

Firearms Injury & Death Prevention Advocacy

October 18, 2023

Alabama Chapter

INCORPORATED IN ALABAMA

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN®





Why are we here?

Today's Agenda

- What we are seeing in Alabama
 - Data from Alabama's children's hospitals
 - Anecdotal experiences of pediatricians in our state
- Opportunity for our collective voice to be heard
 - How to host legislators in the office/clinic outside of the legislative session
 - Legislative advocacy how-tos, dos and don'ts
- Call to action



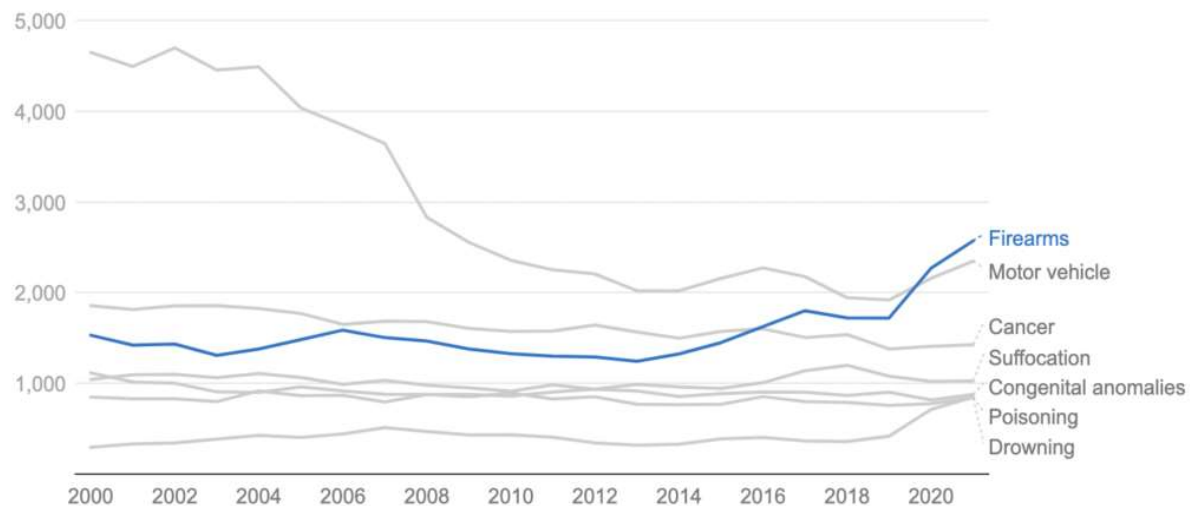
What we are
seeing in Alabama



Children's of Alabama Firearm Injuries

Jennifer McCain, MD, FAAP, Assistant Professor, UAB Department of Pediatrics, Division of Emergency Medicine

