



**U.S. Department of Health and Human Services  
Health Resources and Services Administration**

**REPORT TO CONGRESS**

**POISON HELP CAMPAIGN  
Fiscal Year 2016**

## Executive Summary

This Report to Congress on the Poison Help Campaign for Fiscal Year (FY) 2016 is in response to 42 U.S.C. §300d-72(c), as amended by The Poison Center Network Act (P.L. 113-77), which states, in part:

*“The Secretary shall establish baseline measures and benchmarks to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the nationwide media campaign... and on an annual basis, prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress, an evaluation of the nationwide media campaign.”*

The Health Resources and Services Administration’s Poison Control Program (PCP) plays an important role in ensuring universal access to poison control centers’ (PCC) services. The PCP is legislatively mandated to provide grant funds to PCCs, establish and maintain a single national toll-free phone number (Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222) to access PCC services, and implement a nationwide media campaign (the Poison Help Campaign).

The purpose of the Poison Help Campaign is to increase awareness of PCCs among the public and health care providers regarding the services they provide and the Poison Help Phone Line. Additional objectives are to raise awareness of the Poison Help English and Spanish language websites, increase media focus on the Poison Help Phone Line, and partner with organizations that reach primary audiences.

# Table of Contents

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....	ii
ACRONYM LIST.....	iv
I. LEGISLATIVE LANGUAGE .....	1
II. INTRODUCTION.....	1
III. FY 2016 POISON HELP CAMPAIGN ACTIVITIES.....	2
IV. CONCLUSION.....	3

## **Acronym List**

CSN	Children's Safety Network
FY	Fiscal Year
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
NHSC	National Health Service Corps
NPPW	National Poison Prevention Week
OC	Office of Communications
PCC	Poison Control Center
PCP	Poison Control Program

## I. Legislative Language

This report is being provided to Congress as outlined in 42 U.S.C. §300d-72(c), as amended by the Poison Center Network Act (P.L. 113-77). The Poison Center Network Act states in part:

*“The Secretary shall establish baseline measures and benchmarks to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the nationwide media campaign... and on an annual basis, prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress, an evaluation of the nationwide media campaign.”*

## II. Introduction

The Poison Help Campaign seeks to increase awareness of the 55 poison control centers (PCC), the services they provide, and the toll-free Poison Help Phone Line (1-800-222-1222) among the public and health care providers. Additional campaign objectives are to:

- Increase awareness of the Poison Help websites [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) and [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov);
- Increase the number of traditional and social media impressions focused on the Poison Help Phone Line;
- Increase the number of traditional and social media impressions focused on the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) poisoning prevention resources; and
- Develop and sustain partnerships with organizations that influence target audiences.

The Poison Help General Population Survey measures statistical benchmarks of the Poison Help Campaign every 5 years. Appendix B of the FY 2012 Poison Help Report to Congress includes the results from the 2011 survey at <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/the-poison-help-line/campaignfiscalyear2012.pdf>. The approval process to conduct another survey is currently underway, and if approved, HRSA will make the results available in the FY 2018 Poison Help Campaign Report to Congress.

During the FY 2016 reporting period, the Poison Control Program (PCP) focused on developing media materials through its contract with Brunet-Garcia Advertising to assist with outreach to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. The target audience was selected in response to the Senate’s direction to the Secretary “to engage in discussions with the Nation’s poison control centers to develop a plan to achieve these possible additional Medicare and Medicaid cost savings” (Senate Report #113-71). Senate Report #113-71 stated that “Poison control centers respond to nearly 4 million public and healthcare professional poisoning, toxic exposure, and adverse drug event emergency calls annually. It is estimated that the avoidance of these unnecessary hospitalizations save more than \$1,200,000,000 in healthcare costs annually, of which nearly \$700,000,000 of these savings accrue to the benefit of the Federal Medicare and Medicaid programs.” The Senate Report also stated, “The Committee believes these savings can be substantially increased through enhanced awareness of poison control centers by all Medicare and Medicaid participants. The Committee encourages the Secretary to engage in discussions with the Nation’s poison control centers to develop a plan to achieve these possible additional

Medicare and Medicaid cost savings.” The purposes of the contract with Brunet-Garcia Advertising are (1) to expand the Poison Help Campaign to educate Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries about poison prevention and the availability of PCC resources in local communities and (2) to conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide toll-free Poison Help Line phone number (1-800-222-1222).

