

July 24, 2020

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Majority Leader
U.S. Senate
317 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Chuck Schumer
Minority Leader
U.S. Senate
322 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Nancy Pelosi
Speaker
U.S. House of Representatives
1236 Longworth House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Kevin McCarthy
Minority Leader
U.S. House of Representatives
2468 Rayburn House Office Building
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Majority Leader McConnell, Speaker Pelosi, Minority Leader Schumer, and Minority Leader McCarthy:

The undersigned members of the [Injury and Violence Prevention Network](#) ask that, as you consider the next emergency supplemental funding package to continue our nation's response efforts to the COVID-19 pandemic, you recognize the need to respond to and prevent injuries and violence that are adversely and inequitably impacting communities across the country since the start of the outbreak.

Drastic societal changes in everyday life – including school and office closures, “shelter in place” orders, and “social distancing” measures – have collectively led to an increased incidence of injuries and violence and have taken a tremendous toll on protective factors like economic stability, educational opportunity, community connectedness, and mental health. News reports and qualitative data provided by injury and violence prevention experts illustrate the need to expand the reach of injury and violence prevention programs. Specific areas that have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 include:

- Suicide, particularly among our youth;
- Child abuse and maltreatment;
- Elderly falls;
- Adverse Childhood Experiences;
- Core State Violence and Injury Prevention Program (SVIPP);
- Domestic violence; and,
- Firearm-related injuries.

Our nation's youth and elderly are some of our most vulnerable populations during this time. The key to keeping our elderly safe and at home is to strengthen our targeted prevention programs administered through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's (CDC) National Center for Injury Prevention and Control (NCIPC), the federal government's lead agency working to advance an injury and violence prevention agenda.

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need to strengthen national investments in injury and violence prevention programs. We must ensure that all states and territories have ongoing infrastructure resources available for staff, resources, and readiness necessary to undertake critical public health actions to respond to and prevent injuries and violence, including: conducting timely public health surveillance of fatal and non-fatal injuries; collaborating with local, tribal, state, and national

partners; and implementing and evaluating strategies focused on health equity and based on the best available prevention science.

Efforts to address injury and violence prevention have long garnered bipartisan and bicameral support. Annually, injuries and violence cost the U.S. \$840 billion, which is equal to 85% of the annual federal deficit. Investments can be made today to ensure that the COVID-19 pandemic does not further exacerbate the socioeconomic toll of injuries and violence.

The IVPN calls on you to recognize and support ongoing efforts to address the increased prevalence of injuries and violence that are inequitably impacting communities across the country, particularly during the outbreak. Please feel free to contact Paul Bonta, Director of Government Relations for the Safe States Alliance, at paul.bonta@safestates.org should you have any questions or wish to discuss this further.

Sincerely,

American Academy of Pediatrics

American Foundation for Suicide Prevention

American Psychological Association

American Public Health Association

Association of Maternal & Child Health Programs

Association of State and Territorial Health Officials

American Trauma Society

Brain Injury Association of America

Child Injury Prevention Alliance

Children's Hospital Association

Committee for Children

KidsAndCars.org

Kids In Danger

Moore Center for the Prevention of Child Sexual Abuse at the

Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health

National Alliance to End Sexual Violence

National Association of State Emergency Medical Services Officials

National Association of State Head Injury Administrators

National Center on Domestic and Sexual Violence

National Prevention Science Coalition

National Safety Council

Prevent Child Abuse America

Prevention Institute

Safe Kids Worldwide

Safe States Alliance

Society for Public Health Education

Trust for America's Health

YMCA of the USA