



March 22, 2024

Dear Members of the Senate Judiciary and Public Safety Committee,

On behalf of the more than 10,000 members of the Minnesota Medical Association (MMA), I am writing in strong support of SF 4312.

Firearm death and injury is a public health crisis, and it is particularly acute among children, adolescents, and young adults. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), death by firearm is now the leading cause of death for children in the U.S. surpassing motor vehicle deaths and those caused by other injuries in 2020. On average, 22 children and young adults die each day from firearm injuries. Homicide was the largest single category of firearm-related deaths among children and teens in recent years, followed by suicide and accidental discharges.

Many of these deaths could be prevented if firearms were stored properly. National studies have found that up to 32% of youth firearm deaths by firearm injury could be prevented if all household firearms were properly secured in accordance with standard firearm safety practices. Other national studies showed that, among children younger than 15 years, unintentional shooting deaths were reduced by 23% in states with safe storage laws. The data is clear. Unsafe storage of firearms increases the risk of firearm injury to children in the home.

Physicians treat patients who are harmed or killed by firearms every day in Minnesota. When more than 45,000 Americans die each year as a result of firearm violence – over 4,000 of whom were under the age of 19 – there's no way to describe it other than a public health crisis.

I urge members to support SF 4312.

Sincerely,

Laurel Ries, MD
President, Minnesota Medical Association