

MAFP President Responds to Shooting at MSU

The Time to Take Action to Protect Human Life is Now

The following letter was sent by MAFP President Glenn Dregansky, DO, FAAFP, to the MAFP membership.

Dear Colleagues: This letter, sent to the entire MAFP membership, is coming to you in the aftermath of the horrific violence that took place on the Michigan State University campus in East Lansing on Feb. 13. As the grandfather of a current MSU student, an MSU alum myself, and president of the state's largest medical specialty association representing family medicine members—including those who work, practice, teach, train, and learn at MSU and MSU-affiliated programs—I was terrified, heartbroken, and, yes, angered by the unnecessary and avoidable tragedy. How did this happen in our community, to our students, neighbors, colleagues, and peers? Before “putting pen to paper,” I re-read the letter my predecessor, Dr. Srikar Reddy, sent to the MAFP membership following the Oxford school shooting just 15 months ago. Sadly, the issue that Dr. Reddy described in Nov. 2021 has not changed: gun violence is a public health crisis—no one is immune. Already this year—just six weeks into 2023—there have been 71 mass shootings in the United States, including at MSU; and, as of 2020, gun violence is now the leading cause of death among children and teens, passing vehicle crashes, drug overdoses, and cancer.

The time for thoughts and prayers has passed.

The time to expand access to quality, affordable mental healthcare services is now. The time to reach community-wide, statewide, and nationwide commitment to preventing and responding to gun violence through reasonable laws is now. On March 22, family physicians, family medicine residents, and medical students will be in Lansing for Michigan Family Medicine Advocacy Day, meeting with legislators about issues impacting the practice of medicine and our patients. Discussions will center on policies and laws that support the Academy's mission and strategic vision of ensuring all Michiganders have access to quality, affordable healthcare within a family physician-led medical home.

More specifically, through our unified family medicine voice and individual boots-on-the-ground experience, Advocacy Day is the opportunity for members of every membership type to share expertise and science-based insights about what is needed to increase access to physical and mental healthcare for all, under the pillars of:

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- **Reducing administrative tasks**, so physicians have more time to spend with patients
- **Investing in the primary care workforce**, so there are enough physicians to meet demand
- **Reforming the payment and delivery system**, to achieve practice efficiency and sustainability

And, we will discuss the need for **elevating public health and safety**.

Local, state, and federal lawmakers need to hear from you!

By speaking out on issues that not only impact the family physicians of today and those of tomorrow, but also our patients and communities, we CAN help prevent the next tragedy, preserve the patient-physician relationship, and advance our specialty to benefit generations to come. Whether you are attending Advocacy Day or not, you have a critical role. I urge you to make yourself and your ideas for change known to your state and federal representatives and senators by attending local coffee hours, inviting them to visit you at your practice to see, first-hand, the impact you are making in the lives of their constituents, and calling or emailing them. The [Advocacy](#) section of our website is a resource. On behalf of the entire leadership at Michigan Academy of Family Physicians, thank you for all you do for the good of your patients and your professional association. We are family physicians, and we do make a difference!