, AAP chapters continue to fight bills that threaten physician counseling on firearm safety. In 2013, despite widespread condemnation in the news media, bills were introduced in Kansas, Missouri, Ohio, Oklahoma, South Carolina, and West Virginia that would restrict a physician’s ability to counsel patients and their families about safe storage of firearms. A Wisconsin state legislator has drafted legislation that was not formally introduced. Though none of these bills passed in 2013, similar legislation should be expected in 2014.

A US Federal District Court Judge ruled to permanently enjoin the Florida law restricting physician counseling on firearms to be unconstitutional in July 2011, but Governor Rick Scott and the state of Florida have appealed that ruling. The US Court of Appeals of the 11th Circuit heard oral arguments in the case of *Wollschlaeger v Florida* in July 2013, and a ruling in appellate court is expected sometime within the year. The AAP remains committed to opposing this unprecedented governmental intrusion into clinical decision making and physician autonomy.

One year post-Newtown, states could see the number of bills introduced to prevent at gun violence drop. This underscores the importance of the pediatrician’s voice to ensure that this issue remains at the forefront of state policymakers legislative agendas. Many state AAP chapters will be working with legislators on bills that will strengthen state gun laws, while others may be fighting bills that would threaten physician counseling on firearms or loosen current firearm restrictions. These chapters will welcome the Section of Medical Students, Residents, and Fellowship Trainees (SoMSRFT) enthusiasm and energy and their efforts to reduce gun deaths.

It is important to coordinate all state level advocacy efforts including phone calls and visits with state legislators, letters to the editor about specific state legislation, and other state public policy outreach with your state AAP chapter. Find out how to reach your AAP Chapter Executive Director at this [helpful link](#).

To aid in chapter efforts, medical students, residents and fellowship trainees should reference the [AAP Advocacy Guide](#) for tips on reaching out to state lawmakers, writing letters to the editor, and working with your AAP chapter (My AAP login required for some references.) Also visit the [AAP Division of State Government Affairs Web Site](#) for more information about current state gun laws, state legislation tracking, and State Advocacy Focuses on Safe Storage Laws, Assault Weapons Bans, and Universal Background Check legislation. Additional information is also available on the [PAVE website](#).
For more information about gun laws in your state or legislative strategies to address gun violence in your state, please contact the Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org.
ADVOCATE FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN 10 MINUTES

For the second edition of ADVOCATE FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN 10 MINUTES, we wanted to focus on educational advocacy involving your state government affairs and their current policies on firearms. As a reminder, each month your PAVE advocacy committee would like to offer medical students, residents, and fellows concrete strategies to advocate for firearm violence prevention which avoid the barriers which often prevent us from advocating (ie time and resources). This month, we ask you EDUCATE YOURSELF AND DISCUSS your state government affairs involving firearms. To do so, please perform the following steps:

1) Read the following: http://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/Firearms_SLR.pdf paying close attention to the policies in your home state.
2) Browse through the AAP resources on the bottom of the first page, especially the advocacy resources (MyAAP login required)
3) Discuss what you learned with 1-2 colleagues over the course of the month.

THAT IS IT! We know many of us are hesitant to discuss these issues in depth because of a lack of knowledge of our own state government affairs due to time constraints, but this wonderful document from the AAP Division of State Government Affairs can prompt an informed discussion in as little as 5 minutes. If you feel inspired to follow-up on the information you obtain and spend more time advocating this month, please contact your state legislators and let them know you are concerned about the current policies in your state. If you need help with this, please contact the PAVE team using the e-mail below or the AAP Division of State Government Affairs at stgov@aap.org, or at 847/434-7799.

Lastly, we did not hear from anyone in regards to last month’s ADVOCATE FOR FIREARM VIOLENCE PREVENTION IN 10 MINUTES but we would love to this month. Please write to us (Christian.pulcini@gmail.com) so we can highlight your efforts in the next advocacy update!

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.

**PAVE PROJECT SPOTLIGHT**

The success of any advocacy campaign comes from grassroots support and effort. 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.

January’s spotlight takes us to District VII: Scott & White pediatric residency program has taken off with their PAVE the way for firearm injury prevention campaign. This year's campaign will focus on raising awareness for firearm safety with children. Schools in the Temple, TX area will be encouraged to participate in poetry/art for prevention. Each student will have the opportunity to create a work of poetry or art to signify what gun safety means to them. There will be rewards at each grade level. Scott & White resident are hoping to use art as a way to bring awareness of the dangers of firearms in the community and the importance of keeping them safely locked up to prevent injuries.

**POETRY FOR PREVENTION**

For the remainder of the PAVE campaign, we will 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](mailto:costello.lisa@gmail.com)

This month’s poetry comes from Deepa Vasireddy, MD, PGY-2 Pediatrics and Delegate from The Unterberg Children’s Hospital at Monmouth Medical Center in New Jersey (District III)

**January Poetry for Prevention:**

Parents might think a gun can protect,
And it’s present in several homes,
Actually in thirty three percent.
A child is killed or injured by a firearm every 30 minutes,
And it’s twenty two times more likely to be used for causes other than self defense.
It increases the risk of suicide when kept at home,
So never tell child the lock or safe’s code.
Separate should be kept the gun and bullets,
Together we should discuss with kids the repercussions.
Let’s keep homes free of guns,
Let’s make laws stricter for once.
How many more kids are we going to lose?
Before we realize a change has been long due

WHAT WE’RE READING, TWEETING, & WATCHING

- An **op-ed** published in The Day newspaper, “Newtown one year later: A pediatrician mom’s view,” by Ayesha Cheema-Hasan, MD, FAAP, Fellow Developmental-Behavioral Pediatrics, Rhode Island Hospital/Hasbro Children’s Hospital, Brown University

- An **op-ed** published in the Brookline Newspaper, “A pediatrician’s perspective on keeping kids safe one year after Newtown,” by Christian Pulcini, MS 4, Tufts University School of Medicine, SOMSRFT Medical Student Subcommittee Chair

- A **letter to the editor** published in the Washington Post, “To reduce gun deaths among children, focus first on prevention,” by Aimee Grace, MD, FAAP, General Academic Pediatrics Fellow Children's National Health System and SOMSRFT Committee on Federal Government Affairs liaison

- [@AmerAcadPeds](http://twitter.com/AmerAcadPeds): 1/2/14, 11:14 AM: Drs Sean Palfrey and Bob Sege: #NewYear is a time to reflect on & commit to making our homes & communities safer cocm.blogspot.com

- [@AAPSOMSRFT](http://twitter.com/AAPSOMSRFT): 1/1/14, 10:16 PM: This New Year resolve to #keepkidssafe. Join us as we continue to #PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention in 2014: goo.gl/M1778a

- In this [video](http://youtube.com), pediatricians describe how the prevention of gun violence is a child health issue, and advocate to keep children safe where they live, learn and play.

- David Chen, MD, a pediatric resident in Wilmington, Delaware, describes the impact gun violence has on children in his community in this [video](http://youtube.com).

Thank you for your ongoing efforts that work to PAVE the way to firearm injury prevention—they are appreciated!

#Forkids

Pediatricians Against Violence Everywhere Advocacy Team

Thanks:
The PAVE advocacy committee would like to again thank AAP immediate past President Dr. Tom McInerny for his ongoing support of our Section and his advocacy efforts toward protecting children from gun violence.

Thank you to Katie Crumley and the AAP Division of State Government Affairs for your assistance with the PAVE campaign and for your piece in the PAVE Advocacy Update.

Thank you to Christian Pulcini for helping us become advocate in minutes each month!