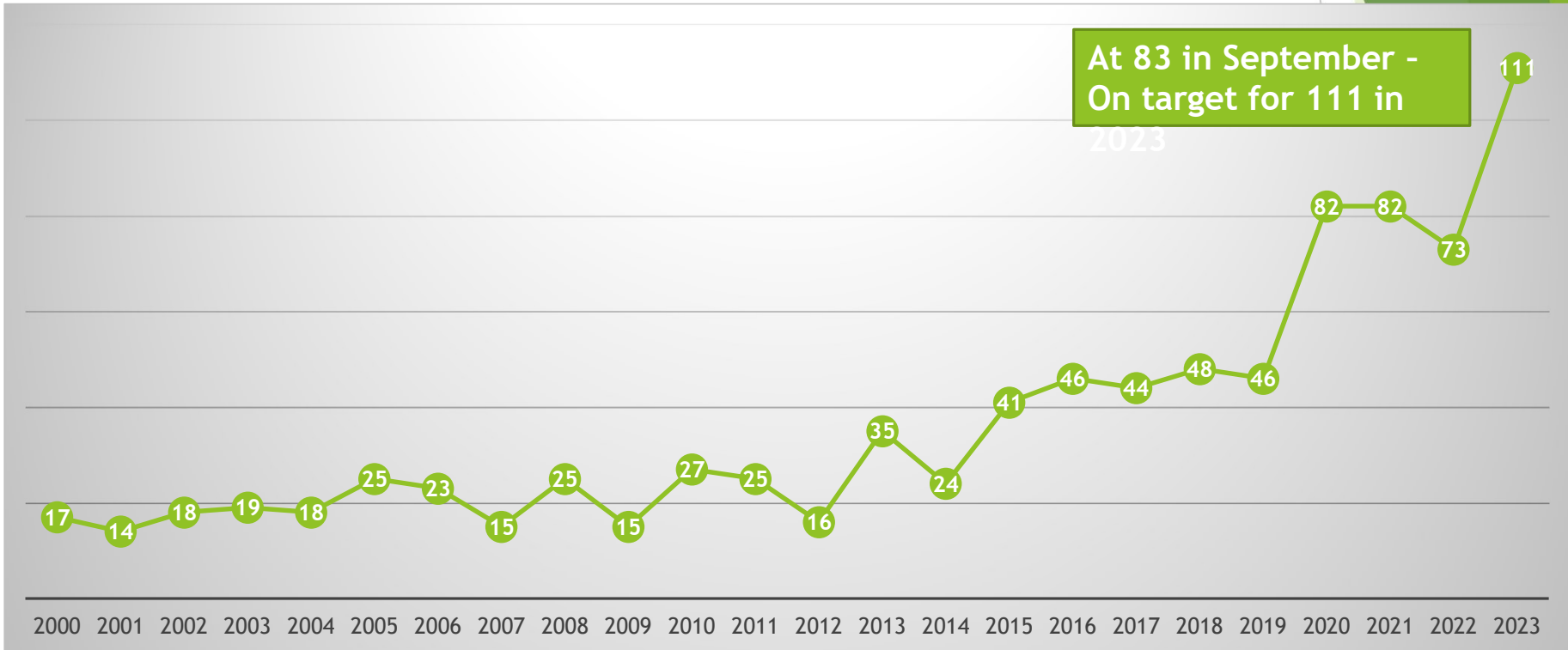
Firearms Involved in More Child Deaths Than Any Other Cause in 2020-2021



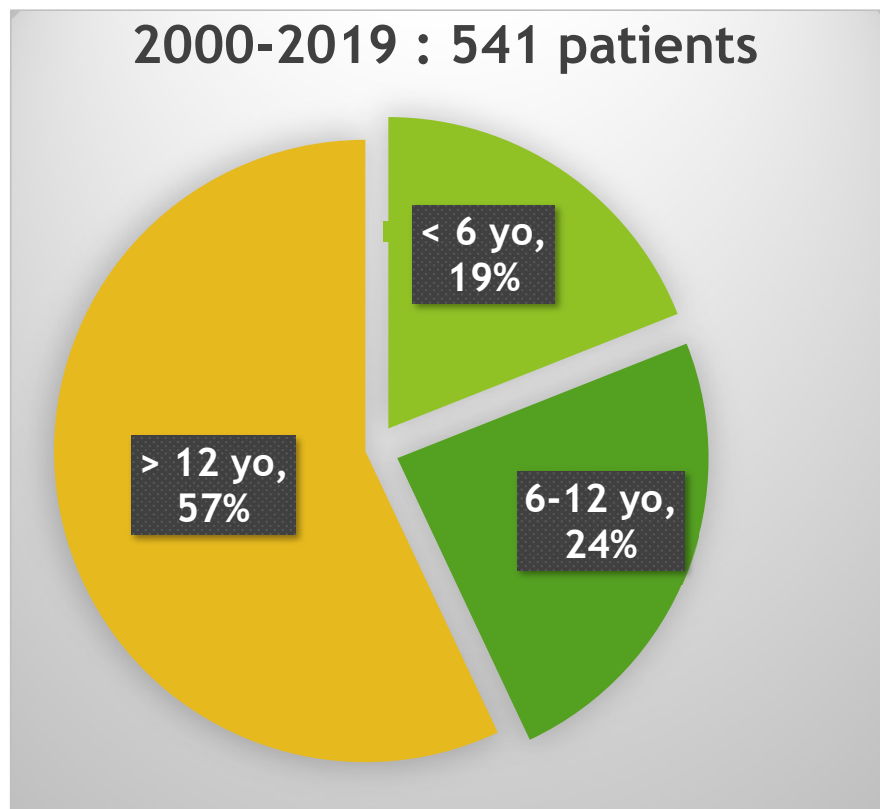
- ▶ The number of US children dying in firearm-related incidents has doubled since 2013.
- ▶ Firearm-related deaths - 20% of deaths of children <18 yo in the US in 2021.
- ▶ Total firearm-related deaths in 2 years- 4,733 (2,571 were < 13 yo).

