

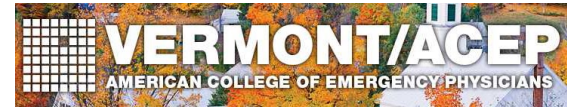


## Vermont Chapter

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American Academy of Pediatrics

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VERMONT ACADEMY OF  
FAMILY PHYSICIANS

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### **Vermont Physicians Mourn Senseless Violence in Uvalde, Texas School Shooting**

*Call on lawmakers to do more to address firearm violence in Vermont*

MONTPELIER- The members of the Vermont Medical Society (VMS), American Academy of Pediatrics Vermont Chapter (AAPVT), Vermont Academy of Family Physicians (VTAFP), Vermont Psychiatric Association (VPA) and Vermont Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians (VTACEP) are grieving, along with the rest of the nation, for the children and families of those who were killed in the senseless mass shooting that occurred yesterday at the Uvalde, Texas elementary school.

Every person in our nation has been impacted by the repeated assault of gun violence that has ripped apart communities and particularly targeted our public schools. Yesterday's shooting was the second-deadliest school shooting since 2012, when 26 children and adults were killed at Sandy Hook Elementary School and reportedly is the 30th shooting at a K-12 school in 2022.

These kinds of mass shootings are horrific, tragic, and preventable. No less tragic or preventable are the firearm injuries and deaths that occur daily in our country. Firearm death due to suicide, homicide, and unintentional shootings are all too common. The COVID-19 pandemic has exacerbated gun violence across the nation, with the firearm homicide rate in the United States reaching its highest level since 1994 and firearm suicide rates increasing as well.

VMS President and psychiatrist, Simha Ravven, M.D., said, "These horrifying violent episodes create a wave of sympathy, but when absolutely no actions are taken to prevent the next tragedy, people can feel a hopeless despair. There are simple actions we each can take to prioritize firearm safety, as well as larger steps our legislature and certainly Congress can be taking."

In Vermont, after we were spared from a plotted school shooting in 2018, there was forward movement to tighten up our gun violence prevention laws, which were known to be some of the most permissive in the nation. More must be done in order to protect and defend all of the citizens of our State, including our most vulnerable young people. We need to take concrete action to prevent firearm violence now, including implementing:

- **Waiting periods for firearm purchases:** to allow for “cooling off periods” and decrease the likelihood of impulsive acts of firearm violence;
- **Promotion of firearm safe storage within the home and provision of easily accessible offsite firearm storage:** to reduce the incidence of firearm injury and death in our communities.

“Too often, children in Vermont and across the country have had their lives profoundly impacted by firearm violence.” said Dr. Rebecca Bell, president of AAPVT. “Each one of us can make our communities safer by ensuring firearms are stored unloaded, locked up, with the ammunition locked and stored separately. Regular conversations about firearm access in homes should be part of our lives. This is not a matter of rights or control, but of safety.”

Vermont physicians recognize that there is a lot of work to be done to begin to curb the unacceptable level of firearm injury and death in our state. We continue to advocate for legislative, public health, and community efforts that reduce this devastating toll and make our communities safer.

It is understandable and expected that news of the recent shootings will be met with grief and despair. Please reach out to your medical practitioner if you or a family member is having difficulty coping. We are here to support you.

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