



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

**REPORT TO CONGRESS**

**POISON HELP CAMPAIGN  
Fiscal Year 2014**

## Executive Summary

This Fiscal Year 2014 Report to Congress on the Poison Help Campaign is in response to 42 U.S.C. §300d-72, as amended by The Poison Center Network Act (P.L. 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 (PCP) plays an important role in ensuring universal access to poison control centers’ (PCC) services. The PCP is legislatively mandated to provide grant funds to PCCs, establish and maintain a single national toll-free number (Poison Help: 1-800-222-1222) to access PCC services, and implement a nationwide media campaign (the Poison Help Campaign or PHC).

The purpose of the PHC is to increase awareness of PCCs among the public and health care providers, the services they provide, and the Poison Help line. Additional objectives are to raise awareness of the Poison Help English and Spanish language websites, increase media focus on the Poison Help line, and partner with organizations that reach primary audiences.

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## **Acronym List**

AAPCC	American Association of Poison Control Centers
CDC	Centers for Disease Control and Prevention
CSN	Children's Safety Network
FY	Fiscal Year
HRSA	Health Resources and Services Administration
NHSC	National Health Service Corps
NPPW	National Poison Prevention Week
PCC	Poison Control Center
PCP	Poison Control Program
PHC	Poison Help Campaign

## I. Legislative Language

This report is being provided to Congress as outlined in 42 U.S.C. §300d-72, as amended by the Poison Center Network Act (P.L. 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 (PHC) seeks to increase awareness of poison control centers (PCC), the services they provide, and the toll-free Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222) among the public and health care providers. Additional campaign objectives are to:

- increase awareness of the Poison Help websites [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) and [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov);
- increase the number of traditional and social media impressions focused on the Poison Help line;
- increase the number of traditional and social media impressions focused on the Health Resources and Services Administration’s (HRSA) poisoning prevention resources; and
- develop and sustain partnerships with organizations that influence target audiences.

Statistical benchmarks of the PHC are measured through the Poison Help General Population Survey, which is conducted every 5 years. Results from the 2011 survey, the most recent year for which data exist, can be found in Appendix B of the Fiscal Year (FY) 2012 Poison Help Campaign Report to Congress at <http://poisonhelp.hrsa.gov/the-poison-help-line/campaignfiscalyear2012.pdf>. Results of the upcoming 2016 survey will be made available in the FY 2017 Poison Help Campaign Report to Congress.

During the FY 2014 reporting period, the Poison Control Program (PCP) worked to implement the Senate recommendation to expand the target audience for the PHC. The Senate “encourage[d] the Secretary to engage in discussions with the Nation's poison control centers to develop a plan to achieve...possible additional Medicare and Medicaid cost savings” (Senate Report #113-71). In response, the PCP developed a new contract opportunity to focus on outreach to Medicare and Medicaid beneficiaries that was awarded to Brunet-García Advertising in FY 2015. Additional details will be provided in the next report to Congress.

In addition to this expanded focus, the PHC continued its outreach efforts through dissemination of new content, updates to and expansion of its websites, and maintaining and developing new relationships with partners and stakeholders.

### **III. FY 2014 Poison Help Campaign Activities**

#### **New Content**

During this reporting period, the “Making Connections” web video was posted and disseminated through various channels. The video, which encouraged people to program the Poison Help number into their phones, was produced in English and Spanish, posted on the Poison Help websites ([www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) and [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov)), and featured on HRSA’s YouTube channel. Online and social media were used to promote the video, including PCP websites, HRSA’s website, Facebook, and Twitter accounts.

The PCP conducted two rounds of blogger outreach to increase video exposure. General market Spanish-language blogs, focused on outreach to parents, caregivers, and older adults, received an e-mail pitch and an audience-specific article highlighting the video. The blogger outreach effort generated 903 video views— accounting for 53 percent of the views for the reporting period.

The PCP’s partnerships with the American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) and PCCs offered additional opportunities to promote the video. Through the AAPCC’s efforts, Scholastic’s Over-The-Counter Literacy Program posted the video on its website. Many PCCs published the video on their centers’ and/or respective host institutions’ websites and social media platforms. One center, affiliated with a hospital, played the video on patient televisions. Finally, a PCC shared the video with two cable access television stations that aired it over a 3-month period. In January and February 2014, the video was televised over 40 times, followed by nearly 700 broadcasts in March in recognition of National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW).

#### **Website Growth**

The Poison Help websites, [www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov) and [www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov](http://www.PoisonHelpEspanol.hrsa.gov), recorded a 45 percent increase in visits from FY 2013 to FY 2014 (with over 15,000 additional visits). In FY 2014, each visitor had an average of two or more page views. This increase demonstrates the immense value of both the content on these sites as well as the effectiveness of reaching audiences through an online medium.

#### **Partnership Building**

The PHC relies on developing and sustaining partnerships within HRSA, among Department of Health and Human Services partners, and with numerous external stakeholders. Within HRSA, the Maternal and Child Health Bureau promoted messages and disseminated resources with the Children’s Safety Network (CSN), Family/Professional Partnerships, and Bright Futures Programs. For example, over 7,000 public health and injury prevention professionals received the “Making Connections” video electronically through the CSN newsletter. The PCP provided scheduled written updates regarding poison control and prevention for meetings of the American Academy of Pediatrics Council on Injury, Violence and Poison Prevention. Poison Help materials, including the video, were shared with nearly 700 Family-to-Family Health Information Centers, Family Voices state affiliate organizations, Title V and other maternal and

child health organizations, families of children and youth with special health care needs, and professionals and professional organizations that serve such children. The National Health Service Corps (NHSC) featured an NPPW article in the March 2014 (National Health Service) Corps Connection electronic newsletter. This newsletter is sent to over 22,000 NHSC scholars and loan repayment recipients throughout the country, NHSC practice sites, alumni, advisory council members, ambassadors, and professional and academic partners. In addition, the NHSC leveraged its own stakeholder network and posted poison control messages, the video, and other information on Facebook and Twitter. The PCP collaborated with the HRSA Office of Women's Health to promote NPPW among members of the Department of Health and Human Services Coordinating Committee for Women's Health.

Other partnership activities include:

- The Health and Human Services Behavioral Health Coordinating Committee's Subcommittee on Prescription Drug Abuse queried the PCCs for data related to synthetic and organic marijuana use and abuse.
- The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) met with HRSA, including staff from the PCP, to discuss collaboration on implementation and/or dissemination of CDC's upcoming Guideline for Prescribing Opioids for Chronic Pain.
- HRSA participated in the Department of Justice's Drug Enforcement Administration National Prescription Drug Take-Back Days, which dispose of drugs in environmentally responsible ways and decrease the supply of unused prescription drugs in the home.

## **IV. Conclusion**

This report presents the PHC's outreach efforts to heighten awareness of the PCP message. HRSA will continue to work to sustain and expand strategic communications efforts. The campaign will 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 line into their phones to ensure that the number is easily accessible. New strategies will be based on cost-effectiveness and maximum reach and evaluated to continually improve results.