

February 8, 2023

Dear Chair Becker-Finn and members of the committee,

In June of 2022, leaders from Minnesota health care systems came together to declare gun violence a public health crisis and pledged to work to prevent the deaths of people of all ages and backgrounds. As part of our ongoing commitment to ending gun violence we urge legislators to utilize the 2023 legislative session to take meaningful policy actions to eliminate gun violence in our communities, including firearm safety and gun violence prevention.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, there were more than 45,222 firearm-related deaths in the United States in 2020, with roughly 24,292 of those deaths resulting from suicide. That same year, guns became the leading cause of death for children and teenagers. The 45,222 people that were lost to gun violence and gun-related suicide are not just numbers. They are our family members, our neighbors, our colleagues, and our fellow community members.

In Minnesota, in 2021, the number of Minnesotans dying from gun violence rose to its highest level in 20 years. Gun homicides have more than doubled between 2018-2021, and suicides account for nearly two-thirds of all gun deaths.

As health care providers, we have a unique and often heartbreaking first-hand look at the devastating effects gun violence has on our communities, including the dire consequences secondary trauma has on our employees. What may be most painful is knowing that gun violence and its impacts are preventable. This is an issue that touches every corner of our state. The time to act on gun violence is now.

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