Gun violence – including mass shootings, homicides, suicides, and domestic partner violence – victimizes more than 45,000 individuals and their loved ones per year, tears families and communities apart, and has a disproportionate effect on communities of color. Emergency physicians, surgeons, pediatricians, psychologists, and other clinicians agree: gun violence is a public health crisis.

Despite this crisis, the 1996 “Dickey Amendment” had a chilling effect on the provision of CDC and NIH funds to study gun violence. Under Democratic leadership, Congress appropriated $25 million annually in FY2020-2022 to study firearm-related injuries and deaths and the effectiveness of interventions. Among the studies funded by NIH and CDC are:

- Firearm Practices and Suicide Risk in U.S. Army Soldiers & Veterans
  - Jackson Foundation for the Advancement of Military Medicine

- Firearm Involvement in Adolescent Children of Formerly Incarcerated Parents
  - Northwestern University

- Preventing Violent Firearm Use Among Urban Youth Seeking Emergency Department Care
  - University of Michigan

Even with this funding, CDC and NIH receive many more proposals than they can fund. Increasing investment in gun violence research could support multi-year studies on interventions like:

- The optimal way to craft ERPO laws to keep guns out of the hands of dangerous individuals
- How to address social determinants of health and inequities that lead to greater risk of injury and death from firearms
- Preventing school shootings and other mass shootings;
- Protecting women and children from violent domestic partners.

Nearly 300 medical, public health, and research organizations have called on Congress to match President Biden's budget request by appropriating $35 million to the CDC and $25 million to NIH for gun violence prevention research. Expanded resources would allow for further study of this critical public health issue.

For additional information, contact: Zach Laris, American Academy of Pediatrics, zlaris@aap.org