



The senseless deaths of 28 people in Newtown could have happened in any community in our state – or any other state. It is now time to address the issues that could prevent a tragedy from being visited upon another community in Connecticut or elsewhere.

While the reasons for what happened on December 14 in Newtown may never be fully known or understood, certain circumstances are evident and must be addressed.

Violence, especially gun violence, has become a public health crisis in the United States. As physicians, we support a multi-pronged approach to improving the safety and welfare of our communities. The Connecticut State Medical Society will work to advance the following principles with whatever organizations and in whatever forums necessary to improve public health:

- ✓ Expansion of community education and social programs that foster play among children and prevent exposure to violent games and movies.
- ✓ Reduction of opportunities for young people to become isolated by reversing the shredding of safety-net services that identify and direct them to available programs such as afterschool and community activities, therapy or occupational training.
- ✓ Provide affordable and accessible options for families of children with significant impairments so that they can proactively get the medical care their sons and daughters need, rather than wait for them to break the law and be funneled into the juvenile justice system.
- ✓ Full mental health parity must not only be the law of the land: cuts to mental health services must be viewed as a threat to public health that put our children and those around them at risk. We unequivocally reject these cuts.
- ✓ Our members support the U.S. Constitution. However, as physicians we know that the presence of firearms in a home increases the probability of injury and death significantly. We have seen in our cities and towns, the increased prevalence of homicide and suicide directly attributed to the presence of a gun. We will continue efforts to educate our patients on the safety risks of having weapons in the home, and support programs that educate the public about gun safety.
- ✓ We support the return of a strong assault-weapons ban, the elimination of the sale of automatic and many semi-automatic weapons and restriction on the size of magazines and numbers of rounds held, in concert with established American Medical Association Policy.
- ✓ State emergency planning officials must include mental health/counseling in their disaster planning response so that necessary services are provided in a coordinated, and not patchwork, manner.

There is no single “fix” to the problem of violence. In fact, there can never be a complete elimination of violence. Passing laws alone does not ensure safety. But we can and we must do better for our communities. The physicians of the Connecticut State Medical Society will do our part to bring about meaningful change wherever we can share our expertise.