

Where We Stand:

NAMI believes that public policy should be guided by credible, evidence-based research. NAMI supports funding for research to understand the causes and effects of gun violence in the U.S., including self-directed violence, and opposes restrictions on gun violence research.

Why We Care:

When tragic acts of gun violence occur, people with mental illness are often unfairly drawn into the conversation. The truth is that the vast majority of violence is not perpetrated by people with mental illness – in fact, they are more likely to be victims of violent crime or self-inflicted injury. The myth that people with mental illness are violent perpetuates stigma and distracts from the real issues. One of which being that each year, most firearm deaths are suicides, and firearm deaths are the most common method used in suicides.

Unfortunately, federal policy has restricted research that could create a better understanding about how to prevent gun violence. Since 1996, the “Dickey Amendment” has severely limited federal financing to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) for gun violence research. By barring funds “to advocate or promote gun control,” the field of gun violence research has been severely underfunded. Thankfully, in 2019, Congress clarified that the ban on federal dollars did not extend to a ban on

research and has created an opportunity for the federal government to learn more about the causes of gun violence.

NAMI supports funding for research to understand the causes and effects of gun violence in the U.S., including self-directed violence, and opposes restrictions on gun violence research.

NAMI believes that in order to meaningfully reduce gun violence in the U.S., including self-directed gun violence, the federal government must invest in research to help us better understand this pressing public health issue and develop evidence-based practices on how to prevent it.

To learn more about NAMI’s work on this issue, visit www.nami.org/Advocacy/Policy-Priorities