STATEMENT ON THE CDC'S RECENT STUDY ON THE EFFECTIVENESS OF GUN LAWS FOR VIOLENCE PREVENTION

In response to the recently released study “First Reports Evaluating the Effectiveness of Strategies for Preventing Violence: Firearms Laws” (Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Reports (MMWR), October 3, 2003), the Johns Hopkins Center for Gun Policy and Research offers the following statement:

1. The lack of sufficient evidence to prove that gun laws prevent violence does not mean that gun policies don’t work.

Although sometimes misinterpreted in news coverage to date, the CDC concluded that there is currently “insufficient evidence to determine effectiveness” of the policies reviewed in the study. This conclusion was based largely on the inadequate number of high-quality studies on gun laws.

2. The report underscores the importance of gun violence as a public health problem and the need for further scientific research to identify effective policies for prevention.

For every successful public health intervention, there historically was a point at which there was insufficient evidence to scientifically prove its effectiveness. Nonetheless, those interventions were pursued, evaluated, and refined, ultimately saving lives.

A clear implication of the report’s call for further research is that there should be increased support for high-quality research on the impact of gun policies. With almost 30,000 deaths from gun violence in the United States annually and an estimated $100 billion in social costs per year, there is an unquestionable need for continued commitment to the reduction of gun violence.

THE JOHNS HOPKINS CENTER FOR GUN POLICY AND RESEARCH is dedicated to reducing gun-related injuries and deaths through the application of a public health perspective to the issue of gun violence prevention. Its faculty and affiliated experts have pioneered innovative strategies for reducing gun violence, and achieved a national reputation for high-quality, policy-relevant research. The Center examines the public health effects of guns in society and serves as an objective resource for the media, policy makers, advocacy groups, and attorneys.

For more information, contact the Center at 410-614-3243 or jhc grp@jhsp h.edu, or visit our website at www.jhsph.edu/gunpolicy.

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