

Firearm Safety: Consolidated Policies
Approved by the CMS BOD: 1-18-19

Why the board is having this discussion: The board of directors discussed a Central Line proposal to create new CMS policy on firearms during the September and November 2018 meetings. The most recent discussion included a crosswalk review of existing policy, the proposed policy and current law. After further deliberation the board opted to combine existing CMS policy only into a new, succinct, overarching proposal, rather than adopting the proposed Central Line proposal. Staff was directed to craft a consolidated policy, which is detailed below.

What the board will be voting on:

1. *Approval of consolidated, existing CMS policy on firearm safety into one, overarching policy proposal.*

Firearm safety

Colorado Medical Society recognizes and calls for action on firearm safety in the following areas:

- **Public health crisis**
 - CMS recognizes firearm violence as a public health crisis. (325.982)
 - Public health expertise should be utilized and supported by federal and state research to study firearm injuries and deaths. This includes increased funding for and the use of state and national firearm injury databases, including the expansion of the National Violent Death Reporting System to all 50 states and U.S. territories, to inform state and federal health policy. (325.973)
- **Regulation of firearms and firearm crimes**
 - CMS supports the enactment of reasonable laws that seek to regulate the sale and distribution of firearms in order to protect public health and safety. (325.982)
 - CMS supports enforcement of existing firearm safety and firearm control laws. (325.982)
 - CMS supports universal background checks at purchase. (325.975)
 - CMS supports legislative efforts that specifically penalize those who commit crimes with firearms. (325.982)
- **Mental health**
 - CMS supports initiatives to enhance access to mental and cognitive health care, with greater focus on the diagnosis and management of mental illness and concurrent substance abuse disorders. (325.973)
 - CMS supports the development and use of standardized approaches to mental health assessment for potential violent behavior. (325.973)
 - CMS supports strengthening mental health checks at the time of purchase of a firearm. (325.975)

- **Education and awareness**

- CMS encourages physicians to include inquiry of gun ownership and subsequent discussion of gun safety as an element of their practice, as appropriate. (325.974)
- CMS supports the rights of physicians to have free and open communication with their patients regarding firearm safety. (325.973)
- CMS encourages physicians to consider this issue every time an opportunity presents itself to educate patients about firearm safety. (325.982)
- CMS encourages physicians to access evidence-based data regarding firearm safety to educate and counsel patients about firearm safety. (325.973)
- CMS supports and encourages physicians to educate patients about the importance of using gun locks in their homes. (325.973)
- CMS supports educational efforts designed to increase awareness, especially among children, about the dangers of firearms and to reduce firearm violence in our society. (325.982)
- CMS encourages physicians to become involved in local firearm safety classes as a means of promoting injury prevention and the public health. (325.973)
- CMS encourages awareness among physicians and school faculty about traits that may indicate an individual could be capable of violence. Although these individuals may never display violent behavior, they still may benefit from professional help. CMS also encourages physicians to collaborate with school officials in developing programs to achieve zero tolerance toward school violence. (325.982)
- CMS encourages local projects to facilitate the low-cost distribution of gun locks in homes. (325.973)

Background

Existing CMS policy on firearm safety is spread across four policies. While each is unique, some address overlapping issues.