CDC Wonder Underlying Cause of Death data 2020-2021

COA ED Firearm Injuries From 2000 to 2023



20 Years of Firearm Injuries in COA ED: 2000-2019



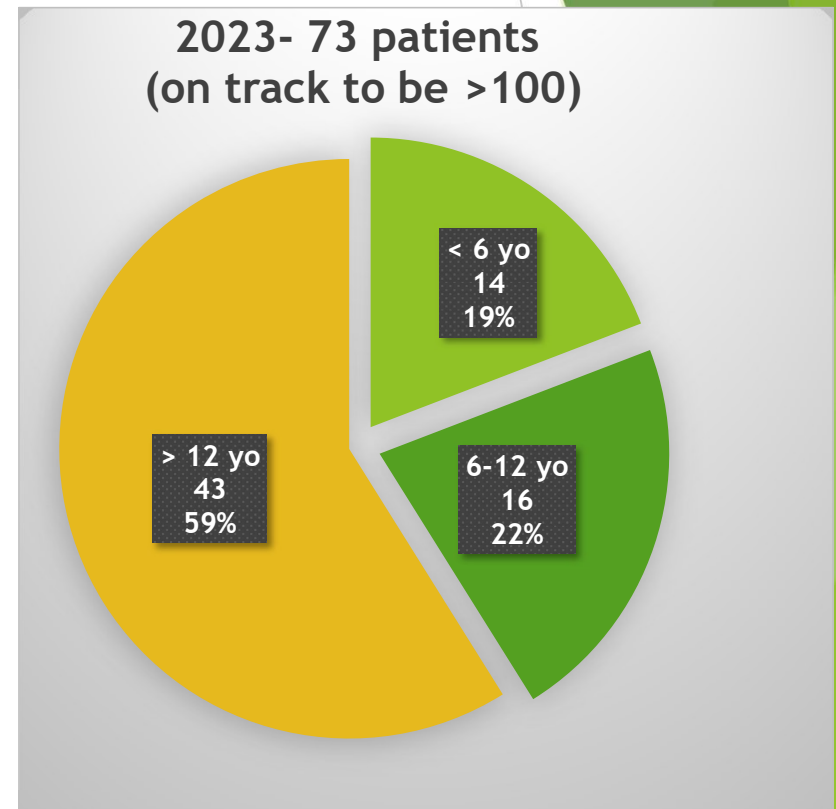
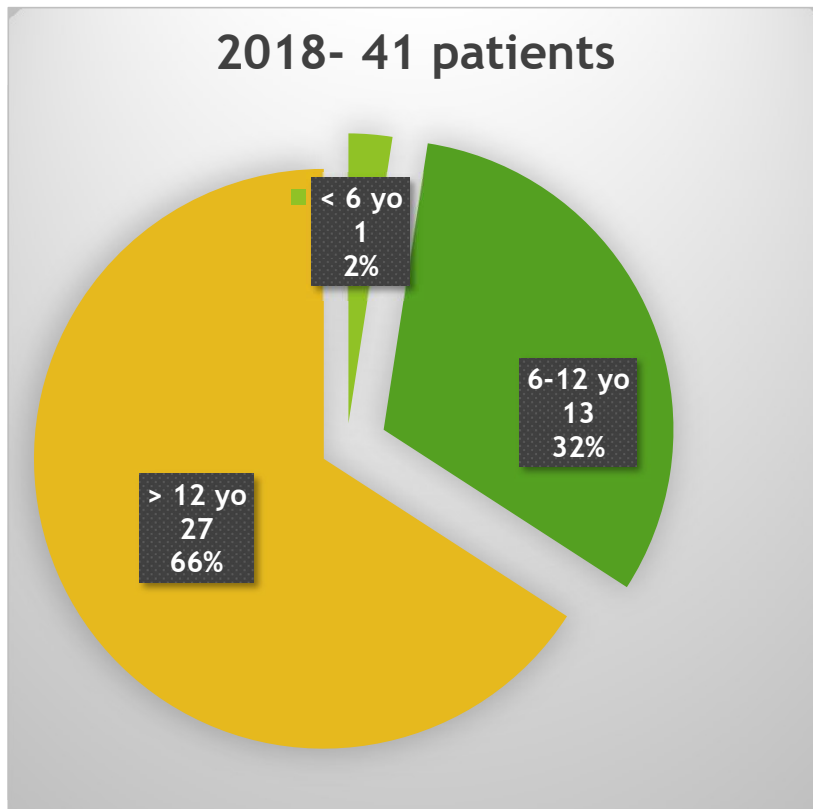
- ▶ 54% were Intentional Injuries
- ▶ 76% were Male
- ▶ 71% were African-American

