
SENATE COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION

Senator Connie Leyva, Chair

2019 - 2020 Regular

Bill No:	AB 521	Hearing Date:	June 19, 2019
Author:	Berman		
Version:	May 30, 2019		
Urgency:	No	Fiscal:	Yes
Consultant:	Olgalilia Ramirez		

Subject: Physicians and surgeons: firearms: training.

NOTE: This bill has been referred to the Committees on Education and Public Safety. A “do pass” motion should include referral to the Committee on Public Safety.

SUMMARY

This bill requires, to the extent the Regents of the University of California adopt a resolution making this requirement applicable, the University of California Firearm Violence Research Center at UC Davis to develop multifaceted education and training programs for medical and mental health providers on the prevention of firearm-related injury and death.

BACKGROUND

Existing law:

- 1) Establishes UC, to be administered by the Board of Regents, with full powers of organization and government, subject only to such legislative control as may be necessary to insure the security of its funds and compliance with the terms of the endowments of the university and such competitive bidding procedures as may be made applicable to the university by statute for the letting of construction contracts, sales of real property, and purchasing of materials, goods, and services. (California Constitution Article IX, § 9)
- 2) Establishes legislative intent and requests that the UC Regents establish a center for research into firearm violence to address the following: the nature of firearm violence, including individual and societal determinants of risk for involvement in firearm violence, whether as a victim or perpetrator; individual, community and societal consequences of firearm violence; and prevention and treatment of firearm violence at the individual, community, and societal levels. (Penal Code § 14232.)

ANALYSIS

This bill:

- 1) Requires, to the extent the Regents of the UC adopt a resolution making this requirement applicable, the University of California Firearm Violence Research Center at UC Davis to develop multifaceted education and training programs for

- medical and mental health providers on the prevention of firearm-related injury and death.
- 2) Requires that the center develop education and training programs that address all of the following:
 - a) The epidemiology of firearm-related injury and death, including the scope of the problem in California and nationwide, individual and societal determinants of risk, and effective prevention strategies for all types of firearm-related injury and death.
 - b) The role of health care providers in preventing firearm-related harm.
 - c) Best practices for conversations about firearm ownership, access and storage.
 - d) Appropriate tools for practitioner intervention with patients at risk for firearm-related injury or death.
 - e) Relevant laws and policies related to prevention of firearm-related injury and death and to the role of health care providers in preventing firearm-related harm.
 - 3) Requires the center to do all of the following:
 - a) Launch a comprehensive dissemination program to promote participation in education and training programs among practicing physicians, mental health care professionals, and other relevant professional groups in the state, as specified.
 - b) Develop curricular materials for medical and mental health care practitioners in practice and in training, as specified.
 - c) Develop education and training resources on firearm-related injury or death, as prescribed.
 - d) Serve as a resource for the many professional and educational organizations in the state whose members seek to advance their knowledge of firearm-related injury and death and effective prevention measures.
 - e) Conduct rigorous research to further identify specific gaps in knowledge and structural barriers that prevent counseling and other interventions and to evaluate the education and training program. This bill specifies that the center incorporate research findings into the design and implementation of the program to support the center's mission.
 - 4) Requires educators from the center provide didactic education in person and by remote link at medical education institutions and recruit and train additional health professionals to provide such education.

- 5) Requires by December 31, 2020 and annually thereafter, the University of California transmit programmatic and financial reports on this program to the Legislature, including reporting on funding and expenditures by source, participation data, program accomplishments and the future direction of the program.
- 6) State's findings and declarations relative to firearm-related death and injury in this state.

STAFF COMMENTS

- 1) ***Need for the bill.*** According to information provided by the author, "California experiences unacceptably high rates of firearm-related death and injury. In 2017, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported 3,184 firearm-related deaths in California: 1,610 suicides, 1,435 homicides, 86 deaths by legal interventions, 38 unintentional deaths, and 15 deaths of an undetermined type. Furthermore, mass shootings are changing the character of public life in the state. Just last November, a mass shooting at Borderline Bar and Grill in Thousand Oaks, California resulted in 12 deaths.

