The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists
WOMEN'S HEALTH CARE PHYSICIANS

ACOG
THE AMERICAN CONGRESS OF OBSTETRICIANS AND GYNECOLOGISTS

Statement of Policy

As Issued by the Executive Board of the
American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the
American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists

GUN VIOLENCE AND SAFETY

The impact of gun violence on the health and safety of women is of great concern to obstetrician–gynecologists. Women disproportionately experience intimate partner violence, and the presence of firearms within those relationships is a key risk factor for intimate partner homicide. Homicide is the second leading cause of injury-related deaths among pregnant and postpartum women, and the majority of these homicides are carried out with firearms[i].

Women in the U.S. who are killed by an intimate partner are more likely to be killed with guns than by all other methods combined[ii]. Access to firearms increases the risk of intimate partner homicide more than five times compared to cases where there are no weapons[iii]. Women are twice as likely to be shot and killed by an intimate partner as they are to be murdered by a stranger using any type of weapon[iv].

The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists and the American Congress of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG) support an evidence-based, public health approach to gun violence that emphasizes education, prevention, and safety. To this end, ACOG:

1. Recommends routine screening for intimate partner violence[v]
2. Recommends periodic injury prevention evaluation and counseling regarding firearms[vi]
3. Opposes governmental restrictions or requirements dictating the content of physician/patient counseling regarding firearms [vii]
4. Encourages the appropriate federal and state agencies to support and fund research, surveillance activities, public education, and anti-violence initiatives that recognize and address the role of intimate partner violence and firearms in the health and safety of women
5. Supports laws or regulations limiting the purchase and ownership of firearms by individuals with emergency, temporary, or permanent protective or restraining orders or those with intimate partner violence and/or stalking convictions
6. Encourages improved access to mental health care and services

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[i] Chang J, Berg CJ, Saltzman LE, Herndon J. Homicide: A leading cause of injury deaths among pregnant and postpartum women in the United States, 1991-1999. Am J Public Health. 2005;95:471-477.

[ii] Rothman E. F., Hemenway D, Miller M, and Azael D. Batterers' Use of Guns to Threaten Intimate Partners. *Journal of the American Medical Women's Association*, 2005. 60 (1): p. 62- 68.

[iii] J.C. Campbell, Webster J, Koziol-McLain, CR, et al. 2003. Risk Factors For Femicide in Abusive Relationships: Results From A Multi-Site Case Control Study. *American Journal of Public Health*. 93 (7).

[iv] Tjaden P., Thoennes N. Full Report of the Prevalence, Incidence and Consequences of Violence Against Women: Findings from the National Violence Against Women Survey. Washington, DC: US Department of Justice: 2000. NCJ 18781

[v] Intimate partner violence. Committee Opinion No. 518. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists. *Obstet Gynecol* 2012;119:412–7.

[vi] Well-Woman Care: Assessments & Recommendations, available at:
http://www.acog.org/About_ACOG/ACOG_Departments/Annual_Womens_Health_Care/Assessments_and_Recommendations

[vii] Statement of Policy, *Legislative Interference with Patient Care, Medical Decisions, and the Patient-Physician Relationship*, May 2013

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