

American Academy of Pediatrics

DEDICATED TO THE HEALTH OF ALL CHILDREN™



Hawaii Chapter

Position Paper

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Hawaii Poison Information Hotline

Background

The Hawaii Poison Center has functioned as an integral and essential part of the State's Emergency Medical Services System since 1988. The objectives of the Center as stated in the annual report are:

1. Provide 24-hour poison hotline services throughout the State of Hawaii to prevent and reduce harm from poisoning.
2. Determine the nature and types of calls and poisoning exposures reported to the Hawaii Poison Center hotline.
3. Promote poison prevention education, specifically for Hawaii's unique community.
4. Develop on-going and long-term funding to maintain Hawaii Poison Center services statewide.

The annual report shows that the Center received 11,833 calls during the past year. Bites and stings, cosmetics and personal care products and analgesics were the top three reasons for calls.

The professionally trained nursing staff is able to provide early management of acute cases, thus obviating the need for expensive and time-consuming emergency room visits.

In the area of poison prevention education the Center goes to schools and community events. 298 presentations were made and an estimated 24,000+ people contacted.

It is estimated that the Poison Center intervention saved over 4.2 million dollars in health care costs. Through fund raising efforts it raised over \$280,000 in the past year.

Pediatric Perspective

Practicing pediatricians depend heavily on the Poison Center Hotline to provide help for patients with acute poisoning episodes. The information needs to be given to the patient fast and accurately. Prompt institution of therapy is important. The trained nursing staff is able to do this. Pediatricians do not have this information at their fingertips because of the large number and complexity of toxic substances to which patients are exposed.

The annual report states that since 1988, not a single child in Hawaii has died from accidental poisoning. This is testimony to the need for these services.

Advocacy

Support for the Hawaii Poison Hotline; Emergency Medical Services bill