OPINIONS ON HEALTH PROFESSIONALS TALKING ABOUT GUN SAFETY
Results from the 2018 California Safety and Wellbeing Survey (CSaWS)

On average, 109 people die from firearms every day in the U.S. and many more come to hospitals with injuries.

Access to firearms comes with risk. Safe gun practices can reduce the risk of harm for everyone who lives in a home with a firearm.

Patients often expect to have conversations with their doctors about risks to health and safety.

We asked Californians whether it was appropriate for doctors and other health professionals to talk with patients about gun safety in general and when there is a gun in the home and the patient or someone in the home was at increased risk for firearm-related injury.

Health professionals can
‣ identify patients at higher risk for gun injury
‣ talk with them about the importance of gun safety
‣ take action to prevent harm when risk is imminent

More than 4 in 5 said gun safety conversations were at least sometimes appropriate when there were guns in the home and someone in the home was at increased risk for firearm injury.

DOI: 10.1377/hlthaff.2019.00602
Practicing gun safety means safely and responsibly handling and storing firearms. Storing guns securely is important to help prevent gun deaths and injuries.

The most secure way to store a firearm is:
• Unloaded and separate from ammunition
• Locked up using a locking device, such as a cable lock, a lock box, or a gun safe

Health professional counseling on storing guns securely may be important to help prevent injuries.

Guns in the home put everyone who is living or spending time there at increased risk of injury and death.

Most Californians, including most gun owners, agree that:
• gun safety conversations between health care providers and patients are appropriate when there is a gun in the home and risk of injury is elevated.
• health care provider intervention is appropriate when a patient has access to a gun and is at acute risk for injury.

These results support provider engagement in clinical efforts to prevent firearm injury.