

# MAFP: Resolved to Combat Gun Violence and Crime in Michigan



At the 2014 Annual Meeting of Members, held July 18 in Lansing, the membership of the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) adopted two resolutions regarding firearms-related policies and prevention of gun violence.

MAFP Board President **Dr. Tina L. Tanner** (*Montague*), said “We realize the right to own guns is a Constitutional right, however the number of deaths related to gun violence and crime are a public health issue that the Academy is committed to becoming more vocal to address.”

MAFP accepts and defends the second amendment to the Constitution, but hopes

these resolutions will bring attention to the number of unnecessary deaths we face here in Michigan, she said.

Dr. Tanner said, “We want to focus on where we can affect change.”

As many have seen in recent news stories, Michigan has four of the top 10 cities for gun violence in the United States, some of which are known on a worldwide scale. As Family Physicians, many of our members have seen the tragedy and heartbreak that comes from gun-related violent crimes, accidental death, and suicide.

According to the National Center for

Injury Prevention and Control, guns are associated with approximately 30,000 deaths per year (2012), more than half of which are suicides.

In Michigan, the number is 1,211 gun-related deaths in a single year (2012), representing nearly 80 percent of all homicides and nearly 50 percent of suicides according to the Michigan Department of Community Health. More than half of these deaths are suicides.

MAFP member **Dr. Jerry Walden** (*Ann Arbor*), feels very strongly about the issue because of the number of gun-related incidents he has seen in his years of

# Resolutions 3 & 4 – Adopted July 18, 2014

practice, which is why he helped to write and promote resolutions on the topic [see sidebar].

“Cities in Michigan have more gun violence than entire countries,” he said, “and no other industrialized country has anywhere near these numbers.”

Dr. Walden associates the excess of gun violence to an excess of unregulated firearms. There is no national registry or background check in 40 percent of sales nationwide, he said, and local concealed weapons permits are on the rise.

Because of this, more than 200 locally-based physicians have joined in the efforts of the Physicians for the Prevention of Gun Violence (PPGV), said Dr. Walden, and more continue to join (for more about PPGV, visit [ppgv.org](http://ppgv.org)). Over the past two years, PPGV has partnered with the Washtenaw County Medical Society and co-written resolutions for the Michigan State Medical Society. They also bring in experts from across the country to address physicians and the public on gun violence and crime-related injury.

“Physicians have a powerful voice in public health,” Dr. Walden said. “We owe it to the men, women, and children that we serve to take a leadership position on this issue and protect our right to communicate with our patients.”

Florida’s gag law (prohibiting asking about guns and safety) could happen here, he said, because 10 other states have taken action and/or are considering a similar restriction.

The resolutions adopted at the 2014 meeting represent the desire of Family Physicians to stand alongside other medical organizations and associations who are working to address gun violence and firearm-related crime in our state. To learn more about this effort and become involved in MAFP advocacy efforts, contact our office at [info@mafpa.com](mailto:info@mafpa.com) or 517.347.0098.

*Note: The right to own and bear arms is a personal decision, and we-at-the-Academy support the Constitution. The scope of this article does not affect gun ownership.*

## Resolution No. 3 – Aligning American Academy of Family Physicians (AAFP) Firearms-Related Policies with Other National Medical Organizations

RESOLVED: that the Michigan Academy of Family Physicians (MAFP) reaffirm its policy on gun violence in alignment with the AAFP policy; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP ask AAFP to advocate for consumer product regulations that make safe gun storage a priority; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP ask AAFP to advocate for child firearm and ammunition access prevention laws such that there would be criminal penalties for gun owners who are not responsible in the way that they store their firearms or ammunition; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP ask AAFP to discuss with the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services the ability to establish national programs to support gun safety training and counseling programs among physicians and other medical professionals; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP ask AAFP to advocate for repeal of sec 2717(c) of the ACA that bans health insurances in the health exchanges from collecting data about firearms in homes.

## Resolution No. 4 – Prevention of Gun Violence

RESOLVED: that MAFP take a leadership role as a voice protecting our State’s citizens by actively supporting firearm legislation and enforcement in accordance with MAFP/AAFP policy; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP seek out legislators actively working on firearm safety legislation to partner with; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP actively opposes any legislation that would allow concealed weapons to be carried in to self-designated ‘gun free’ zones, including hospitals and healthcare facilities; and be it further

RESOLVED: that MAFP encourage the inclusion of presentations promoting firearm safety and prevention of gun violence in national, state, and local continuing medical education programs as physicians look for more evidenced based strategies on how to discuss firearm safety and preventable violence with their patients.

*Note: Resolutions 3 & 4 authored by MAFP members Jerry Walden, MD, FAFPA (Ann Arbor) and Anne Kittendorf, MD, FAFPA (Dexter)*