SMOKY MOUNTAIN MCO

News You Can Use

Your monthly resource for news and information about behavioral health and intellectual/ developmental disabilities in western North Carolina and beyond

From the doctor: With Chief Medical Officer Dr. Craig Martin

During my surgery rotation in medical school, I practiced my suture closure skills by completing a cross-stitch sampler. I still remember the motto: "The wisdom of the wise is an uncommon degree of common sense." The advice is still good, and – if I may brag – my sewing technique earned me high honors at the end of the rotation.

My thoughts returned to surgery after the June 12 shooting massacre in Orlando, both physical surgery and how mental health practitioners work to "sew together" people who have experienced trauma. I also thought of the common sense of reducing violence in our culture, terror and the trauma of mass murder.

More than 400,000 primary care physicians and psychiatrists in the United States have lobbied Congress to take a proactive approach to gun violence. That includes funding for research and prevention through the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Nearly 90 people in our country die every day from gun violence. Directly or indirectly, we all suffer.

Twenty years ago, Australia tightened gun laws following a mass shooting that killed 35. The impact of the law remains under debate, but since then, the country hasn't experienced a mass shooting. The Australian government, in my opinion, was right in taking action to better a basic right of all people – the right to stay alive. Meanwhile, gun control debate in the United States all too often eschews common sense in favor of political polarization.

I'm proud we do our part at Smoky to sow the seeds that "sew" together members of our communities. That includes both preventing trauma and ensuring those who experience trauma have access to treatment that promotes healing and recovery. We offer support and hope not only to vulnerable populations – in truth, we are all vulnerable, but together, we become more resilient.

As we celebrate Independence Day, let's also celebrate our interdependence and recognize that as members of a community, we're fortunate to have one another to rely on. When common sense prevails, that harmony, and the strength it generates, is a most wonderful thing indeed.

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