

Prevention, a Pediatrician's Creed

Because I have had children die in car accidents when they were not wearing seatbelts, I urge everyone to wear seatbelts.

Because I have had infants die from suffocation when in bed with their parents, I discuss and advise against co-sleeping.

Because I have had teens' whose sexual activities have caused unwanted pregnancies, serious infections, pain and anguish, I discuss relationships and safe sex.

Because I have had patients and friends who have been seriously harmed by drug and alcohol abuse, I counsel about safe drinking and drug use when driving and during other activities of daily living.

Because I have had patients and friends who have had terrible problems with mental health disorders, I talk, counsel, and refer people to programs and professionals I believe can help them.

Because I have seen children die of vaccine-preventable diseases, I urge universal vaccination.

Because I have had children and parents who have died or been permanently injured by gun violence, I urge families not to keep guns in their homes and use guns in ways that harm no one.

I realize that these topics may be uncomfortable for some people to think about, or talk about, and they are not always easy for me either, but my role as a pediatrician, working to help children and young people grow up as safe, healthy and successful as possible, requires me to do this.

I know that there are some people in this country who feel strongly I should not discuss firearm safety, for instance, and are even committed to passing legislation to prohibit me from doing so. They do not have to talk about it, but I do, and will, and must, for the sake of my patients, their families and all families in this country.

Sean Palfrey, M.D.



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