

Problem Statement

Deaths and injuries related to firearms in the United States has reached epidemic proportions and continues to rise.

Background

Approximately 40,000 people die in the U.S. and an estimated 100,000 people are injured from firearms annually. As most firearm injuries are intentional, there are opportunities for intervention and prevention utilizing a comprehensive public health to address this epidemic. In November, 2019 the NRA warned doctors to “stay in their lane” in response to an American College of Physician’s position statement on gun violence prevention. The response from physicians, nurses, and other healthcare professionals was unified and resolute that firearm injury and death prevention is “in our lane.”

Methods

Building on the momentum that #ThisIsOurLane generated, a local coalition of clinicians led by a family physician and a nurse started meeting in November, 2019. The coalition, Madison #ThisIsOurLane, is multidisciplinary and focuses on education and advocacy on issues related to gun injury prevention.

Outcomes

Coalition members have been involved in a number of educational and advocacy efforts that are highlighted below:

Education

1. Professional Development

- Organized professional development sessions at meetings
- Given multiple talks and “boot camps” to students and clinicians

2. Health Professional Students

- Participated in a summer research project focused on gun violence prevention
- Students have organized talks for fellow students and participated in national meeting presentations on the topic

3. Clinician Outreach

- Revising existing EMR templates that relate to gun safety
- Revising processes to communicate safe storage resources to clinical staff and faculty

Advocacy/Community Engagement

1. Led the 2019 WAFP Advocacy Day focused on Gun Injury Prevention
2. Participated in press conferences and legislative testimony on the topic
3. Written op-eds
5. Are members of the Wisconsin Coalition for Gun Safety
6. Partnered with organizations focused on suicide prevention and violence interrupter groups

Submitted by:

Melissa Stiles, MD

Professor

University of WI Department of Family Medicine and Community Health

Recipient of the 2020 STFM Advocate Award