

POSITION STATEMENT

on

FIREARM SAFETY

Background

Recent tragedies related to gun violence have demonstrated a need to assess public policy related to firearms. To that end, there is an emerging consensus that while most gun owners are responsible and law-abiding, additional public education on gun safety and injury prevention is desirable.

Position Statement

Due to the traumatic injuries and deaths that are caused by firearms, which threaten the public health and safety of many Americans, the American Association of Neurological Surgeons (AANS) and Congress of Neurological Surgeons (CNS) support the development and promotion of public education programs designed to prevent firearm injuries by teaching and encouraging proper firearm use, safety, storage, and ownership responsibility. In addition, individuals with behavioral medical conditions should have access to appropriate mental health services and should not have access to firearms.

Rationale

- Traumatic brain injury (TBI) is a leading cause of death and disability in the United States. Approximately 53,000 persons die from TBI-related injuries annually, and of these TBI deaths, 34.8 percent were firearm related deaths.¹
- Among all firearm-related TBI deaths, 74.2 percent were suicides, 22.2 percent were homicide and 3.6 percent were unintentional, of unknown intentionality, or related to legal intervention.¹
- Firearm homicide was the number two cause of death for Americans aged 15 to 24 and the number three cause of death for Americans 25 to 34 in 2010. Overall, firearm homicide is the number 5 leading cause of death of all Americans in 2010.²
- The last time it was measured, in 2005, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) estimated firearms-related deaths cost \$37 billion to the health care system and the economy. The costs for those who survived gun violence were estimated at \$3.7 billion that year.³

¹ CDC, Surveillance for Traumatic Brain Injury – Related Deaths -- United States 1997-2007. <http://1.usa.gov/10Lbco0> (Accessed on 5/3/13).

² CDC: 10 Leading Causes of Injury Deaths by Age Group Highlighting Violence-Related Injury Deaths, United States – 2010. <http://1.usa.gov/10xbOX2> (Accessed on 5/3/13).

³ CDC, Leading Causes of Death Reports, National and Regional, 1999-2010. <http://1.usa.gov/YiKLIB> (Accessed on 5/3/13).