

May 2, 2018

Secretary Alex M. Azar II  
U.S. Department of Health & Human Services  
200 Independence Avenue, S.W.  
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Azar:

As organizations representing the nation's pediatricians and other providers who care for children, we write to respectfully request a meeting with you to discuss the opportunity to address current research gaps in firearm-related morbidity and mortality, and prevention thereof.

The members of our organizations work on a daily basis to improve the lives of children by conducting pediatric research, treating children in clinical and other settings, providing anticipatory guidance to support child development and safety, and educating the next generation of pediatricians and child health providers. We count among our members preeminent experts and researchers in a wide variety of fields, from clinical care to basic science to public health. This includes experts who have years of expertise in violence prevention as it pertains to children and adolescents.

Perhaps the most important test of any society is how well it nurtures and protects its youngest members. Firearm-related deaths are among the top three causes of death among youth in the United States. Gunfire kills about 1,300 U.S. children and teenagers each year and injures nearly 5,800 more. A concerted national effort is required to change this frightening statistic. A key component of this effort must be to ensure that we pursue science-driven solutions to keeping children safe from firearm-related death and injury.

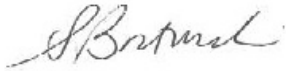
We are heartened by your comments on February 15, 2018 clarifying that the Dickey Amendment does not prohibit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from funding gun violence prevention research, comments which were referenced by Congress in its omnibus appropriations agreement. As you know, the Dickey Amendment was a 1996 amendment to a federal spending bill indicating that the CDC could not advocate for or promote gun control. This language created a chilling effect on public health research on gun violence prevention at the federal level. Despite the amendment sponsor's later statement that he never intended to undermine public health research, the practical effect has been just that. CDC has not funded research into important issues including: the best ways to prevent unintended firearm injuries and fatalities among children; the most effective methods to prevent firearm-related suicides; the measures that can best prevent the next shooting at a school or public place; and numerous other vital public health questions.

The impact of federal public health research in reducing deaths from threats such as car accidents, smoking, and Sudden Infant Death Syndrome has been well proven. Robust research on car accidents and subsequent legislation has helped save hundreds of thousands of lives through public health interventions including seat belts and other automobile safety features. We need to support public

health research on firearm injury and fatality prevention so that the same approach can help reduce firearm morbidity and mortality in our communities and ensure that CDC and the National Institutes of Health (NIH) are able to adequately fund research into this public health priority.

We stand ready to assist you in proceeding with this vital public health research and look forward to an opportunity to discuss this with you in greater detail. Ami Gadhia, JD (agadhia@aap.org) will be in touch shortly to schedule a meeting with a delegation comprised of a group of the signers below.

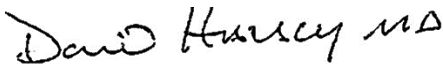
Sincerely,



Susan Bostwick, MD, MBA  
President, Academic Pediatric Association



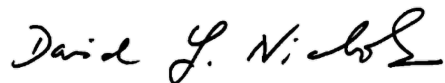
Karen Dineen Wagner, MD, PhD  
President, American Association of Child  
& Adolescent Psychiatry (AACAP)



David A. Halsey, MD  
President, American Association of  
Orthopaedic Surgeons (AAOS)



Colleen A. Kraft, MD, FAAP  
President, American Academy of  
Pediatrics



David Nichols, MD, MBA  
President and CEO, American Board  
of Pediatrics



Elena Fuentes-Afflick, MD, MPH  
President, American Pediatric  
Society



Henri R. Ford, MD, MHA  
President, American Pediatric Surgical  
Association



Amy Billett, MD  
President, American Society of  
Pediatric Hematology/Oncology



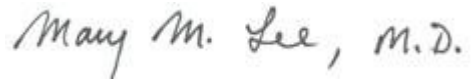
Michael Artman, MD  
President, Association of Medical School  
Pediatric Department Chairs



Javier Gonzalez del Rey, MD, MEd  
President, Association of Pediatric  
Program Directors



Debra Boyer, MD, MHPE  
Chair, Council of Pediatric Subspecialties



Mary M. Lee, MD  
President, Pediatric Endocrine Society



Paul Chung, MD, MS  
Chair, Pediatric Policy Council



Paul W. Spearman, MD, FPIDS  
President, Pediatric Infectious Diseases  
Society



Richard M. Schwend, MD  
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Deborah Christie, PhD  
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Diego Jaramillo, MD, MPH  
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Michelle A. Gill, MD, PhD  
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