

NHMS Policy Position

Firearm Safety—Opposing “Stand Your Ground” Laws

Whereas, Injuries and death by firearm are a significant public health concern as evidenced by increasing numbers of homicides and injuries by firearm in the US over the last ten years, including 19,362 murders in 2020 (compared with 15,439 in 2019), and 39,423 injuries in 2020 (compared with 30,151 in 2019) (Gun Violence Archive), and

Whereas, the United States has on average about 25 times the incidence of gun homicides and injuries compared with other Western countries, and

Whereas, “stand your ground” laws remove the duty to retreat from an uncertain threatening, or potentially violent situation, and

Whereas, “stand your ground” laws upend centuries of legal tradition, emboldening individuals to use deadly force in public even when safe retreat from the situation or when non-lethal force would suffice, and

Whereas, studies show that “stand your ground” laws are associated with significant increases in homicide and injury rates as evidenced by

1. 32% increase in firearm homicide rates and 24% increase in overall homicide rates in Florida after the passing of a “stand your ground” law in 2005 (*Humphreys, Gasparrini and Weibe, JAMA Int Med 177, no. 1, 2017: 44-50*),
2. In 79% of Florida “stand your ground” cases, the assailant could have retreated to avoid the confrontation, and in 68% of cases the person killed was unarmed (*Robert A. Spitzer, New York Times, May 4, 2015*),
3. Other studies have shown that in any given month 30-50 people across the country are killed as a result of “stand your ground” laws, and they are associated with an increase of 8% overall in US firearm homicides along with significant increases in firearm injuries resulting in emergency room visits and hospitalizations (*McClellan and Tekin, J. Human Resources, Vol. 52, No. 3, 2017: 621-653*).

New Hampshire

MEDICAL SOCIETY

ADVOCATING FOR PHYSICIANS & PUBLIC HEALTH SINCE 1791

Resolved, that NHMS opposes all “stand your ground” laws.

Adopted by NHMS Council on April 14, 2021