

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 632

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

SEPTEMBER 8, 1999

Referred to the Committee on Commerce

AN ACT

To provide assistance for poison prevention and to stabilize
the funding of regional poison control centers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Poison Control Center
5 Enhancement and Awareness Act”.

1 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

2 Congress makes the following findings:

3 (1) Each year more than 2,000,000 poisonings
4 are reported to poison control centers throughout
5 the United States. More than 90 percent of these
6 poisonings happen in the home. 53 percent of poi-
7 soning victims are children younger than 6 years of
8 age.

9 (2) Poison control centers are a valuable na-
10 tional resource that provide life-saving and cost-ef-
11 fective public health services. For every dollar spent
12 on poison control centers, \$7 in medical costs are
13 saved. The average cost of a poisoning exposure call
14 is \$32, while the average cost if other parts of the
15 medical system are involved is \$932. Over the last
16 2 decades, the instability and lack of funding has re-
17 sulted in a steady decline in the number of poison
18 control centers in the United States. Within just the
19 last year, 2 poison control centers have been forced
20 to close because of funding problems. A third poison
21 control center is scheduled to close in April 1999.
22 Currently, there are 73 such centers.

23 (3) Stabilizing the funding structure and in-
24 creasing accessibility to poison control centers will
25 increase the number of United States residents who
26 have access to a certified poison control center, and

1 reduce the inappropriate use of emergency medical
2 services and other more costly health care services.

3 **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

4 In this Act, the term “Secretary” means the Sec-
5 retary of Health and Human Services.

6 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL TOLL-FREE NUM-**
7 **BER.**

8 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide co-
9 ordination and assistance to regional poison control cen-
10 ters for the establishment of a nationwide toll-free phone
11 number to be used to access such centers.

12 (b) RULE OF CONSTRUCTION.—Nothing in this sec-
13 tion shall be construed as prohibiting the establishment
14 or continued operation of any privately funded nationwide
15 toll-free phone number used to provide advice and other
16 assistance for poisonings or accidental exposures.

17 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
18 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
19 \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through
20 2004. Funds appropriated under this subsection shall not
21 be used to fund any toll-free phone number described in
22 subsection (b).

1 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONWIDE MEDIA CAM-**
2 **PAIGN.**

3 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
4 national media campaign to educate the public and health
5 care providers about poison prevention and the availability
6 of poison control resources in local communities and to
7 conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide
8 toll-free number established under section 4.

9 (b) CONTRACT WITH ENTITY.—The Secretary may
10 carry out subsection (a) by entering into contracts with
11 1 or more nationally recognized media firms for the devel-
12 opment and distribution of monthly television, radio, and
13 newspaper public service announcements.

14 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
15 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
16 \$600,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004.

17 **SEC. 6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A GRANT PROGRAM.**

18 (a) REGIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTERS.—The
19 Secretary shall award grants to certified regional poison
20 control centers for the purposes of achieving the financial
21 stability of such centers, and for preventing and providing
22 treatment recommendations for poisonings.

23 (b) OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.—The Secretary shall
24 also use amounts received under this section to—

25 (1) develop standard education programs;

1 (2) develop standard patient management pro-
2 ocols for commonly encountered toxic exposures;

3 (3) improve and expand the poison control data
4 collection systems;

5 (4) improve national toxic exposure surveillance;
6 and

7 (5) expand the physician/medical toxicologist
8 supervision of poison control centers.

9 (c) CERTIFICATION.—Except as provided in sub-
10 section (d), the Secretary may make a grant to a center
11 under subsection (a) only if—

12 (1) the center has been certified by a profes-
13 sional organization in the field of poison control, and
14 the Secretary has approved the organization as hav-
15 ing in effect standards for certification that reason-
16 ably provide for the protection of the public health
17 with respect to poisoning; or

18 (2) the center has been certified by a State gov-
19 ernment, and the Secretary has approved the State
20 government as having in effect standards for certifi-
21 cation that reasonably provide for the protection of
22 the public health with respect to poisoning.

23 (d) WAIVER OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

24 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may grant a
25 waiver of the certification requirement of subsection

1 (c) with respect to a noncertified poison control cen-
2 ter or a newly established center that applies for a
3 grant under this section if such center can reason-
4 ably demonstrate that the center will obtain such a
5 certification within a reasonable period of time as
6 determined appropriate by the Secretary.

7 (2) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may only renew
8 a waiver under paragraph (1) for a period of 3
9 years.

10 (e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts made
11 available to a poison control center under this section shall
12 be used to supplement and not supplant other Federal,
13 State, or local funds provided for such center.

14 (f) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—A poison control
15 center, in utilizing the proceeds of a grant under this sec-
16 tion, shall maintain the expenditures of the center for ac-
17 tivities of the center at a level that is not less than the
18 level of such expenditures maintained by the center for
19 the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the
20 grant is received.

21 (g) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary may
22 impose a matching requirement with respect to amounts
23 provided under a grant under this section if the Secretary
24 determines appropriate.

1 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
3 \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through
4 2004.

Passed the Senate August 5, 1999.

Attest:

GARY SISCO,
Secretary.