Gun violence not only has serious implications for public safety and public health, but is extremely costly as well. In 2010, the estimated cost of hospital and emergency department care for firearm-related injuries in California was \$112 million, with Medi-Cal and other government payors responsible for 64 percent of those costs. These high costs occur even though most people who die from firearm-related injuries do so at the scene of the shooting and receive no medical care for their injuries. Medical costs make up approximately 2 percent of the total cost of firearm-related harm, which is driven primarily by losses in productivity and quality of life.

Last year, the American College of Physicians published a position paper on reducing firearm injuries and deaths in the United States that "recommends a public health approach to firearms-related violence and the prevention of firearm injuries and deaths." The paper further encourages physicians to "discuss with their patients the risks that may be associated with having a firearm in the home and recommend ways to mitigate such risks." While many health care providers recognize their responsibility to help prevent firearm-related injury and death, many cite lack of knowledge regarding when and how to counsel patients as a principal barrier to action. A position statement adopted by the California Medical Association Board of Trustees on July 28, 2017, states that "expanded education and training are needed to improve clinician familiarity with the benefits and risks of firearm ownership, safety practices, and communication with patients about firearm violence." It further states that "medical schools and residency programs should incorporate firearm violence prevention into their academic curricula" and "California-specific resources such as continuing medical education modules, toolkits, patient education handouts, and clinical intervention information would help to address this practice gap."

The author asserts that this bill seeks to "recognize that health care providers are uniquely positioned to help prevent firearm-related harm and that the University

of California Firearm Violence Research Center is uniquely qualified to equip them with the education, training, and resources needed to identify patients at risk for such harm, provide evidence-based counseling to mitigate risk, and intervene in situations of imminent danger.”

- 2) ***University of California firearm research center.*** Provisions within federal appropriations prohibit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) from using funds to advocate or promote gun control. In recognition of a gap in information related to firearm-related violence, the Budget Act of 2016 provided one-time funding for the establishment of a research center on firearm-related violence at the University of California. Current law specifies that the center’s research include, but not be limited to, the effectiveness of existing laws and policies intended to reduce firearm violence, including the criminal misuse of firearms, and efforts to promote the responsible ownership and use of firearms. Current law further specifies that the center work on a continuing basis with policymakers in the Legislature and state agencies to identify, implement, and evaluate innovative firearm violence prevention policies and programs. The center is housed at UC Davis and is supporting efforts at three affiliate UC campuses: Berkeley, Irvine, and Los Angeles.

This bill seeks to fill a void in information related to firearm-related injury and death by requesting that the existing UC Firearm Violence Research Center develop education and training programs for health care providers to implement, among other things, effective prevention and intervention strategies and tools with patients at risk for firearm-related harm. Staff notes that in the 2019 Budget Act Governor Newsome proposes an appropriation of \$1 million per year to the center on an ongoing basis.

- 3) ***Prior and related legislation.***

SB 1006 (Wolk, 2016) sought to establish a research center on firearm-related violence within the UC. The language in SB 1006 was folded into a budget trailer bill, SB 1602, which enacted the California Firearm Violence Research Act.

SB 826 (Leno, Ch. 23, Stats. 2016), the Budget Act of 2016, appropriated \$5 million on a one-time basis for a center for research into firearm-related violence. The funds appropriated were made available for expenditure until June 30, 2021. Governor Newsom has proposed appropriating \$1 million per year to the center on an ongoing basis.

SUPPORT

American Academy Of Pediatrics, California
 Brady California United Against Gun Violence
 California Chapter of the American College of Emergency Physicians
 California Medical Association
 California State Council of the Emergency Nurses Association
 Jewish Center for Justice
 Safe- Scrubs Addressing the Firearm Epidemic
 Society of Women Engineers at UCLA
 Several Individuals

OPPOSITION

None received

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