



Colorado Medical Society

"Advocating excellence in the profession of medicine"

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Colorado Medical Society Supports Hickenlooper Response to Gun Violence

The Colorado Medical Society board of directors voted unanimously today to support Governor John Hickenlooper's funding plan to address gun violence. The Governor's plan, "Strengthening Colorado's Mental Health System: A Plan to Safeguard All Coloradans" was released in December.

The following statement is attributable to Jan Kief, MD, CMS President.

"We are physicians, not law enforcement experts, but we do know that firearm safety is a public health failing. We also know that Governor Hickenlooper's approach is thoughtful, sound, and evidence-based. This is why, today, the Colorado Medical Society board of directors voted unanimously to support his plan to expand access to behavioral health care services in Colorado."

"It is common sense to expand our capacity to care for and intervene with the appalling unmet needs of patients with largely undiagnosed and untreated mental illness. It is and has been a travesty that some of our state's largest mental health facilities are our prisons and county jails. It is a comparable travesty that it requires the horrors of Columbine, Aurora, Virginia Tech, Tucson, and Newtown to generate the political will to make this crucial investment in the public's health. We applaud Governor Hickenlooper for stepping up."

"While it is clinically difficult if not impossible for physicians and other mental health experts to consistently anticipate violent behavior, it is not difficult to reduce that risk by expanding our mental health system capacity, especially in terms of caregivers and support systems, and especially for our children and adolescents."

"Gun ownership per se is not the risk—it is illegal or irresponsible gun use, and the irresponsible sale and distribution of firearms to those who lack the competency and maturity to own any kind of loaded weapon. But that aspect is problematic, a symptom, unless we take care of those who by no choice of their own are burdened with treatable mental disorders."

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The Colorado Medical Society is a nonprofit organization whose membership comprises the majority of physicians, residents and medical students in Colorado. The Society's mission is to promote the science and art of medicine, the betterment of public health, and the welfare of Colorado physicians and their patients.

Official motion of the CMS Board of Directors attached for information