

# American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



## Minnesota Chapter

### **MNAAP Policy on Firearm Safety and Firearm-Related Deaths**

November 29, 2016

The MNAAP believes that firearm violence is a serious public health issue. With more than 32,000 individuals – and 400 children under the age of 14 in 2014 alone – fatally shot each year, the issue of firearm-related violence can no longer be ignored by policy makers<sup>1</sup>. Firearm-related deaths remain as 1 of the top 3 causes of death in American youth.<sup>1</sup>

- Firearm safety begins at home. The MNAAP fully supports laws that require safe storage of firearms. Unlocked guns in homes increase the incidence of accidental injury and death as well as suicide. In 2009, 114 children and adolescents younger than 20 years died as a result of unintentional firearm-related injuries.<sup>1</sup>
- Counseling parents on ways to keep children safe is central to the mission of all physicians. Just as pediatricians need to ask questions about patient's safety, pediatricians have an absolute right to ask patients and their families about firearm storage in the home. About 1/3<sup>rd</sup> of American children live in homes with a firearm, and 43% of those contain at least one unlocked gun.<sup>2</sup>
- The MNAAP joins the AAP and dozens of other physician groups in strongly urging Congress to end the prohibition on research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on meaningful research on gun violence.
- The MNAAP supports common-sense firearm safety measures including comprehensive background checks, limits on assault-style weapons, and required training on the safe storage of firearms.

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<sup>1</sup> National Center for Injury Prevention and Control, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Web-Based Injury Statistics Query & Reporting System (WISQARS) Injury Mortality Reports, 1999–2009, for national, regional, and states (May, 2012). Available at:

[http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal\\_injury\\_reports.html](http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/fatal_injury_reports.html). Accessed November 29, 2016

<sup>2</sup> American Academy of Pediatrics, <https://www.aap.org/en-us/advocacy-and-policy/state-advocacy/Documents/Safe%20Storage.pdf>. Accessed November 29, 2016