



June 10, 2009

The Honorable Noreen Evans, Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Roger Niello, Vice Chair
Assembly Committee on Budget
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Evans and Vice Chair Niello:

On behalf of Safe Kids USA, I write to urge you to restore funding for the California Poison Control System (CPCS). The CPCS has made remarkable strides in decreasing child hospitalizations and deaths due to poisoning and saves the state millions of dollars in healthcare costs each year. California cannot afford to eliminate this critically important program.

As you may know, the CPCS provides health care practitioners and the public with 24-hour-a-day telephone access to clinical pharmacists, registered nurses, and physicians who can help them manage serious poison exposures. Seventy-eight percent of those exposures can be resolved over the telephone, avoiding needless visits to the ER. Since 1997, the CPCS has managed more than 4 million cases.

Despite the life-saving services provided by the CPCS, funding for the system was eliminated from the Governor's proposed budget. If funding is not restored, California will become the only state in the nation without any emergency poison control services, as of October 1, 2009. That means that providers and the public, who currently make more than 300,000 calls to the CPCS annually, will be forced to call 911 or go to the ER when a poison emergency occurs—at a far greater cost to the state. In fact, California saves some \$70 million in health care costs each year in avoided ER and physician office visits. Moreover, by eliminating general fund support for the CPCS, the state will forfeit \$6.2 million in federal matching funds.

In addition to the negative financial impacts of this cut, the costs to human health will be severe. The elimination of poison control services will have a particularly serious impact on California's children. More than half of all poisonings happen to children ages 5 and under and the CPCS plays a crucial role in determining the outcome of those exposures. Since the CPCS's inception, hospitalizations due to poisoning for children ages 0-5 have been cut in half and deaths dropped by two-thirds. The benefits of the program are clear.

For these reasons, we urge the committee to restore funding for the CPCS. If Safe Kids can be of any assistance to you, please do not hesitate to contact me at (202) 662-4463 or Stephanie A. Russell, Public Policy Associate, at (202) 662-0608.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Alan Korn', written over a series of horizontal lines.

Alan Korn
Executive Director

cc: Members of the Committee on Budget
Marcie Ellis, Safe Kids California State
Sonja Atkins, Safe Kids Greater Sacramento





June 10, 2009

The Honorable Denise Ducheny, Chair
Senate Committee on Budget
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

The Honorable Robert Dutton, Vice-Chair
Senate Committee on Budget
State Capitol
Sacramento, CA 95814

Dear Chair Ducheny and Vice-Chair Dutton:

On behalf of Safe Kids USA, I write to urge you to restore funding for the California Poison Control System (CPCS). The CPCS has made remarkable strides in decreasing child hospitalizations and deaths due to poisoning and saves the state millions of dollars in healthcare costs each year. California cannot afford to eliminate this critically important program.

As you may know, the CPCS provides health care practitioners and the public with 24-hour-a-day telephone access to clinical pharmacists, registered nurses, and physicians who can help them manage serious poison exposures. Seventy-eight percent of those exposures can be resolved over the telephone, avoiding needless visits to the ER. Since 1997, the CPCS has managed more than 4 million cases.

Despite the life-saving services provided by the CPCS, funding for the system was eliminated from the Governor's proposed budget. If funding is not restored, California will become the only state in the nation without any emergency poison control services, as of October 1, 2009. That means that providers and the public, who currently make more than 300,000 calls to the CPCS annually, will be forced to call 911 or go to the ER when a poison emergency occurs—at a far greater cost to the state. In fact, California saves some \$70 million in health care costs each year in avoided ER and physician office visits. Moreover, by eliminating general fund support for the CPCS, the state will forfeit \$6.2 million in federal matching funds.

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Executive Director

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