The National Physicians Alliance was founded in 2005 to strengthen physicians’ civic engagement on behalf of patients and to build community within the profession. United across medical specialties, we believe every person has the right to quality, affordable health care and that America should provide equal opportunity for health.

Focused on the core values that called us to the profession, we advocate for a health care system that puts patients first.

To help restore trust and integrity in medicine, the NPA accepts no funding from pharmaceutical or medical device companies.
The Gun Violence Epidemic

30,500 lives lost each year:

- 11,000 homicides, 19,000 suicides
- 500 unintentional shootings

75,000 gun-related injuries

62 mass shootings in the last 30 years

Since 1968, 1.3 million Americans have died from gun violence. That is more than from ALL wars in American history combined

Since Newtown, over 3,700 American lives lost (equivalent of 140 more Newtown shootings)
A national study of people who died from accidental shootings showed they were more than three times as likely to have had a gun in their home compared with the control group.

Dangers of Guns in the Home: Unintentional Shooting

Compared to states with the fewest guns, states with the most guns have, on average, nine times the rate of unintentional firearm deaths

Dangers of Guns in the Home: Unintentional Shooting

Firearm injuries are the cause of death of 18 children and young adults each day in the U.S.

Eighty-nine percent of unintentional shooting deaths of children occur in the home and most of these deaths occur when children are playing with a loaded gun in their parents’ absence.

Guohua Li et al., *Factors Associated with the Intent of Firearm-Related Injuries in Pediatric Trauma Patients*, 150 ARCHIVES OF PEDIATRIC & ADOLESCENT MED. 1160, 1162(1996).
Dangers of Guns in the Home: Unintentional Shooting

Approximately one of three handguns is kept loaded and unlocked and most children know where their parents keep their guns.

In one 2006 study, 73 percent of children under age 10 reported knowing the location of their parents’ firearms, and 36 percent admitted they had handled the weapons.


Dangers of Guns in the Home: Suicide

One study found that homes in which a suicide had occurred were 4.8 times more likely to contain a firearm than similarly situated neighborhood homes that had not experienced a suicide.

Arthur L. Kellermann et al., *Suicide in the Home in Relation to Gun Ownership*, 327 NEW ENG. J.MED. 467 (1992)
A series of studies found that average suicide rates are higher in states with higher rates of household firearm ownership.

Dangers of Guns in the Home: Suicide

One study found that **MORE THAN 90 PERCENT** of all suicide attempts with a firearm, if serious enough to require hospital treatment, result in death. Suicide attempts by jumping, by comparison, carry a 34 percent fatality rate; suicide attempts by drug poisoning carry a two percent fatality rate.

More than 75 percent of guns used by youth in suicide attempts and unintentional injuries were kept in the home of the victim, a relative, or a friend.

Dangers of Guns in the Home: Domestic Violence

Women in the United States are murdered by intimate partners or former partners approximately nine times more often than they are murdered by strangers.

Jacquelyn C. Campbell et al., Intimate Partner Homicide: Review and Implications of Research and Policy, 8 TRAUMA, VIOLENCE, & ABUSE 246, 247 (2007)
Dangers of Guns in the Home: Domestic Violence

An abusive partner’s access to a firearm increases the risk of homicide eightfold for women in physically abusive relationships.

Domestic violence incidents involving firearms are TWELVE TIMES MORE LIKELY TO RESULT IN A DEATH compared to non-firearm abuse incidents.


Doctors Can Make a Difference

A study on firearm storage counseling by family physicians found that 64 PERCENT of participants who received verbal firearm storage safety counseling from their doctors improved their gun safety by the end of the study.

Florida Physicians Gag Law

In 2011, Florida Representative Jason Brodeur introduced an NRA-sponsored bill that would have made health care practitioners who inquired into gun ownership guilty of a felony.

The bill contained penalties of up to five years in prison and a fine up to $5 million.
The bill was watered down significantly and was ultimately signed by Governor Rick Scott and went into effect on June 2, 2011.
Florida Physicians Gag Law

The new code section, Fla. Stat. § 790.338, provides that a health care practitioner or facility:

1. May not enter any disclosed information concerning firearm ownership into a patient's medical record if the practitioner knows that it is not relevant to medical care or safety, or the safety of others;
2. Should refrain from making a written inquiry or asking questions concerning the ownership of a firearm or ammunition by the patient or a family member, or concerning firearms in the home;

**Exception**: An emergency medical technician or paramedic who believes the information is necessary to treat a patient during the course and scope of a medical emergency or that the presence or possession of a firearm would pose an imminent danger or threat to the patient or others.
Florida Physicians Gag Law

3. May not discriminate against a patient based solely upon firearms ownership;

4. Should refrain from unnecessarily harassing a patient about firearm ownership during an examination.

In addition, an insurer may not deny coverage, increase any premium, or otherwise discriminate against any insured or applicant on the basis of firearm or ammunition ownership.
Violation of the new provisions can result in disciplinary actions which can include suspension or permanent revocation of a license and a fine of up to $10,000 for each offense.
Legal Challenge to Florida Gag Law

One month after the bill was signed into law, plaintiffs challenged the law in the U.S. District Court for the Southern District of Florida, Miami Division.

Plaintiffs are six individual physicians and the Florida chapters of the

- American Academy of Pediatrics
- American Academy of Family Physicians
- American College of Physicians

The Law Center filed an amicus brief in support of plaintiffs.
The District Court granted a permanent injunction against the law finding that it violated the First Amendment and limits “the free flow of truthful, non-misleading information within the doctor-patient relationship.

The ruling has been appealed to the Eleventh Circuit Court of appeals.
Legal Challenge to Florida Gag Law

Although the NRA claimed the law was necessary to protect Second Amendment rights, the court stated:

“A practitioner who counsels a patient on firearm safety, even when entirely irrelevant to medical care or safety, does not affect nor interfere with the patient’s right to continue to own, possess, or use firearms.”
Related State Legislation

NINE OTHER STATES have introduced physician gag rule legislation in various forms since 2011.

Most bills have died. Montana and Minnesota are the only state to enact related legislation.
Federal Law

Affordable Care Act

- Disclosure of information
- Storage of information
- Use of information by insurance providers

42 U.S.C. § 300gg-17

President Obama Executive Actions

No. 16: Requests about firearms are *not* prohibited

No. 17: Reporting threats of violence is *not* prohibited
How We Can Work Together

• Amicus brief support
• Support or oppose legislation
• Provide technical assistance

Our website is also a great resource:

www.smartgunlaws.org

Connect through Twitter: @smartgunlaws
- Follow us, and we will share your gun violence prevention messages
- Share & retweet our content, share our resources with your following with #FridayFollow
More NPA Resources

www.NPAlliance.org/gun-violence-prevention

- Policy Statement one-pagers
- Sign-up for action alerts
- Policy discussion webinars
- Academic literature on public health approach to Gun violence prevention
- And more....
Physician Voices Make a Difference

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