*** 541 patients in 2 decades

*** 320 patients in last 4 years

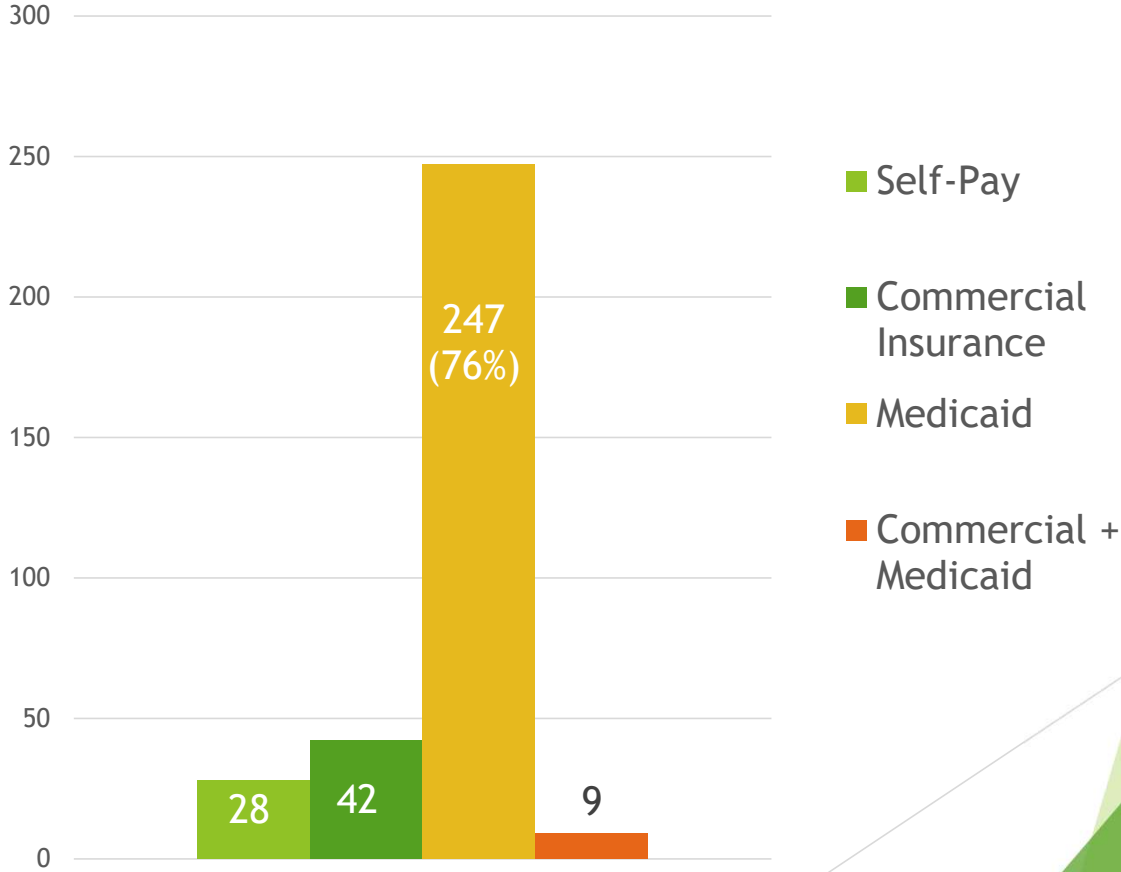
(extrapolates out to 1600 patients in next 2 decades)

