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ATSPA Calls for Firearm Violence Prevention Across the Commonwealth

On June 25, 2024, Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy released a Surgeon General's advisory on firearm violence, declaring "firearm violence a public health crisis." ⁱ

The American Trauma Society, Pennsylvania Division (ATSPA) has promoted firearm violence prevention and safe firearm storage since the early 2000's, providing gun locks to families across the Commonwealth. In the last five years, more than 8,000 Pennsylvanians have died from gun violence – and tens of thousands are surviving a firearm violence-related injury.

The attempted assassination of former President Donald Trump, on July 13, 2024, at a rally in Butler, Pennsylvania, was the 19th mass shooting to occur, in Pennsylvania, in 2024, and resulted in the consequential death of an esteemed Pennsylvania firefighter and serious injury to two others in attendance. In addition, firearm violence is now the leading cause of death in children and adolescents. ⁱⁱ Now, more than ever, our work must continue.

Recently, the ATSPA partnered with CeaseFirePA Education Fund, the PA Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics, the Pennsylvania Trauma Systems Foundation and other medical organizations, in an educational event to promote the understanding of this crisis.

As the ATSPA partners with nearly 90 Pennsylvania trauma centers, hospitals, and EMS organizations across the Commonwealth, we stand with those physicians, nurses, first responders and other healthcare professionals who witness this devastation day after day.

The ATSPA grieves for those lost and supports those families who have been forced to endure the needless loss of a loved one. The ATSPA stands with those who are crying out, desperate for change.

We call for enlightened vision and demand bi-partisan partnership as we strive to end these senseless acts of violence.

As a state division of the National American Trauma Society, we at ATSPA stand firmly with their suggested measuresⁱⁱⁱ to reduce firearm violence:

- 1) Collaboration of medical, private, public and government groups, working together actively and urgently, toward the goal of eliminating preventable injury and death resulting from firearm violence
- 2) Public education on gun safety, including safe storage, collaborative training with law enforcement and sporting organizations
- 3) The protection of the rights of healthcare workers as they strive to counsel their patients on gun safety



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ⁱ Office, H. P. (2024, June 25). *U.S. Surgeon General Issues Advisory on the Public Health Crisis of Firearm Violence in the United States*. Retrieved from U.S. Department of Health and Human Services: <https://www.hhs.gov/about/news/2024/06/25/us-surgeon-general-issues-advisory-public-health-crisis-firearm-violence-united-states.html>

ⁱⁱ Wonder, C. (2024, April 26). *National Center for Health Statistics - Mortality Data on CDC WONDER*. Retrieved from Centers for Disease Control and Prevention: <https://wonder.cdc.gov/Deaths-by-Underlying-Cause.html>

ⁱⁱⁱ Society, T. A. (2022). *ATS Position Statement 2022-01 Firearm Violence*. Retrieved from American Trauma Society: https://cdn.ymaws.com/www.amtrauma.org/resource/resmgr/position_statements/ATS_Position_Statement_2022-.pdf