UPDATE

POISON CONTROL PROGRAM

1-800-222-1222

www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov

POISON Help®

About HRSA

The Health Resources and Services Administration is part of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. HRSA is the primary Federal agency responsible for improving access to health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. For more information about HRSA and its programs, visit www.hrsa.gov.

Forward this message to a friend

Summer 2009: In This Issue

Poison Help Campaign Will See You Deep in the Heart of Texas

Methadone Misuse: A Complex and Pressing National Concern

New HRSA Brochure Focuses on Safe Medicine Use

Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (PSPC): Enroll in PSPC 2.0 Now

HRSA Releases the Evaluation Report of the Taking Your Medicines Safely Pilot Program

Farewell to PCTARC

Clean Out Your Medicine Campaigns

Poison Control Program Seeks New Director

Poison HELP National Number Touted on CBS Day Time Television Show

Poison Help Campaign Will See You Deep in the Heart of Texas

Representatives of the Poison Help Campaign will be at the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology (NACCT) in San Antonio, Texas, September 21-26, 2009, to solicit feedback about campaign efforts. Campaign representatives had a similar opportunity last February at the annual AAPCC (American Association of Poison Control Centers) meeting where they provided an update on campaign progress and solicited feedback from Poison Center staff. That opportunity was invaluable and we want and need more of that one-on-one interaction to take our campaign to new heights of success.

We look forward to doing the same in San Antonio and hope you will stop by to talk with us about the campaign. We want to hear from YOU about what is happening in your communities, at your centers, and how we can make the Poison Help Campaign work for you. And we are excited to share our latest thinking and showcase some of the ways in which we are moving our plans into action.

If you have ideas about specific campaign-related issues you want us to address in San Antonio, please let us know. And if you won't be in San Antonio, we still want to hear from you—please send your ideas to rsanchez-barrett@hrsa.gov.

back to top

Methadone Misuse: A Complex and Pressing National Concern

In an effort to inform healthcare professionals and consumers about safe methadone use, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) and the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) are collaborating on a nationwide educational campaign. *Follow Directions: How to Use Methadone Safely*—is designed to reach treatment programs, patients, and consumers to help educate them about the safe use of methadone

Methadone is a commonly known drug used to assist addicts in their recovery from habit-forming drugs or prescription medications. Methadone is also prescribed to treat moderate-to-severe chronic pain patients. To that end, it is essential that prescribing clinicians and physicians are aware of a patient's overall health and other medications being taken. Patients need to be educated on the safe use of methadone and counseled on the possible adverse consequences of misuse, abuse, or sharing of the medication. Due to its complex pharmacology, methadone can be lethal or life threatening if it is not used exactly as directed or is mixed with certain other medicines. Whether used for addiction treatment or pain management, methadone is safe and effective when taken properly.

To further spread the message to consumers, educational information is being distributed through pharmacies to patients who have been prescribed methadone. SAMHSA and FDA will partner with Federal agencies and healthcare organizations to distribute the message of safe use.

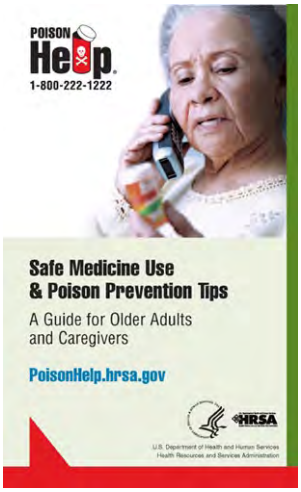
"The methadone safety campaign materials provide simple instructions for illicit and prescription drug addiction treatment and for pain management patients," noted H. Westley Clark, M.D., J.D., M.P.H., Director of SAMHSA's Center for Substance Abuse Treatment. "Our goal is to ensure the understanding of methadone's safe use by all patients and prescribing healthcare professionals."

For more information on the campaign, or to download free copies of the educational materials, please visit the *Follow Directions Campaign site* or call 1-800-662-HELP.

back to top

New HRSA Brochure Focuses on Safe Medicine Use

The Health Resources and Services Administration, Healthcare Systems Bureau, Poison Control Program, is pleased to announce the availability of its newest brochure, Safe Medicine Use & Poison Prevention Tips: A Guide for Older Adults and Caregivers. The brochure includes useful tips for the safe use of prescription and over-the-counter medicine. Developed in partnership with the Administration on Aging, the brochure promotes the use of the Poison Help toll-free number (1-800-222-1222) as a resource for questions about medicine use and poison prevention. The brochure is available for printing online at Poison Help where you will find a variety of poison prevention resources. A limited number of brochures for mail order are also available from the HRSA Information Center or by calling 1-800-ASK-HRSA.



back to top

Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (PSPC): Enroll in PSPC 2.0 Now

The Patient Safety and Clinical Pharmacy Services Collaborative (PSPC) hosted its third Learning Session (LS3) May 6-7, 2009, in Washington, DC. Two teams with representation from Poison Centers were present at LS3—Rebecca Rembert, Assistant Director of Outreach and Development for the Carolinas Poison Center and Mark Ryan, PharmD, Director of the Louisiana Poison Control Center. While several other Poison Centers have participated in previous learning sessions, now is the time for all Poison Centers to consider participating in the second year of the PSPC beginning this fall. Results from the first year have been very exciting. PSPC1 teams have reported dramatic improvements in health outcomes and quality of care in 68 communities across the country. Teams with Poison Centers have also reported timely opportunities to promote utilization of poison center services and to integrate poison centers as a 24-hour resource for medication safety questions.