Firearm Injuries in COA ED: 2018 vs 2023

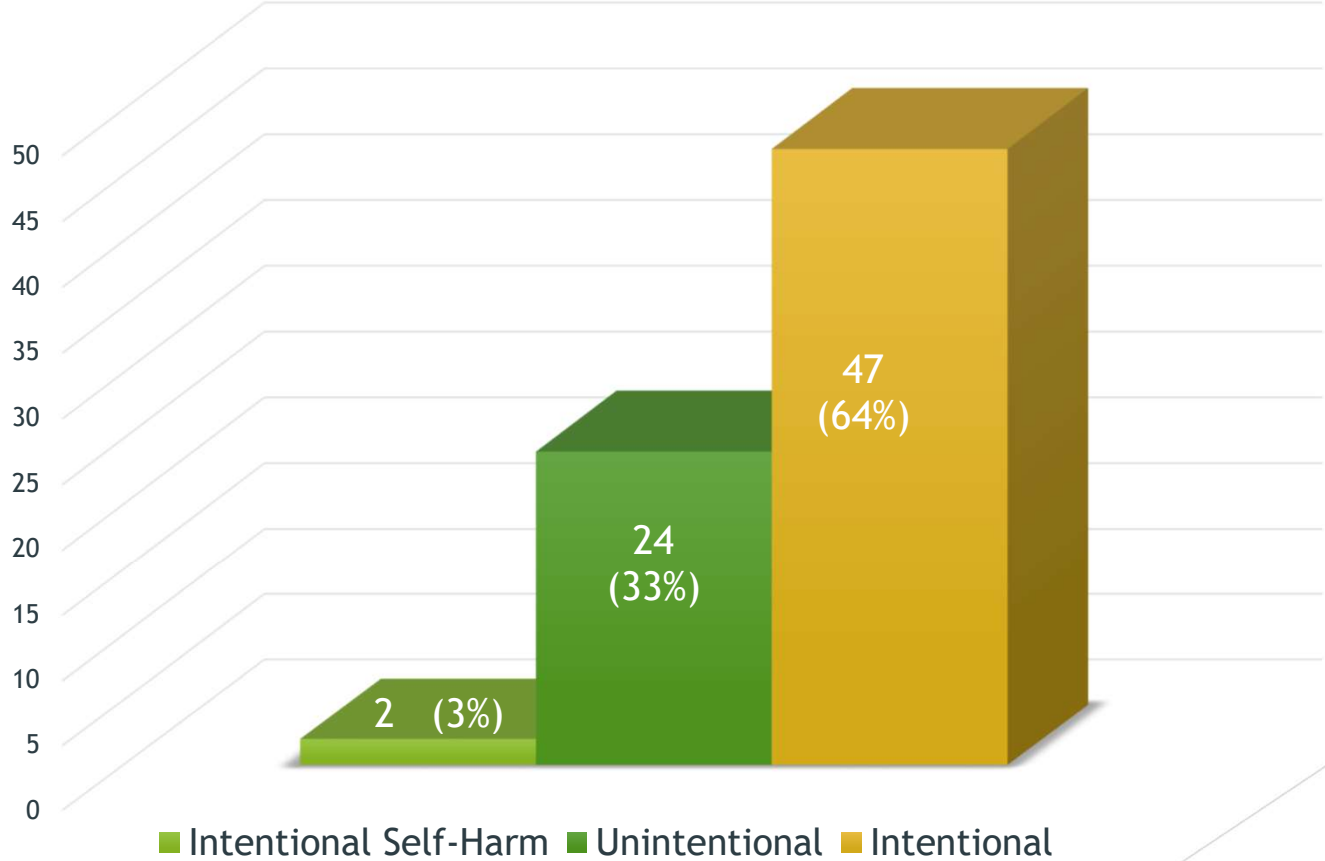


Insurance Status (2018-July 2023), n=326

► 76% Medicaid



Intentionality of Firearm Injuries - 2023, n=73



Coroner's Cases 2022 - Jefferson County, AL

- ▶ 34 Cases Reviewed- Unanticipated Deaths
- ▶ 0 cases from MVCs
- ▶ 15 of the 34 deaths of children were caused by firearms
- ▶ Ages ranged from 12 yo - 17 yo
- ▶ 2 were Intentional Self-Harm
- ▶ 3 were Female



