

July 11, 2011

The Honorable Tom Harkin  
Chairman  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Richard Shelby  
Ranking Member  
Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor,  
Health and Human Services, and Education  
U.S. Senate  
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Dennis Rehberg  
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 Harkin, Chairman Rehberg, Ranking Member Shelby, and Ranking Member DeLauro:

As organizations committed to the health and well-being of our nation's children and families, we urge you to restore funding for the network of highly effective and cost-efficient poison control centers to \$29.3 million in the FY2012 Labor-HHS-Education Appropriations legislation.

Since initially authorized by Congress in 2000, federal funding for poison control centers has received significant bipartisan support. In FY2010, Congress allocated \$29.3 million in funding to supplement local and state support for the 57 poison control centers that serve our nation every day. Unfortunately, Congress reduced funding for poison control centers almost 25 percent in FY2011 to \$22 million. It is necessary for Congress to restore poison control center funding and reject the fiscally unwise and illogical cuts to this very successful national public health program.

Poison control services save money and save lives. The return on investment for the national poison center program was documented in a 2004 Institute of Medicine report, which noted that poison centers save over \$7 for every \$1 spent in state and federal funding. This modest investment prevents more than \$1 billion in unnecessary health care costs each year, which are reflected in safe home management of patients with possible poisoning, toxic exposures, and adverse drug reactions who would otherwise unnecessarily utilize doctors' offices, ambulances, and hospitals at a much greater cost. An additional \$9 is saved for every \$1 spent in improved care of poisoned patients admitted to hospitals. Poison centers help direct more effective laboratory testing, antidotes, and patient care, thereby shortening the length of hospital stays.

The life-saving and cost-saving value of America's network of poison control centers is well documented. We urge you and all Members of Congress to support restoring funding to the FY2010 level of \$29.3 million for the national poison control program in the FY2012

appropriations legislation. If we may provide further information or assistance, please contact Kristen Mizzi with the American Academy of Pediatrics at 202/347-8600.

Sincerely,

Academic Pediatric Association  
American Academy of Pediatrics  
American Association of Colleges of Pharmacy  
American Association of Poison Control Centers  
American College of Clinical Pharmacy  
American College of Emergency Physicians  
American College of Osteopathic Emergency Physicians  
American Public Health Association  
Association of Maternal and Child Health Programs  
Children's Healthcare is a Legal Duty, Inc.  
The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia  
Consumer Federation of America  
Consumer Healthcare Products Association  
Consumers Union  
National Association for Children's Behavioral Health  
National Association of EMS Physicians  
National Association of Pediatric Nurse Practitioners  
National Association of State EMS Officials  
National WIC Association  
Prevention Institute  
Safe Kids USA  
Safe States Alliance  
Trust for America's Health  
Voices for America's Children