

Gun injuries declared public health emergency

By Melissa Healy, Los Angeles Times

Seven medical specialty societies, the American Bar Association and the American Public Health Association on Monday joined forces to declare gun-related injuries, which annually kill an average of 32,000 Americans and harm nearly twice that number, “a public health crisis” that should be studied and solved “free of political influence or restriction.”

The professional societies jointly issued a “call to action,” and declared their collective backing for universal background checks, a ban on military-style assault weapons and large capacity magazines, more federal support for gun-injury research, and an end to laws that would punish physicians who discuss the safety of gun ownership with their patients.

They also called for better and more timely care for those with mental illness and substance abuse problems, and urged lawmakers not to stigmatize those patients or discourage them from seeking care in drafting laws to keep guns out of the hands of some.

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