



CANADA'S EMERGENCY PHYSICIANS OPPOSE REPEALING THE LONG-GUN REGISTRY

Ottawa, ON (August 25, 2010) -- The Canadian Association of Emergency Physicians (CAEP) is opposed to the proposed repeal of the long-gun registry (Bill C-391), to be voted on in the House of Commons on September 22, 2010. Our experiences, backed by scientific studies clearly show the registry has saved lives.

Dr. Carolyn Snider, a member of CAEP's Public Affairs Committee and lead author of the peer-reviewed publication, *CAEP Position Statement on Gun Control* [5], says "As front-line physicians in emergency departments, we regularly witness the horrific injuries and deaths that result from firearms. Our membership has instructed CAEP to vigorously support efforts to reduce the tragic human toll associated with firearm misuse by opposing the repeal of the long-gun registry."

"We recognize the great majority of gun owners in Canada are responsible citizens," says Dr. Snider. "The long gun registry is not about treating them as criminals; it is about protecting the vulnerable among us and we strongly urge members of Parliament to oppose Bill C-391."

In 2006, 774 Canadians were killed by the use of firearms. Despite the media's focus on crime, 76% of these firearm-related deaths were caused by suicide.[1] This equates to one firearm suicide every 15 hours in Canada. Fortunately, firearm suicides have decreased significantly since the *Firearms Act* was implemented. A leading international scientific journal, *Injury Prevention*, features a study that demonstrated a significant decline in firearm suicide rates among men in Québec that was associated with the implementation of the *Firearms Act (Bill C-17)*. [2] In addition to showing a decline in firearm suicides, this study demonstrated that the reduction did not result in people substituting other suicide methods. This is strong scientific evidence that supports the retention of the registry.

Those opposed to long gun registration claim there is a lack of criminal activity involving long guns. This is not true. Of firearm-related homicides in 2008 in Canada, 26% were by rifles or shotguns. Furthermore, long guns were used in 72% of firearm-related spousal homicides.[4]

"For many, these may just be statistics. However, as emergency physicians we meet the people behind these statistics – those whose lives are lost due to long guns, notwithstanding our utmost efforts to save them, and whose families are shattered in a moment due to these guns. We witness and share their anguish," says Dr. Snider

"As emergency physicians, we confirm the registry's benefit in saving lives. We treat patients on a regular basis who are suicidal and who are victims of domestic assault. We know that a long gun in the home puts both types of patients at a significantly higher risk of being killed. Since many of these patients come to the hospital accompanied by police, we work with the police, who use the registry regularly to determine if the patient has a gun registered in the home. This knowledge, together with information as to whether the police then removed the firearm, helps us to assess the patient's safety plan and to ensure that these impulsive potential methods of injury or death are removed," she said.

For more information, please contact:

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[1] Statistics Canada. Deaths and mortality rate, by selected grouped causes, age group and sex, Canada, annual, Table 102-0551. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/cansim/home-accueil?lang=eng>

[2] Gagne et al. Firearms regulation and declining rates of male suicide in Quebec. *Injury Prevention*. 2010;16:247-253.

[3] Statistics Canada. Homicide in Canada, 2008. Available at: <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/pub/85-002-x/2009004/article/10929-eng.pdf>

[4] Canadian Centre for Justice Statistics. Family Violence in Canada: A Statistical Profile 2006. Available at: http://www.phac-aspc.gc.ca/ncfv-cnivf/familyviolence/pdfs/fv-85-224-XIE2006000_e.pdf

[5] CAEP Position Statement on Gun Control Carolyn E. Snider, MD, MPH; Howard Ovens, MD; Alan Drummond, MDCM; Atul K. Kapur, MD, MSc Available at: <http://www.caep.ca/template.asp?id=37C951DE051A45979A9BDD0C5715C9FE>