



**Association of  
American Medical Colleges**  
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**David J. Skorton, MD**  
President and Chief Executive Officer

October 1, 2019

The Honorable Anna Eshoo  
Chair  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
Subcommittee on Health  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Michael Burgess, M.D.  
Ranking Member  
Committee on Energy & Commerce  
Subcommittee on Health  
U.S. House of Representatives  
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairwoman Eshoo and Dr. Burgess:

On behalf of the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC), I write to thank the Subcommittee for convening the Oct. 3 field hearing, “A Public Health Crisis: The Gun Violence Epidemic in America.” The AAMC is a not-for-profit association dedicated to transforming health care through innovative medical education, cutting-edge patient care, and groundbreaking medical research. Its members are all 154 accredited U.S. medical schools; nearly 400 major teaching hospitals and health systems; and more than 80 academic societies.

As I wrote in [USA Today](#) last month, with an average of 100 deaths by firearms each day in the U.S. as a result of suicide, interpersonal violence, unintentional injuries, and mass shootings, we must pursue comprehensive strategies to prevent these avoidable tragedies in our communities nationwide. Like any public health crisis, a meaningful response will require engagement from multiple sectors, including the health care community and policymakers.

As I suspect you will hear from at least two of the witnesses at the hearing, physicians and health professionals at academic medical centers and other Level I trauma centers are on the front lines of treating both the physical and the emotional traumas that result from gun violence. They also can play a role in preventing injury and death through violence prevention programs, screenings, and lethal means counseling.

But we cannot expect our health care providers to solve this problem on their own – we must equip them and their communities with the tools they need to reduce these preventable deaths. Lawmakers can play an important role by advancing public policy solutions that help promote gun safety. For example, dedicated funding for firearm morbidity and mortality research by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, funding hospital-based violence prevention programs, implementing background checks, and promoting meaningful extreme risk protection orders that prevent at-risk individuals from harming themselves or others, are important steps that Congress can take to enhance everyone’s safety and help health professionals better serve their communities. To that end, over the last two weeks, nearly 5,000 medical students, residents,

faculty, researchers, and others in the academic medicine community have signed a petition urging lawmakers to treat gun violence like the public health crisis that it is.

I firmly believe we can and must implement, with urgency, solutions to help advance safety while respecting the rights of responsible firearm owners. Thank you for your attention to this important issue.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "David J. Skorton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "David" and last name "Skorton" clearly legible.

David J. Skorton, MD  
President and CEO