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March 7, 2018

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
S-312, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education and
Related Agencies
U.S. Senate
S-312, The Capitol
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

As you finish work on the Fiscal Year 2018 Omnibus Appropriations bill, I urge you, on behalf of the physician and medical student members of the American Medical Association (AMA), to include specific funding for gun violence research within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. Gun violence in America today is clearly a public health crisis that needs comprehensive, multi-faceted public health solutions. A key element of an enhanced public health response to preventing gun violence is improved surveillance and epidemiological research studying the causes of gun violence, the risk factors associated with gun violence, and interventions that might work.

Last month's massacre at Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Florida was the 30th mass shooting (e.g., a shooting in which four or more people are killed and injured) of 2018. It was also the 18th time a gun has been fired at an American school this year and the sixth such shooting with injuries and deaths. With the addition of Parkland, three of the 10 deadliest mass shootings in modern U.S. history have occurred in the past six months. The frequency of mass shootings—four or more victims—has tripled since 2011. In addition to the direct impact of gun violence on individuals and their families and friends, gun-related violence has broader societal and economic impacts on medical and mental health care systems, communities, workplaces, schools, police, and the criminal justice system.

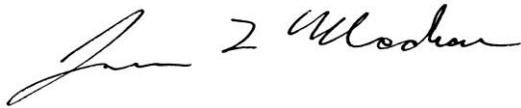
Public health is focused on preventing disease and injury in communities and populations on a larger scale and promoting public safety. Addressing the high number of gun-related homicides, suicides, and injuries—many of which are preventable—is as much of a public health issue as is addressing tobacco use, underage drinking, alcohol and substance use disorders, vaccinations, safety belt use, pool safety, and helmet use for bicyclists and motorcyclists. Determining the root causes—through federally-funded research—of this epidemic is critical to solving it. The

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AMA believes a specific funding allocation for federal gun violence research, including for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, is a necessary first step to reversing the course on gun violence.

Solving this crisis will require us all to work together, and the AMA stands ready to help in any way we can.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "James L. Madara". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large initial "J" and a stylized "M".

James L. Madara, MD