Additionally, PCP continued its outreach efforts through dissemination of Poison Help messages and materials as well as maintaining and developing new relationships with partners and stakeholders. The PCP developed a new partnership with the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), who provided feedback during the development of the new Poison Help materials. Please refer to section III, Partnership Building, for more information on HRSA’s partnerships and stakeholder efforts.

### **III. FY 2016 Poison Help Campaign Activities**

#### **New Content**

In September 2015, the Poison Help Campaign contracted with Brunet-Garcia Advertising to develop new media materials designed to target the Medicare and Medicaid populations. Media materials included 2 animated television and radio public service announcements, 6 infographics, and 29 digital advertisements in English and Spanish. The contractor designed two video concepts, and subsequent storyboards, to test using 15 in-depth-interviews in English and Spanish with Medicare and Medicaid enrollees. The interviews occurred in a professional research facility in the Washington, D.C./Baltimore area. At the conclusion of the focus group testing, one concept was identified as the unanimous favorite, and a video reflecting the winning concept was developed. HRSA plans to release these media materials during FY 2017 for distribution to broadcast television networks, national and regional cable networks, Neilson monitored radio stations, CMS’s Medicare Facebook and Twitter accounts, and HRSA’s Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube accounts. Data regarding these targeted media materials for the poison help campaign will be available in the FY 2017 report.

#### **Website Update**

The Poison Help websites, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) and [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov), recorded 62,119 visitors and 83,963 sessions. Downloads included information on safe medication use, seasonal safety tips, and a poison help brochure for education of the community the PCC serves. The website provides the information in both English and Spanish which highlights the services that PCCs provide and encourages the public to program the Poison Help number into their phones. Although the number of website visits decreased by approximately 8 percent from FY 2015, it is anticipated that visits will increase with the release of the campaign media materials. Another resource is the “Making Connections” web video that provides the information in both English and Spanish. The web video continues to be available on the Poison Help website and on HRSA’s You Tube channel.

## **Partnership Building**

PCP continues to sustain its partnerships within HRSA and the Department of Health and Human Services. During National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), HRSA's Bureau of Health Workforce recognized NPPW through its National Health Service Corps (NHSC) and NURSE Corps Programs on Facebook and Twitter. HRSA's Bureau of Primary Health Care promoted NPPW in their weekly external stakeholder-focused Primary Health Care Digest to 19,000 subscribers and others, including many Federally Qualified Health Centers. The Office of Women's Health promoted NPPW through their distribution channels. The National Healthy Mothers, Healthy Babies Coalition's Text4Baby promoted NPPW in their weekly electronic news announcements. Text4baby is an education campaign that provides free cell phone text messaging to pregnant women and new moms on how to have a healthy pregnancy and a healthy baby.

Additionally, the HRSA Web Team participated in the #SafeMedsChat on Twitter. The Alliance for Aging Research hosted the event in partnership with the American Association of Poison Control Centers, the Consumer Healthcare Products Association Educational Foundation, the Acetaminophen Awareness Coalition, and the National Council on Patient Information and Education.

Other partnership activities include:

- HRSA met with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) Public Health Education Committee Co-chairs to discuss efforts to promote the poison centers, the services they provide, and the 800-phone number. The AAPCC is a non-profit organization that supports the nation's 55 poison centers through information, advocacy, education, and research.
- HRSA participated in the Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days. This effort allows for the disposal of drugs in environmentally responsible ways and decreases the supply of unused prescription drugs in the home.

## **IV. Conclusion**

This report presents the Poison Help Campaign's outreach efforts to heighten awareness of the PCP message. HRSA will continue to work to sustain and expand strategic communications efforts. HRSA also plans to continue to coordinate its primary messages with key constituencies, identify opportunities for cross promotion with other federal poisoning prevention activities, and encourage individuals to program the Poison Help phone line into their phones to ensure the number is easily accessible.