USA Health Pediatric Firearm Injury Data

Ashley Williams, MD, Assistant Professor, Department of Surgery, Division of Trauma, Acute Care Surgery & Burns, USA Health University Hospital, Mobile



Erin Swanson, MD, FAAP



Eric Tyler, MD, FAAP

16 April 2023

- ▶ 630 text message from Dr. Linda Gibson-Young from Auburn University
- ▶ “What can I do to help?”
- ▶ “Do I look that bad?”
- ▶ “The Dadeville Shooting”
- ▶ That was the first I heard of the tragedy.
- ▶ I was not notified or called as a part of a disaster team.
- ▶ I was certain that my patients were in the crowd wounded by the events of a sweet Sixteen Birthday Party

Waiting

- ▶ I am lousy at waiting.
- ▶ Law enforcement and the Trauma Centers all across the region were doing their job.
- ▶ I had to stay in my lane
- ▶ FRUSTRATION
- ▶ Rumors/ Rumors. We still do not know the answer to the big question, “WHY”

The Group

- ▶ Only God knows the exact number there.
- ▶ 32 were shot
- ▶ 28 wounded.
- ▶ The birthday event was promoted on social media
- ▶ People from four counties and at least six high schools were present.
- ▶ There was no way to reach them in one set place.



Plans

- ▶ We made plans
- ▶ One office/ One provider to provide the follow-up care.
- ▶ A call got an appointment ASAP
- ▶ We waited about four days before anyone showed up.



Our mantra

- ▶ Ask how are you holding up?
- ▶ Assure. You are safe here. We will walk with you through this as far as it takes.
- ▶ Care. Assess the wounds/ dress the wounds.
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Listen
- ▶ Encourage
- ▶ Repeat



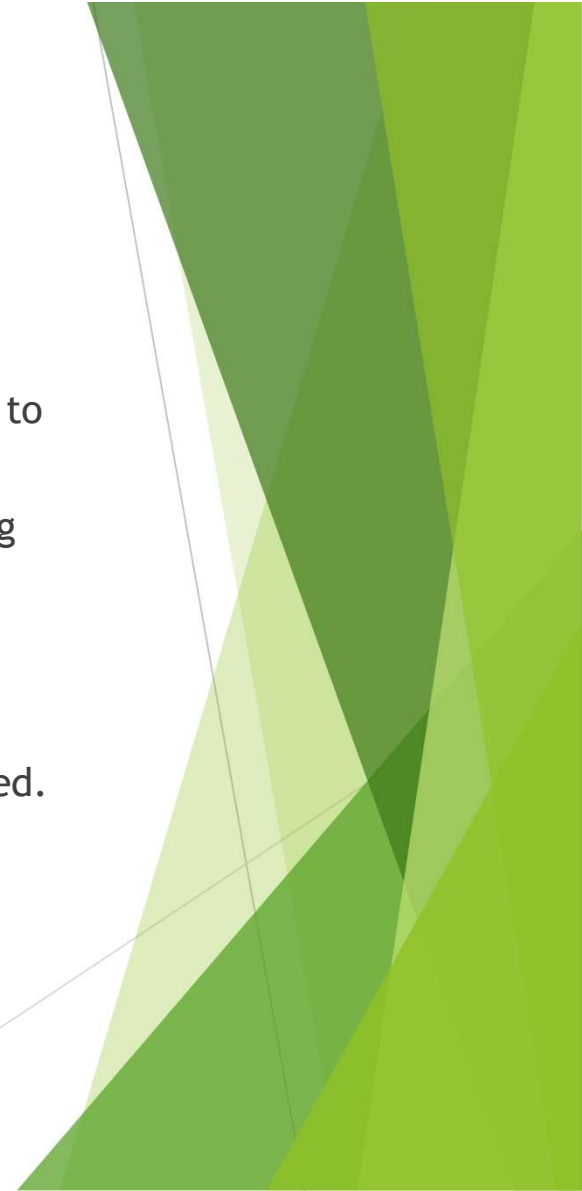
The wounded

- ▶ Started showing up
- ▶ Leg wound distal-proximal and Proximal to distal.
- ▶ Ricocheting bullets
- ▶ Chest wounds
- ▶ Foot wounds
- ▶ Head wounds
- ▶ A bullet in the anterior chest wall
- ▶ Chest tube sites male and female



