

Script – Broadcast - Gun Violence and Mental Health

It's been a discussion that, unfortunately, Americans have had many, many times before. In a desperate search for solutions, all of us - particularly political leaders - call for ways to curb or eliminate gun violence following a mass shooting.

Recent events - in El Paso, Texas and Dayton, Ohio - as well as arrests of individuals alleged to be capable of gun violence, has again raised debate on the need for stricter gun purchase and ownership laws. New this time, however, is a call for more mental health programs and institutions, with proponents believing there is a correlation between extreme gun violence and mental illness.

Just this week the American Psychiatric Association (APA) issued a statement arguing that there is no evidence for the claim, saying, "Blaming mental illness for the gun violence in our country is simplistic and inaccurate and goes against the scientific evidence currently available."

Dr. Joseph Chupervich, a psychiatrist with OSF Behavioral Health at OSF HealthCare Saint Elizabeth Medical Center, agrees.

SOT: Dr. Joseph Chupervich, Psychiatrist, OSF Behavioral Health

"If you look statistically, the mental health diagnosed people are really - don't play a role, a large role at all in this. It's people who are disgruntled or want their claim to fame - their 15 minutes. Or it's people who are fired, or are overwhelmed by the costs or the economy - a lot of issues. That's why a more informed task force needs to look at this, rather than. You know, our country is full of these patch solutions." (:37)

Dr. Chupervich believes a task force with political and religious leaders, mental health specialists, even the media, can provide the varying perspectives needed to adequately address all aspects of the gun violence question.

And while he does not believe it plays a significant role in the search for a solution, Dr. Chupervich believes more funding for mental health programs is necessary.

SOT: Dr. Joseph Chupervich, Psychiatrist, OSF Behavioral Health

"As a psychiatrist, what I see is people complain 'are you going to pass the bill' - give this and that. That's because no one is paying for these - you sit down with somebody and you talk - and you try to understand. You look at different angles, you're being followed supportively trying to understand that person - where they are. And there's not enough of that. The funding's not there - certainly in our state it's getting cut back and, I think, nationally, too." (:27)

To learn more about OSF behavioral health programs go to www.osfhealthcare.org/locations/medical-group/

This includes SilverCloud, an online tool designed to provide patients with easy and immediate access to evidence-based, cognitive behavioral therapy programs. The application offers supportive content for a range of mental and behavioral health issues such as depression, anxiety and stress.