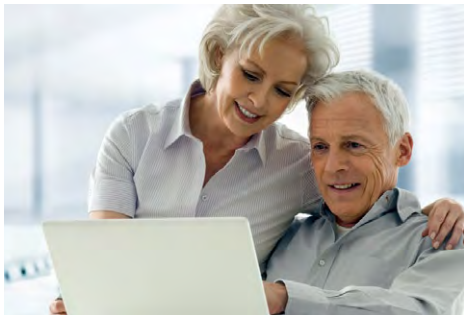
Sponsored by HRSA's Healthcare System Bureau, Office of Pharmacy Affairs, and HRSA's Center for Quality, the Collaborative is designed to improve the quality of care for patients by improving patient safety and patient health outcomes through the integration of clinical pharmacy services. The requirements of a PSPC team are to: commit to the PSPC aims and goals, gain a commitment from your organizational leaders, ensure that there is at least one HRSA-supported organization on your team, enroll an inter-professional team, and track and share your results monthly.

Form your own team or consider reaching out to an existing group. To find an active team in your area, please visit the team listing; these teams will be participating in LS4 in September 2009. Poison Centers interested in participating in PSPC 2.0 should contact the Poison Control Program about possible funding support to travel to the four Learning Sessions. Contact Rebeca Sanchez-Barrett at rsanchez-barrett@hrsa.gov.

The enrollment process for teams is simple: (1) form a community-based team (2) identify the organization that will serve as the "primary health care home" for your target population(s) (3) provide contact information for each of your team's organizational members and (4) answer six questions that detail your goals and commitments. Enrollment packages are now available at the Patient Safety Home and are due July 31, 2009. Please send questions to patientsafety@hrsa.gov.

back to top

HRSA Releases the Evaluation Report of the "Taking Your Medicines Safely" Pilot Program



An evaluation report of the "Taking Your Medicines Safety" (TYMS) pilot program—a poison education program for older adults—is now available on the Poison Help site. Designed to prevent unintentional drug misuse and drug poisoning among older adults (over 65), the TYMS program also promotes Poison Centers as a resource for medication safety questions. The pilot program was developed, implemented, and evaluated by a subgroup of Poison Center educators with assistance from the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation. The evaluation report details the methodology, evaluation results, and lessons learned from the pilot program.

The next phase of the TYMS program is currently under development with field-testing of a Web-based curriculum for use in senior centers across the United States. HRSA is partnering with the Administration on Aging to promote and facilitate distribution of the TYMS program to older adults via senior centers once completed. Look for the availability of this program in late Fall 2009.

back to top

Farewell to PCTARC

On May 17, 2009, the Poison Center Technical Assistance Resource Center (PCTARC) closed its doors after 9 years of service to the Nation's Poison Centers. Funded by the Health Resources and Services Administration, PCTARC provided technical assistance, training, and information to Poison Centers, stakeholder organizations and agencies. PCTARC also worked closely with HRSA staff to develop and manage the Federal Poison Control Program and contributed greatly to its growth. PCTARC was housed in the offices of the Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation (PIRE), a non-profit research firm headquartered in Calverton, Md.

PCTARC technical assistance highlights included the strategic management and planning that was a critical first step in providing Poison Centers with the tools needed to address center-specific issues; planning and facilitating the first and subsequent PCP grantee meetings; the evolution of the Poison Workgroup, which has been such a milestone in advancing the role of Poison Centers; the financial stability workgroup that helped focus critical issues for Poison Centers; "Taking Your Medicines Safely" (TYMS), the senior poison prevention education program originally developed in conjunction with Poison Center educators and now modified to be delivered by senior center personnel; the bi-annual Regional Educators' meetings that generated so much enthusiasm; the monthly Northeast Educators' conference calls that offered an ongoing opportunity for anyone to participate in a regional collaboration and sharing of knowledge; and HRSA's quarterly grantee conference calls that provided all Poison Centers with Federal program updates. The service and assistance provided by PCTARC was invaluable and will be greatly missed by HRSA and Poison Centers.

Although PCTARC has officially closed, a few PIRE staff will continue to work with HRSA and Poison Centers through November 2009. Continuation of projects include working with the Poison Workgroup—a group of professionals interested in poison prevention—who currently are carrying out action plans to reduce morbidity and mortality from narcotic/opioid poisoning. PIRE staff also will continue to work on the final phase of the TYMS program. Please send any inquiries about the Poison Workgroup or TYMS to sheppard@pire.org or call 301-755-2728.

back to top

Clean Out Your Medicine Campaigns

Donna Lotzer, Senior Clinical Pharmacist and Educator at the Wisconsin Poison Center

There is agreement that expired or unwanted medications should not be stored around the house where they are accessible and can lead to unintentional poisonings or intentional abuse. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy indicated to consumers that drugs should not be flushed unless recommended by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (see these Federal Guidelines). However, without drug take-back programs and consistent information on this topic, residents will continue to engage in improper disposal habits.

