

106TH CONGRESS  
1ST SESSION

# H. R. 1221

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

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## IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

MARCH 23, 1999

Mr. UPTON (for himself, Mr. TOWNS, Mr. BILIRAKIS, Ms. ESHOO, Mrs. JOHNSON of Connecticut, Mr. RANGEL, Mr. LEACH, Mr. STARK, Mr. FRELINGHUYSEN, Mr. BENTSEN, Mr. FOLEY, Mr. MORAN of Virginia, Mr. LATOURETTE, Mr. McDERMOTT, Mr. NEY, Mr. ROTHMAN, Mr. CAMP, Ms. BROWN of Florida, Ms. PELOSI, Ms. BERKLEY, Ms. KILPATRICK, Mr. CROWLEY, Mr. MENENDEZ, Mr. KENNEDY of Rhode Island, and Mr. CLAY) introduced the following bill; which was referred to the Committee on Commerce

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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:

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

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

21          (3) Stabilizing the funding structure and in-  
22          creasing accessibility to poison control centers will  
23          increase the number of United States residents who  
24          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) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
13   authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
14   \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through  
15   2004.

16   **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONWIDE MEDIA CAM-**  
17                           **PAIGN.**

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

24       (b) CONTRACT WITH ENTITY.—The Secretary may  
25   carry out subsection (a) by entering into contracts with

1 1 or more nationally recognized media firms for the devel-  
2 opment and distribution of monthly television, radio, and  
3 newspaper public service announcements.

4 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
5 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
6 \$600,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004.

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

8 (a) REGIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTERS.—The  
9 Secretary shall award grants to certified regional poison  
10 control centers for the purposes of achieving the financial  
11 stability of such centers, and for preventing and providing  
12 treatment recommendations for poisonings.

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

- 15 (1) develop standard education programs;
- 16 (2) develop standard patient management pro-  
17 tocols for commonly encountered toxic exposures;
- 18 (3) improve and expand the poison control data  
19 collection systems;
- 20 (4) improve national toxic exposure surveillance;
- 21 and
- 22 (5) expand the physician/medical toxicologist  
23 supervision of poison control centers.

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

4           (1) the center has been certified by a profes-  
5 sional organization in the field of poison control, and  
6 the Secretary has approved the organization as hav-  
7 ing in effect standards for certification that reason-  
8 ably provide for the protection of the public health  
9 with respect to poisoning; or

10          (2) the center has been certified by a State gov-  
11 ernment, and the Secretary has approved the State  
12 government as having in effect standards for certifi-  
13 cation that reasonably provide for the protection of  
14 the public health with respect to poisoning.

15       (d) WAIVER OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

16           (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may grant a  
17 waiver of the certification requirement of subsection  
18 (c) with respect to a noncertified poison control cen-  
19 ter or a newly established center that applies for a  
20 grant under this section if such center can reason-  
21 ably demonstrate that the center will obtain such a  
22 certification within a reasonable period of time as  
23 determined appropriate by the Secretary.

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

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

8       (f) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—A poison control  
9       center, in utilizing the proceeds of a grant under this sec-  
10      tion, shall maintain the expenditures of the center for ac-  
11      tivities of the center at a level that is not less than the  
12      level of such expenditures maintained by the center for  
13      the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the  
14      grant is received.

15      (g) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary may  
16      impose a matching requirement with respect to amounts  
17      provided under a grant under this section if the Secretary  
18      determines appropriate.

19      (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is  
20      authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,  
21      \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through  
22      2004.

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