



POLICY STATEMENT

AMCHP Supports Policies to Protect Children from Gun Violence

Protecting and promoting the health of children is core to the mission of public health and Title V Maternal and Child Health programs. In 2010, 18,270 children and teens died or were injured by firearms. Homicide and suicide - most often by firearm - are the second leading causes of death for teens and young adults.¹ Overall, 31,228 people of all ages died from gun violence in 2010.

Accordingly, the Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs (AMCHP) supports a comprehensive public health approach to protect children and prevent gun violence, including the following federal policies:

Gun Safety

- Require criminal background checks for all gun sales and make sure dangerous people are prohibited from having guns.
- Create serious punishments for gun trafficking.
- Maximize enforcement efforts to prevent gun violence and prosecute gun crime.
- Provide effective training for active shooter situations for law enforcement officers, first responders, and school officials.
- Protect the rights of health care providers to talk to their patients about gun safety.
- Launch a national responsible gun ownership campaign.
- Review and enhance as warranted safety standards for gun locks and gun safes.
- Encourage the development of innovative gun safety technology.

Mental Health

- Reach young people through programs to identify mental illness early and refer them to treatment.
- Provide “Mental Health First Aid” training for teachers.

¹ http://www.cdc.gov/injury/wisqars/pdf/10LCID_All_Deaths_By_Age_Group_2010-a.pdf

- Make sure students with signs of mental illness get referred to treatment.
- Support individuals ages 16 to 25 at high risk for mental illness.
- Train additional mental health professionals to serve students and young adults.
- Launch a national conversation to increase understanding about mental health.
- Finalize requirements for private health insurance plans to cover mental health services.
- Make sure millions of Americans covered by Medicaid get quality mental health coverage.

Research

- Conduct research on the causes and prevention of gun violence, including links between video games, media images, and violence.
- Better understand how and when firearms are used in violent death.

School Safety

- Provide incentives for schools to hire school resource officers.
- Put up to 1,000 new school resource officers and school counselors on the job.
- Invest in other strategies to make our schools safer.
- Give schools and other institutions a model for how to develop and implement reliable emergency management plans.
- Help schools develop and implement emergency plans.
- Help 8,000 schools create safer and more nurturing school climates.
- Share best practices on school discipline.
- Help schools address pervasive violence.