

105TH CONGRESS  
2D SESSION

# S. 1862

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

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IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 25, 1998

Mr. DEWINE introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred  
to the Committee on Labor and Human Resources

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## A BILL

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”.

6       **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7       Congress makes the following findings:

8               (1) Each year more than 2,000,000 poisonings  
9       are reported to poison control centers throughout  
10      the United States. More than 90 percent of these

1        poisonings happen in the home. 53 percent of poi-  
2        soning victims are children younger than 6 years of  
3        age.

4            (2) Poison centers are life-saving and cost-effec-  
5        tive public health services. For every dollar spent on  
6        poison control centers, \$7 in medical costs are saved.  
7        The average cost of a poisoning exposure call is  
8        \$31.28, while the average cost if other parts of the  
9        medical system are involved is \$932. Over the last  
10       2 decades, the instability and lack of funding has re-  
11       sulted in a steady decline in the number of poison  
12       control centers in the United States. Currently,  
13       there are 75 such centers.

14           (3) Stabilizing the funding structure and in-  
15        creasing accessibility to poison control centers will  
16        increase the number of United States residents who  
17        have access to a certified poison control center, and  
18        reduce the inappropriate use of emergency medical  
19        services and other more costly health care services.

20    **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

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

1 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL TOLL-FREE**  
2 **NUMBER.**

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

7 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
8 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
9 \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1999 through  
10 2001.

11 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONWIDE MEDIA CAM-**  
12 **PAIGN.**

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

19 (b) CONTRACT WITH ENTITY.—The Secretary may  
20 carry out subsection (a) by entering into contracts with  
21 1 or more nationally recognized media firms for the devel-  
22 opment and distribution of monthly television, radio, and  
23 newspaper public service announcements.

24 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
25 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
26 \$600,000 for each of the fiscal years 1999 through 2003.

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

2 (a) REGIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTERS.—The  
3 Secretary shall award grants to certified regional poison  
4 control centers for the purposes of achieving the financial  
5 stability of such centers, and for preventing and providing  
6 treatment recommendations for poisonings.

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

9 (1) develop standard education programs;

10 (2) develop standard patient management pro-  
11 tocols for commonly encountered toxic exposures;

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

14 (4) improve national toxic exposure surveillance.

15 (c) CERTIFICATION.—Except as provided in sub-  
16 section (d), the Secretary may make a grant to a center  
17 under subsection (a) only if the center has been certified  
18 by a professional organization in the field of poison con-  
19 trol, and the Secretary has approved the organization as  
20 having in effect standards for certification that reasonably  
21 provide for the protection of the public health with respect  
22 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

26 (a) with respect to a noncertified poison control cen-

1       ter that applies for a grant under this section if such  
2       center can reasonably demonstrate that the center  
3       will obtain such a certification within a reasonable  
4       period of time as determined appropriate by the Sec-  
5       retary.

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

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

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

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

24      (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
25      authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,

- 1 \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 1999 through
- 2 2001.