Such concerns have prompted States like Wisconsin and Indiana to initiate drug take-back programs. Wisconsin's *MedDrop* Program is a drive-through/drop-off event offered to Dane County residents. More than 800 residents delivered over 1,600 pounds of medications to a *MedDrop* collection held on June 7, 2008. This program has been successful, while complying with Federal, State, and local collection and disposal laws.

During National Poison Prevention Week, Indiana hosted a "Clean Out Your Cabinet Day" on March 20, 2009. The Indiana Poison Center collaborated with the Indiana Pharmacists Alliance, Marsh Pharmacies, the Marion County Health Department, Statewide Medical Services, and Clarian Health. Over 600 pounds of unwanted or expired medications were collected at the county health department and Marsh pharmacy locations. For more information, visit the Indiana Pharmacists Alliance.

Thinking about starting a program in your area? Here are a few tips for success:

- Develop partnerships with key players committed to public health, education, and safety (e.g., pharmacy, law enforcement, household hazardous waste, etc.).
- Carefully select the collection site, date, and time.
- Prepare for the unexpected (e.g., how should items that are not acceptable be handled?) and expect to be overwhelmed with the public response.

A good resource for public drug disposal programs can also be found at The Drug Take-Back Network Web site.

Behind the table, two volunteer public health nurses from the Marion County Health Department assist a member of the public with their drop-off.

back to top

Poison Control Program Seeks New Director

After 4 1/2 years serving as the Director of the Poison Control Program, Lori Roche accepted a new position at HRSA and is now working in the Bureau of Clinician Recruitment and Service. During her tenure, Roche worked diligently to form new partnerships and elevate the visibility of Poison Centers and the Poison Help Campaign. HRSA seeks a replacement to build on this momentum and encourages qualified government employee candidates to view the vacancy announcement that will be posted on www.USAjobs.gov.

Patricia Stroup is currently serving as the acting director of the Poison Control Program. She may be contacted at 301-443-1127 or pstroup@hrsa.gov. Any inquiries with regard to the Poison Help Campaign should be directed to Rebeca Sanchez-Barrett at rsanchez-barrett@hrsa.gov or 301-443-0324.

back to top

Poison HELP National Number Touted On CBS Day Time Television Show

"The Doctors", a CBS day time talk show featuring four physicians who discuss medical topics of interest to the public, recently encouraged its audience to keep the 1-800 Poison Help number handy at all times. Reference to the number was made on May 14, 2009, during an episode dedicated to distinguishing when to call the doctor and when to rush to the emergency room. The doctors discussed a scenario involving a mother who suspects that her child may have been poisoned by household chemicals. In addition to suggesting a call to Poison Help in cases like this, the doctors also mentioned that Poison Center staff are helpful in temporizing emergency situations that do call for 911 assistance.

In the days following the airing of the show, the Poison Help site experienced a significant spike in hits. While the Poison Control Program cannot be certain that its partnership with Hollywood, Health & Society (HH&S) solely and directly led to the reference and subsequent visits to the Poison Help site, an HH&S interview with a Hollywood trade publication may have set the wheels in motion.

As reported in the Spring 2009 edition of the Poison Control Program's Newsletter, the PCP has an interagency agreement with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to collaborate on HH&S. HH&S is a project at the University of Southern California's Annenberg Normal Lear Center that provides screenwriters and producers with accurate and timely information for health storylines. As part of this collaboration, HH&S consults with select Poison Center staff when specific story line advice related to poisonings is sought.

Sandra de Castro Buffington, HH&S director, was interviewed by Variety for an article about "The Doctors." She told *Variety* about HH&S's collaboration with the PCP and the services offered by poison centers. She also told them about briefings done about poisonings and the availability of the poison expert panel to provide consultation. The reporter subsequently called the writers and producers of the "The Doctors" after the interview and relayed the conversation with de Castro Buffington.

As this sequence of events illustrates, HH&S briefs, informs, conducts outreach, and provides case studies; these health stories regularly find their way into programming. HH&S's *Real to Reel* newsletter reaches 680 writers quarterly and also seeds ideas for poison related stories. This collaboration with HH&S continues to promote the Poison Help number and the invaluable services offered by the Nation's Poison Centers.

back to top

HRSA Poison Control Program

www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov
301.443.1172

Publisher

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)
Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA)
Healthcare Systems Bureau (HSB), Poison Control Program

Parklawn Building, Room 10C-06, 5600 Fishers Lane, Rockville, MD 20857

Prepared for HRSA/HSB by Edelman Public Relations

This publication lists non-federal resources in order to provide additional information to consumers. The views and content in these resources have not been formally approved by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) or the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA). Listing these resources is not an endorsement by HHS or HRSA.