The Stories

- ▶ A group of females were protected by the DJ that sacrificed his equipment to us a table as protection for he and several girls.
- ▶ A group of females in bathroom herded out by a gunman instead of shooting them
- ▶ Three heroic males
- ▶ Phil Dowdell pushed his sister out of a door as he was fatally wounded.
- ▶ One guy is paralyzed from a spinal wound. The girl he covered was uninjured.
- ▶ The retained bullet guy shielded two girls taking a bullet that could have found another mark.



The Follow-up

- ▶ Weekly visits. If they wanted it.
- ▶ They all did.
- ▶ The school did not take role the last six weeks.
- ▶ We offered excuses/ referrals.
- ▶ Some continued to come for six weeks.



Camp Resilience

- ▶ Contact was made with Children's Harbor Executive Medical Director
- ▶ Would a "Survivor Camp" be feasible?
- ▶ Spoke to the Sheriff and the District Attorney's office
- ▶ Thumbs up
- ▶ The Sheriff and the DA have a "Victim Support." Team
- ▶ The Children's Harbor Staff spoke to a sister camp in Orlando that had hosted a camp for survivors.
- ▶ The Board of Children's Harbor

THUMBS UP and one volunteered funding

Camp Resilience

- ▶ Friday 1 September through Sunday 3 September
- ▶ Camp Resilience
- ▶ This was a family camp
- ▶ The intent was organic relationships and sharing.



Camp Resilience

- ▶ This was a pilot program.
- ▶ I hope this situation is never repeated.
- ▶ BUT this Camp Idea can be used again.




Lessons Learned

The shooting involved six shooters ages 16 through 21 years.

This was a strategic event

The weapons used were modified handguns





Opportunity for
our collective
voice to be heard



How to Host a Legislator

Michael Ramsey, MD, FAAP | Dothan Pediatric Healthcare Network



Who are your legislators?

- House Member
- Senate Member
- Committee assignments
- <https://www.sos.alabama.gov/alabama-votes/elected-official-map>



What is your purpose?

- Relationship building
- Information/Education
- Influence/Persuasion



PURPOSE

When should you reach out?

- Out of session
- In session



How should you prepare?

- Alabama AAP talking points
- Area Representatives
- Chapter Officers
- Lobbyist



Who else should I invite?

- Other pediatricians
- Stakeholders
- Business leaders
- Parent advocate



How do I talk to them?

- As an expert
- Controlled passion
- Be personal.



How do I make the most of the time?

- Stay focused on 1-2 issues
- Include an ask
- Include written information
- Offer expertise
- Be mindful of timing



What do I do after?

- Follow up
- Stay in touch
- Maintain relationship.



Resources

- Blueprint for Hosting Legislators (updated October 2023):
<https://tinyurl.com/3u8bsj48>

Alabama Chapter - AAP Legislative Advocacy

Graham Champion, Chapter Lobbyist



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Things to Do

- ▶ Get to know your legislator before you need to engage
- ▶ Make your ask based on your personal story
- ▶ Relate your ask to something the legislator can identify with
- ▶ Be reasonable in your expectations
- ▶ Go for the low hanging fruit first
- ▶ ALWAYS thank your legislator for his or her support



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Things Not to Do

- ▶ Never personally attack a legislator's position on an issue
- ▶ Never mislead a legislator
- ▶ Do not exaggerate your position on an issue



