



U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
Health Resources and Services Administration

REPORT TO CONGRESS

POISON HELP CAMPAIGN
Fiscal Year 2018

Executive Summary

This Report to Congress on the Poison Help Campaign for Fiscal Year 2018 is in response to Section 1272(c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300d-72(c)), as amended by the Poison Center Network Act, Public Law 113-77, which states, in part:

“The Secretary shall establish baseline measures and benchmarks to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the nationwide media campaign... and on an annual basis, prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an evaluation of the nationwide media campaign.”

The Health Resources and Services Administration’s Poison Control Program plays an important role in ensuring universal access to Poison Control Centers’ (PCC) services. The Poison Control Program is legislatively mandated to provide grant funds to PCCs, establish and maintain a single national toll-free phone number (the Poison Help Phone Line) providing access to control center services, and implement a nationwide media campaign (the Poison Help Campaign).

The purpose of the Poison Help Campaign is to increase public and health care provider awareness of the services offered by the Poison Help Phone Line and PCCs. Additional objectives are to raise awareness of the Poison Help English and Spanish language websites, increase media focus on the Poison Help Phone Line, and partner with organizations that reach primary audiences.

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Acronym List

CMS	Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services
HHS	U.S. Department of Health and Human Services
FY	Fiscal Year
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
NPPW	National Poison Prevention Week
PCC	Poison Control Center
PCP	Poison Control Program
P.L.	Public Law
PSA	Public Service Announcement

I. Legislative Language

This report is being submitted to Congress as required by Section 1272(c) of the Public Health Service Act (42 U.S.C. § 300d-72(c)), amended by the Poison Center Network Act, Public Law 113-77. The Poison Center Network Act states in part:

“The Secretary shall establish baseline measures and benchmarks to quantitatively evaluate the impact of the nationwide media campaign... and on an annual basis, prepare and submit to the appropriate committees of Congress an evaluation of the nationwide media campaign.”

II. Introduction

The Poison Help Campaign seeks to increase public and health care provider awareness among the public and health care providers of the 55 Poison Control Centers (PCC) in the United States and its territories, the services they provide, and the toll-free Poison Help Phone Line (1-800-222-1222). Additional campaign objectives are to:

- Increase the number of visits to the Poison Help website www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov.
- Increase the number of traditional and social media Poison Help Phone Line impressions.
- Increase the number of traditional and social media impressions focused on the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) poisoning prevention resources.
- Develop and sustain partnerships with organizations that influence target audiences.

The Poison Help General Population Survey measures statistical benchmarks of the Poison Help Campaign every 5 years.¹ Survey results from a 2017 survey will be available in the Fiscal Year (FY) 2019 Poison Help Campaign Report to Congress.

During the FY 2018 reporting period, HRSA’s Poison Control Program (PCP) focused on distributing media materials through its contract with Brunet-Garcia Advertising, which included outreach to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries. The target audience was selected in response to the Senate’s direction to the Secretary in Senate Report 113-71, which states:

“Poison control centers respond to nearly 4 million public, and healthcare professional poisoning, toxic exposure, and adverse drug event emergency calls annually. It is estimated that the avoidance of these unnecessary hospitalizations save more than \$1,200,000,000 in healthcare costs annually, of which nearly \$700,000,000 of these savings accrue to the benefit of the Federal Medicare and Medicaid programs. The Committee believes these savings can be substantially

¹ A copy of the 2011 survey can be found at: <https://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/sites/default/files/poisonhelp/about-us/2012-ph-report-to-congress.pdf>.

increased through enhanced awareness of poison control centers by all Medicare and Medicaid participants. The Committee encourages the Secretary to engage in discussions with the Nation's poison control centers to develop a plan to achieve these possible additional Medicare and Medicaid cost savings.”

The purpose of the contract with Brunet-Garcia Advertising is to:

- Expand the Poison Help Campaign to educate Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries about poison prevention and the availability of PCC resources in local communities.
- Conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide toll-free Poison Help Line phone number (1-800-222-1222).

Additionally, the PCP strengthened its outreach efforts through dissemination of Poison Help messages and materials and by maintaining and developing relationships with partners and stakeholders. Please refer to section III, Partnership Building, for more information on HRSA’s partnerships and stakeholder efforts.

III. FY 2018 Poison Help Campaign Activities

HRSA continued its outreach through distribution of campaign media materials during FY 2018 to broadcast television networks, national and regional cable networks, and Nielsen monitored radio stations. A paid Public Service Announcement (PSA) distribution for television resulted in 283,132,517 gross impressions including 48,833 airings through 138 unique markets and 288 stations. The PSA distribution for radio resulted in 36,044,360 gross impressions including 10,131 airings through 156 stations. A gross impression is defined as the sum of audiences, in terms of people or households viewing or listening, where there is exposure to the same commercial or program on multiple occasions. Two impressions could mean the same person was in the audience on two occasions or that two different people had been exposed only once. The estimated value of the combined television and radio impressions was \$5.5 million.

Paid Facebook-social media outreach included PSA video ads and graphic ads directed to Medicare beneficiaries and parents. PSA video ads resulted in 434,347 impressions. The Medicare beneficiaries’ graphic ad views resulted in 525,057 impressions. Graphic ad views directed to parents resulted in 880,293 impressions. Outreach also included the distribution of infographics to 470 media outlets and bloggers that resulted in 156,927,408 impressions.

Website Update

HRSA’s Poison Help website, www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov, recorded 148,750 page views in FY 2018. The number of sessions (88,387) on the website increased by approximately 7 percent in FY 2018 as compared to FY 2017. The average time spent on the website increased by 6 seconds, or 4.5 percent. Downloads of information files decreased by 18 percent in FY 2018 over FY 2017, following a significant increase (150 percent) in the percentage of downloads the previous year. The top FY 2018 downloads included the infographic package, spring seasonal safety tips, and safe medicine use tips. HRSA provides online information in both English and

Spanish, which highlights the services that PCCs provide and encourages the public to program the Poison Help Phone Line into their phones. The media campaign contractor is currently redesigning the Poison Help website, and HRSA will report further information on the redesign in the FY 2019 Report to Congress.

Partnership Building

The PCP actively fosters partnerships within HRSA, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and other federal agencies. For example, HRSA collaborated with the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Women, Infants, and Children Program on Facebook, and with CMS on Facebook and Twitter to promote National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW). To promote NPPW through their distribution channels, the PCP distributed PSAs and infographics to HRSA's workforce programs (National Health Service Corps and NURSE Corps) and maternal and child health program (Children's Safety Network), as well as to the HHS Office of Women's Health.

HRSA continued its partnership with the American Association of Poison Control Centers' Public Health Education Committee and continued participation in the Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days.

IV. Conclusion

This report presents the Poison Help Campaign's outreach efforts to heighten awareness of the PCP's messages. HRSA will continue to work to sustain and expand strategic communication efforts. HRSA will also continue to coordinate its primary messages with key constituencies, identify opportunities for cross-promotion with other federal poisoning prevention activities, and encourage individuals to program the Poison Help Phone Line into their phones to ensure the number is easily accessible.