

Congress of the United States
Washington, DC 20515

March 19, 2018

The Honorable Tom Cole
Chairman
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

The Honorable Rosa DeLauro
Ranking Member
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,
Health and Human Services, and Education
U.S. House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515

Dear Chairman Frelinghuysen, Chairman Cole, Ranking Member Lowey, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

Thank you for your continued support of our nation's network of Poison Control Centers (PCCs) and its authorized Health Resources Services Administration (HRSA) funding. This support has allowed our country's current network of 55 PCCs to continue their life-saving work and maintain access to vital health care services for all citizens in every state in the country.

Poisoning is now the leading cause of injury death in the United States, surpassing motor vehicle traffic deaths. A dramatic increase in drug poisoning deaths, especially opioid deaths, is causing the rise. According to the CDC in 2016, more than 64,000 opioid poisoning-related deaths occurred in the United States. For over 50 years, the Poison Control Program has been our nation's primary defense against injury and death from poisonings. Today, the program supports a national network of 55 Poison Control Centers that provide universal access to cost-effective, quality health care advice to the general public and health care providers across the United States. As a result of the Poison Control Program, every American has access to the information and emergency services provided by our nation's poison control centers 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. Poison Control Centers are not only consulted when children get into household products, but also when seniors and people of all ages take too much medicine or when workers are exposed to harmful substances on the job. Approximately 3 million calls are managed by PCCs each year.

Multiple studies have demonstrated that the services provided by Poison Control Centers save dollars by reducing the severity of illness and death. It is estimated that every dollar invested in the poison control center system saves \$13.39 in medical costs and lost productivity, for a total savings of more than \$1.8 billion every year. These savings are attributed to over \$752.9 million in avoided ER visits, \$444.1 million in reduced hospital stay, \$23.9 million in the prevention of poisonings, and \$603 million in reduced work-loss days.

In January 2014, the President signed into law the Poison Center Network Act (P.L. 113-77), which was the fourth five-year authorization of the Poison Control Program. The bill generated overwhelming support in the House and passed by Unanimous Consent in the Senate. The

Poison Center Network Act authorized \$30.1 million in appropriations for the Poison Control Program for each of Fiscal Years 2015 through 2019. Specifically, the Act authorized \$28.6 million to provide grants to accredited poison control centers to prevent and provide treatment recommendations for toxic exposures for healthcare providers, to hospitals and the public; \$800,000 to conduct a national media campaign to educate the public and health care providers about poison prevention and the availability of poison control center resources; and \$700,000 to support the maintenance of the national, toll-free poison control phone number: 1-800-222-1222.

As a result of the communications system established and funded in P.L. 113-77, the nation's network of poison centers are engaged as a first responder in many public health emergencies and occurrences. Also they annually provide critical situational surveillance and real time data to federal, state and local officials. This year is no different. Both the CDC and FDA depend on poison center call data for their surveillance of, and response to, public health occurrences. For example, in the first four months of FY 2017, the FDA requested over 2,500 surveillance reports from the national poison control system. During the nation's Zika virus preparedness and response initiative, two-thirds of the nation's poison centers served as principal informational and response centers in coordination with the CDC.

In order to continue the outstanding work of the nation's poison control centers, which help reduce unnecessary healthcare costs, prevent injuries and fatalities resulting from poisoning, and provide the citizens of the U.S. its only real time, 24x7 source of public health expertise and information, we respectfully request that the House Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education and Related Agencies appropriate \$30 million for the Poison Control Program, in the FY 2019 appropriations bill.

We are grateful for your support for the Poison Control Program in the past and urge you to provide the nation's poison control center network this level of funding as authorized by P.L. 113-77.

Sincerely,



Susan W. Brooks
Member of Congress




Terri Sewell
Member of Congress




Earl Blumenauer
Member of Congress




Joe Barton
Member of Congress


John Lewis
Member of Congress


Danny K. Davis
Member of Congress


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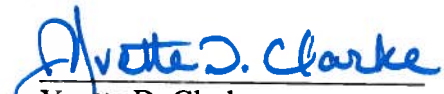

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