



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

REPORT TO CONGRESS

**POISON HELP CAMPAIGN
Fiscal Year 2017**

Executive Summary

This Report to Congress on the Poison Help Campaign for Fiscal Year (FY) 2017 is in response to 42 U.S.C. 300d-72(c), as amended by the Poison Center Network Act, Public Law (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 (the Poison Help Phone Line) 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 among the public and health care providers of the Poison Help Phone Line and of PCCs and the services they provide. 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.

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Acronym List

AAPCC	American Association of Poison Control Centers
CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
FY	Fiscal Year
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
NPPW	National Poison Prevention Week
PCC	Poison Control Center
PCP	Poison Control Program
P.L.	Public Law
PSA	Public Service Announcement

I. Legislative Language

This report is being submitted to Congress as required by 42 U.S.C. 300d-72(c), amended by the Poison Center Network Act, Public Law (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) in the U.S. and its territories, 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 the number of visits to the Poison Help websites www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov and <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/es/index.html>;
- Increase the number of traditional and social media Poison Help Phone Line impressions;
- 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 five years. Appendix B of the fiscal year (FY) 2012 Poison Help Report to Congress included the results from the 2011 survey. See <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/the-poison-help-line/campaignfiscalyear2012.pdf>. HRSA anticipates that updated survey results from a 2017 survey will be available in the FY 2018 Poison Help Campaign Report to Congress.

During the FY 2017 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, in Senate Report 113-71, which states,

“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 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 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
- Conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide toll-free Poison Help Line phone number (1-800-222-1222).

Additionally, the PCP continued its outreach efforts through dissemination of Poison Help messages and materials and maintaining and developing relationships with partners and stakeholders. For example, the PCP worked in partnership with the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) in the distribution of new Poison Help materials. Please refer to section III, Partnership Building, for more information on HRSA’s partnerships and stakeholder efforts.

III. FY 2017 Poison Help Campaign Activities

HRSA released new outreach campaign media materials during FY 2017 for distribution to broadcast television networks, national and regional cable networks, and Nielsen monitored radio stations. A paid Public Service Announcement (PSA) distribution for television resulted in 146,912,181 gross impressions, including 28,635 airings through 92 unique markets and 183 stations. The PSA distribution for radio resulted in 33,580,608 gross impressions, including 18,203 airings through 161 stations. A gross impression is defined as the sum of audiences, in terms of people or households viewing or listening, where there is exposure to the same commercial or program on multiple occasions. Two impressions could mean the same person was in the audience on two occasions or that two different people had been exposed only once. The estimated value of the combined television and radio impressions was \$4.9 million.

Facebook video ads reached a population of 317,116, and Facebook Link Share ads reached a population of 527,913. Medicare beneficiaries had the most video ad views and were the least expensive to reach. It cost \$0.75 per impression for 161,139 impressions, which reached 78,843 Medicare beneficiaries for a total cost of \$120,854. Media and blogger outreach resulted in more than 500 media outlets picking up PCP infographics.

Overall, the 2017 campaign had a 24-to-1 return on investment (i.e., \$24 return on every \$1 spent by HRSA).

Website Update

HRSA's Poison Help websites, www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov and <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/es/index.html>, recorded 145,109 and 8,435 page views, respectively, in FY 2017. Although the number of sessions (82,827) on the websites decreased by approximately 1.1 percent in FY 2017, the amount of time spent on the sites and the number of information downloads increased compared to the previous year. The average time spent on the websites increased by 90 seconds, or 22.3 percent. Downloads of information files increased by 150 percent compared to the previous year, including information on safe medication use, seasonal safety tips, and a Poison Help brochure for public education. HRSA provides online information in both English and Spanish, which highlights the services that PCCs provide and encourages the public to program the Poison Help Phone Line into their phones.

Partnership Building

The PCP actively fosters partnerships within HRSA and the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS). For example, HRSA collaborated with CMS to promote National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW) on Facebook and Twitter. The PCP distributed PSAs and infographics to HRSA Bureau of Health Workforce's National Health Service Corps and NURSE Corps Programs, HRSA Maternal and Child Health Bureau's Children's Safety Network, and HHS' Office of Women's Health, in order to promote NPPW through their distribution channels.

Other partnership activities included the following:

- HRSA collaborated with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) Public Health Education Committee Co-Chairs regarding efforts to promote the PCCs, the services they provide, and the Poison Help Phone Line. 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's messages. 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.