Washington State Nurses Association
Emergency Resolution #1
Health Care Providers, Public Health, and Education About Gun Violence

Whereas,
The public relies on health care professionals to provide them accurate and objective information in order to make informed choices about the general health and safety, and

Whereas,
The public health has benefited from objective data and research into reducing death due to diseases and other preventable public health dangers such as smoking, the use of seatbelts and child protective seats, bike helmets for children and discouraging alcohol use during pregnancy, and

Whereas,
Over 87 gun related deaths occur daily and 15,500 annually and deaths from all firearms related injuries are the 3rd cause of deaths for all ages (2010), and

Whereas,
Over 170 billion dollars are being spent providing health care for injuries related to gun violence, and

Whereas,
The unspeakable events occurring in Newtown Connecticut in December have sparked a renewed debate about gun violence in our society, and

Whereas,
Gun violence has become a public health issue, but through congressional action, the Centers for Disease Control has been deliberately restricted from collecting data or perform research on gun related violence, and

Whereas,
Some states are promoting legislation that prevents and penalizes health practitioners from asking patients about guns in their home and provide gun safety education during routine visits, and

Whereas,
These actions grossly interfere with patients’ need to know and health care providers’ ability to advocate for safety for their patients and the community;

Be It Therefore Resolved
That WSNA actively encourage and support efforts by the American Nurses Association to reject efforts to limit health care practitioners from performing appropriate gun use assessments and offering safety and awareness education in order to reduce gun related deaths and accidents, and
Be it Further Resolved
WSNA encourage ANA to file a brief to the 11th Circuit Court of Appeals to uphold physicians and health care providers right to collect all health data without restrictions, and

Be It Further Resolved
That WSNA is opposed to the reporting of this information to insurance companies or other organizations and will work with the National Federation of Nurses and ANA to do the same at the national level.

Adopted by WSNA General Assembly May 2, 2013