

Testimony in SUPPORT of Senate Bill No. 1,
AN ACT CONCERNING THE HEALTH AND SAFETY OF CONNECTICUT
RESIDENTS

Dear Co-Chairs Senator Anwar and Representative McCarthy Vahey, Vice Chairs Senator Kushner, Senator Marx, and Representative Parker, Ranking Members Senator Somers and Representative Klarides-Ditria, and other distinguished members of the Public Health Committee,

My name is Sandra Carbonari, and I am a board certified pediatrician and member of the Executive Board of the Connecticut Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics (CTAAP) writing in support of Senate Bill 1, An Act Concerning the Health and Safety of Connecticut Residents, specifically Section 19. This section calls for a group of medical professionals to “develop or procure educational material concerning gun safety practices to be provided by primary care providers to patients who are eighteen years of age or older during the patient's appointment with such patient's primary care provider”.

Education is an important part of improving gun safety. However, as pediatricians we believe that this education should not be limited to those over 18 years of age being seen by their primary care provider.

Gun violence is a public health epidemic that is injuring and killing children at alarming rates. The American Academy of Pediatrics (AAP) has been involved for decades in advocacy efforts to address firearm violence as a public health issue and advance policies that keep children, families, and communities safe. Discussion of firearm safety is recommended in the Bright Futures guidelines beginning at the prenatal visit and including every well visit until 21 years of age.

Some alarming statistics:

- In 2020, firearm-related injuries became the [leading cause of death for US children and teens](#) aged 1-19.
- [About one third of American children live in homes with firearms](#), and of these households, 43% contain at least 1 unlocked firearm. Thirteen percent (13%) of households with guns contain at least 1 firearm that is unlocked and loaded or stored with ammunition.
- [Suicide attempts involving a firearm are more often fatal](#) (91%) compared with those involving drug overdoses (23%). Over [80% of child firearm suicides](#) involved a gun belonging to a family member.

- Like counseling on seat belt use or pool safety, counseling parents on firearm ownership and safe storage practices is important and [helps mitigate the risk of death and injury to children](#). There are controlled studies showing that individuals

who received physician counseling were more likely to report the adoption of 1 or more safe gun-storage practices.

The AAP has developed resources to provide this counseling and education concerning gun safety.

There is a Gun Safety Campaign Toolkit: <https://www.aap.org/en/news-room/campaigns-and-toolkits/gun-safety>.

There is a policy statement and a technical report, Firearm-Related Injuries and Deaths in Children and Youth: Injury Prevention and Harm Reduction
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/6/e2022060070/189686/Firearm-Related-Injuries-and-Deaths-in-Children?autologincheck=redirected> and
<https://publications.aap.org/pediatrics/article/150/6/e2022060071/189687/Firearm-Related-Injuries-and-Deaths-in-Children>

The website <https://www.healthychildren.org/> has many resources for parents .

We strongly believe that age appropriate material concerning gun safety practices should be available to primary care providers for all ages, not just those over 18 years of age. Including a member of the CTAAP in the group of medical professionals developing these materials would be extremely valuable as much of this work has been done by our colleagues.

The mission of the AAP is to attain optimal physical, mental, and social health and well-being for all infants, children, adolescents and young adults. Gun safety is an important part of this mission, and the members of our Connecticut chapter will continue to be strong advocates. We ask that a member of our chapter be included in the group developing or procuring educational material concerning gun safety practices, and that these materials be developed for all ages.