



## **NORTH CAROLINA PUBLIC HEALTH ASSOCIATION**

### **A RESOLUTION DECLARING FIREARM VIOLENCE A PUBLIC HEALTH CRISIS**

**WHEREAS**, firearm violence is a significant problem in the United States that affects people in all stages of life, from infants to the elderly; and, outside of the most tragic consequences of a fatal injury, is linked to many chronic diseases, obesity, substance abuse and other physical, reproductive, and mental health conditions; and

**WHEREAS**, the effects of firearm violence extend far beyond these casualties, as firearm violence shapes and reshapes the lives of those who experience the loss of a friend or loved one to gun violence or experience constant fear in their daily lives of when another unexpected firearm attack might occur; and

**WHEREAS**, firearm violence is a leading cause of premature death in the United States. More than 45,000 people are killed as result of gun related homicides and suicides and nearly 85,000 people are injured as result of accidents by firearms each year. As a longtime advocate for violence prevention policies, the American Public Health Association recognizes a comprehensive public health approach to addressing this growing crisis is necessary; and

**WHEREAS**, according to the CDC, violence also affects youth in the United States with homicide as one of the leading causes of death among adolescents between 15 and 24 years old; firearms passed motor vehicles as one of the leading causes of death in children in 2020; Nearly two-thirds of the 4,368 U.S. juveniles up to age 19 who were killed by firearms in 2020 were homicide victims; and

**WHEREAS**, in 2019, over 2,000 North Carolina residents died as a result of violence; the leading methods of violent death were firearm deaths totaling 1,397 (63.1%), an average of more than 4.0 people every day; Of suicide deaths in 2019, 57.3% were firearm deaths; and North Carolina had the 24<sup>th</sup> highest firearm death rate in the country in 2019; and

**WHEREAS**, the CDC has found that although there are a significant number of violent deaths in this country each year, there are many more individuals who survive violence and are left with permanent physical and emotional scars, and that this violence erodes communities by reducing productivity, decreasing property values, and disrupting social services; and

**WHEREAS**, the foregoing findings demonstrate the prevalence of violence and the detrimental effects that violence has on the citizens of this nation, state, and county requiring multidisciplinary solutions that address the root causes of violence; and

**WHEREAS**, protecting public safety in the communities we serve is one of our highest responsibilities as public health professionals and the North Carolina Public Health Association recognizes the need to provide positive and safe environments for children through community programs as well as mental health services; and

**WHEREAS**, it is in the best interest of the residents of this State that we support the existing collaborations to establish an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying social, economic, and systemic factors that promote firearm violence.

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED**, that the North Carolina Public Health Association hereby declares firearm violence a public health crisis and commits to prioritizing our existing networks and relationships with our, state and local partners, to establish an evidence-based public health response to address the underlying social, economic, and systemic factors that promote firearm violence.

**PASSED THIS TWELFTH DAY OF JANUARY TWO THOUSAND TWENTY-THREE**

  
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Rodney Jenkins  
President, North Carolina Public Health Association