



American Association of Poison Control Centers

NEWS RELEASE

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American Association of Poison Control Centers Publishes 34th Annual Report of the National Poison Data System: Calls to Poison Control Show Upward Trend in Medical Severity; Poison Control Increasingly Utilized by Health Care Providers

Alexandria, VA – The recently published 34th *Annual Report of the American Association of Poison Control Centers' (AAPCC) National Poison Data System (NPDS)* reveals that in 2016, someone called a poison control center about every 12 seconds. America's poison control centers managed 2.71 million encounters, over two million of which were human exposure cases. Total calls to poison control showed a 2.94% decline from 2015. However, health care facility (HCF) human exposure cases increased by 3.63% from 2015, representing almost a quarter of all human exposure calls, and calls with more serious medical outcomes have increased by 4.39% per year since 2000.

“Poison control is at the forefront of the evolving opioid epidemic, taking calls from the lay public as well as first responders and emergency department clinicians. As access to prescription opioids have decreased we are seeing a shift towards more illicit opioid use, like heroin, and that's reflected in the kinds of calls we are getting,” said William Banner, MD, PhD, FACMT, FAACT, Medical Director of the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information, and current AAPCC President. Banner and the annual report note the sharp increases in heroin cases and resulting fatalities.

As in previous years, the large majority of exposures were reported from residences, but poison control centers also received a significant number of calls from places of work, school, and outdoors. “One of the major benefits of the poison control system is that specialists are able to treat most cases at the site of exposure with relative ease, saving about \$1.8 billion annually,” said Stephen T. Kaminski, JD, AAPCC CEO and Executive Director.

“Poisoning continues to be the number one cause of injury-related death in the country. Poison control centers are equipped, 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year, to manage an array of calls, from poison-related information to treatment advice for more serious exposures. Anyone can experience a poison emergency; however, the public can easily prepare for these types of emergencies by programming the Poison Help phone number, 1-800-222-1222, into their mobile telephone,” said Kaminski.

In an effort to make poison control expertise even more accessible to the public, AAPCC launched PoisonHelp.org this year. PoisonHelp.org is an online triage tool that allows users to input a substance to which someone may have been exposed, and get an instant tailored recommendation on the next steps they should take. This year AAPCC also set up an automated texting service such that if one texts “Poison” to 797979 he or she can download the complete contact information for poison control, and be prepared for a poisoning emergency.

Data for the Annual Report comes from [NPDS](#). AAPCC maintains NPDS, the data repository for the nation's 55 poison control centers. NPDS is the only comprehensive, near real-time poisoning surveillance database in the United States and contains information on more than 60 million poison exposures mapped to a products database of over 427,000 specific products. "Through NPDS, America's poison control centers are among the most important tools we have for public health surveillance," said David Gummin MD, lead author of the report. "In addition to using it to describe the kinds of cases managed by poison control annually as we did in this report, we can use NPDS to gain valuable insights about anything from the 2010 Gulf oil spill to most recently tackling the growing opioid crisis in United States."

The full report contains a comprehensive overview of cases managed by poison control centers and can be accessed [here](#). An overview of the annual report, the Poison Control Center Data Snapshot, is available as well.

*AAPCC supports the nation's 55 poison control center members in their efforts to treat and prevent drug, consumer product, animal, environmental and food poisoning. Members staff the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians and poison information providers. In addition, AAPCC maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States, providing real-time monitoring of unusual poisoning patterns, chemical exposures and other emerging public health hazards. AAPCC partners with federal agencies such as HRSA, CDC, FDA and EPA, as well as private industry. **Be prepared for a poisoning emergency and program the Poison Help phone number into your mobile telephone today – 1 (800) 222-1222 or text "POISON" to 797979 to download the Poison Help vCard into your smartphone, and visit [PoisonHelp.org](#).***

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