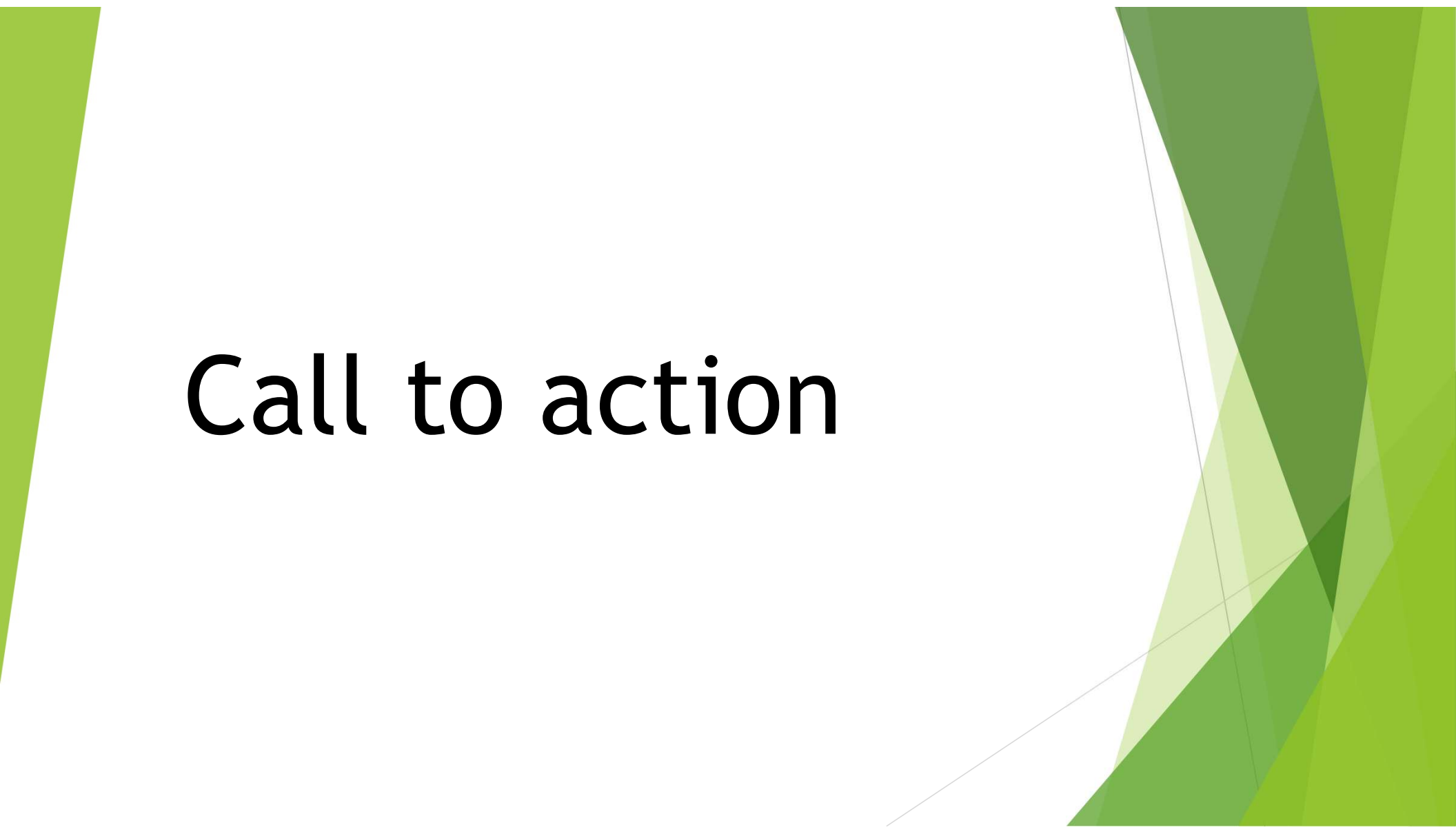
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Gun Safety Issues

- ▶ Safe Storage
- ▶ Red Flag Laws
- ▶ Age of Purchase
- ▶ Permitless Carry



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Call to action

Action Items

- Make contact with legislators between now and legislative session
- Sign up to be part of task force (to help plan Chapter's direction, plan future webinars, etc.) - see link in Chat and it will also be sent to you after the fact with the recording link.
- Sign up for future webinars in this series

The slide features abstract green geometric shapes on the left and right sides. On the left, there is a solid green trapezoidal shape. On the right, there is a complex composition of overlapping, semi-transparent green triangles and polygons in various shades, creating a layered, geometric effect. The central text 'Questions?' is positioned between these two decorative elements.

Questions?