

The Honorable Tim Walz
Governor of Minnesota
120 State Capitol
St. Paul, MN 55155

Dear Gov. Walz,

On behalf of the undersigned medical organizations, we respectfully urge you to call a special legislative session to pass legislation to address the devastating death and injuries from firearms and gun violence. Specifically, we urge lawmakers to pass common sense firearm violence prevention policies that include the following: (1) a statewide ban on assault weapons, (2) a statewide ban on high-capacity magazines, (3) a statewide requirement that firearms be stored locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition, and (4) removal of the current prohibition on local municipalities enacting stricter firearm regulations than the state.

Firearm-related death and injury is a public health crisis. The leading cause of death for children in the state of Minnesota is not cancer, car crashes, or overdose – it is firearms. The policies outlined above are proven to reduce the rate of death and injury by firearm. Studies published by the *Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA)* found that states with bans on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines experienced a lower rate of mass shooting fatalities compared to states without such bans. Additional studies in *JAMA Pediatrics* and by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) have found that safe storage requirements – keeping firearms locked, unloaded, and separate from ammunition – can reduce the risk of unintentional shootings and suicide among children and adolescents. In states with safe storage laws, research from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) shows a 23% reduction in unintentional firearm deaths among children. In addition to protecting children and adolescents, safe storage laws can also help to reduce theft and the illegal use of firearms. Finally, state preemption laws prevent local officials from protecting their communities from gun violence.

Physicians and other healthcare professionals witness firsthand the devastating impact of firearm violence on individuals, families, and communities. We respectfully call on the state's lawmakers to enact evidence-based firearm policies to save lives and protect the well-being of all Minnesotans, but especially those who are most vulnerable – children and adolescents.

Sincerely,



Kimberly Tjaden, MD, MPH
Chair, Board of Trustees, Minnesota Medical Association



Katie Smentek, MD, FAAP
President, Minnesota Chapter of the American Academy of Pediatrics



Jamie Conniff, MD, MPH
President, Minnesota Academy of Family Physicians



Tseganesh Selameab, MD, FACP
Governor, American College of Physicians, Minnesota Chapter



Erin Stevens, MD
Legislative Chair, ACOG-MN

CC Sen. Erin Murphy
Rep. Lisa Demuth
Sen. Mark Johnson
Rep. Jamie Long
Sen. Ron Latz

Rep. Paul Novotny
Sen. Warren Limmer
Rep. Kelly Moller