

October 18, 2019

The Honorable Richard Shelby
Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patrick Leahy
Vice Chairman
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Roy Blunt
Chairman
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Patty Murray
Ranking Member
Subcommittee on Labor, Health and
Human Services, Education,
and Related Agencies
Committee on Appropriations
United States Senate
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Chairman Shelby, Vice Chairman Leahy, Chairman Blunt and Ranking Member Murray:

On behalf of our nearly 5,000 member hospitals, health systems and other health care organizations, our clinician partners – including more than 270,000 affiliated physicians, 2 million nurses and other caregivers – and the 43,000 health care leaders who belong to our professional membership groups, the American Hospital Association (AHA) writes in support of federal funding for research and education to reduce violence in communities.

Violence – in its many forms – is a major public health challenge. America's hospitals and health systems provide critical and lifesaving services to victims of violence and help survivors, their families, and their communities deal with the ensuing physical and psychological traumas caused by violence.

The AHA is committed to helping our members prevent and reduce violence. We have established the [Hospitals Against Violence Initiative](#) specifically focused on combatting violence in all its forms. Through this initiative, we have developed tools and resources for the hospital field, including programs and other efforts to help combat violence within hospital facilities, as well as in the communities served by the hospital.



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Hospitals' efforts to examine and curb violence would be bolstered by federal initiatives to research this critical issue. The AHA believes all policy should be evidence-based and employ strategies that are proven to work. However, due to current restrictions on federal funding, there is little scientific data available to inform sound federal policy to stem gun violence. The AHA supports focused funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Institutes of Health to study gun violence. The AHA supports research for topics, including hospital-based violence intervention programs, suicide prevention, community engagement and collaboration, as well as preparedness, including training, drills and response protocols.

As cornerstones in their communities, hospital and health system leaders have the unique opportunity to lead initiatives to reduce the risk of violence and advocate for advancing safe, healthy communities. We stand ready to work with Congress to find ways to enhance hospitals' ability to address violence in their communities.

Sincerely,

/s/

Thomas P. Nickels
Executive Vice President