

Statement by Wisconsin Healthcare and Public Health Professionals in support of Gun Violence Awareness in Wisconsin

As Wisconsin healthcare organizations concerned for the wellbeing of our patients and communities, we stand together to support the recognition of Gun Violence Awareness Day in Wisconsin on June 2, 2023.

National Gun Violence Awareness Day and “Wear Orange” Weekend started in 2015 as a tribute to Hadiya Pendleton, a Chicago fifteen-year-old who died in a senseless act of gun violence. The statistics are becoming more dire. The most common cause of death for children and adolescents in Wisconsin, and the US, is now due to firearms. Gun suicide accounts for over 65% of firearm fatalities in our state, with one gun suicide every 20 hours in Wisconsin. Homicides account for 28% of gun deaths. Both suicide and homicide rates in Wisconsin are increasing. In the last decade, the overall rate of gun deaths in Wisconsin increased 62%, compared to a 39% increase nationwide.

In September 2022, representatives from 47 healthcare organizations attended the Second Medical Summit on Firearm Injury Prevention: Creating a Sustainable Healthcare Coalition to Advance a Multidisciplinary Public Health Approach (1). The Summit concluded that: “Healthcare professionals on the front lines of caring for people injured or killed have a unique voice in advocating for policy solutions and the change needed to prevent firearm-related violence.”

As healthcare and public health professionals, we are gravely concerned for not only our patients who are directly affected by gun deaths and injuries, but also for our patients who live in a community where gun violence is prevalent, who have witnessed gun violence, or who have had a family member killed or injured through gun violence. We believe the way forward is to adopt a comprehensive public health approach like what has been done to reduce deaths and injuries from motor vehicle accidents (2). We seek to partner with our community members, including gun owners, healthcare and business leaders, as well as legislators and government officials to support education, research, and policy to promote responsible gun ownership and use. Together we can find commonsense harm reduction measures to reduce gun deaths and injuries.

We commit to honor Wisconsin victims and the losses of their families and communities through recognition of Gun Violence Awareness Day 2023 and through our ongoing efforts to reduce future gun violence.

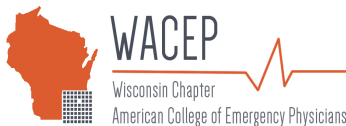
1. FACS; Rivara, et al. Proceedings from the Second Medical Summit on Firearm Injury Prevention, 2022: Creating a Sustainable Healthcare Coalition to Advance a Multidisciplinary Public Health Approach. *Journal of the American College of Surgeons* ();10.1097

2. Stiles M, Hargarten S, Lauby M, Peterson N, Bigham J. Preventing firearm-related death and injury: a call to action for Wisconsin health systems and the Wisconsin Hospital Association. WMJ. 2022;74-76.

Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics
Wisconsin Chapter of the American Academy of Family Medicine
Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Emergency Medicine
Wisconsin Chapter of the American College of Physicians
Wisconsin Medical Society
Wisconsin Psychiatric Association
Wisconsin Public Health Association
Wisconsin Association of Local Health Departments and Boards
Wisconsin Association of School Nurses
Wisconsin Section of the American College of Obstetrician and Gynecologists
Oncology Nursing Society, Southeastern Wisconsin Chapter
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