

106TH CONGRESS
1ST SESSION

S. 632

To provide assistance for poison prevention and to stabilize the funding
of regional poison control centers.

IN THE SENATE OF THE UNITED STATES

MARCH 16, 1999

Mr. DEWINE (for himself, Mr. ABRAHAM, Mr. CHAFEE, Mr. GRAHAM, Mr. BOND, Mr. DOMENICI, Mr. KENNEDY, Mr. DURBIN, Mr. BURNS, and Mr. DODD) introduced the following bill; which was read twice and referred to the Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions

A BILL

To provide assistance for poison prevention and to stabilize
the funding of regional poison control centers.

1 *Be it enacted by the Senate and House of Representa-*
2 *tives of the United States of America in Congress assembled,*

3 **SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.**

4 This Act may be cited as the “Poison Control Center
5 Enhancement and Awareness Act”.

6 **SEC. 2. FINDINGS.**

7 Congress makes the following findings:

8 (1) Each year more than 2,000,000 poisonings
9 are reported to poison control centers throughout

1 the United States. More than 90 percent of these
2 poisonings happen in the home. 53 percent of poi-
3 soning victims are children younger than 6 years of
4 age.

5 (2) Poison control centers are a valuable
6 national resource that provide life-saving and cost-
7 effective public health services. For every dollar
8 spent on poison control centers, \$7 in medical costs
9 are saved. The average cost of a poisoning exposure
10 call is \$32, while the average cost if other parts of
11 the medical system are involved is \$932. Over the
12 last 2 decades, the instability and lack of funding
13 has resulted in a steady decline in the number of
14 poison control centers in the United States. Within
15 just the last year, 2 poison control centers have been
16 forced to close because of funding problems. A third
17 poison control center is scheduled to close in April
18 1999. Currently, there are 73 such centers.

19 (3) Stabilizing the funding structure and in-
20 creasing accessibility to poison control centers will
21 increase the number of United States residents who
22 have access to a certified poison control center, and
23 reduce the inappropriate use of emergency medical
24 services and other more costly health care services.

1 **SEC. 3. DEFINITION.**

2 In this Act, the term “Secretary” means the Sec-
3 retary of Health and Human Services.

4 **SEC. 4. ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL TOLL-FREE**
5 **NUMBER.**

6 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall provide co-
7 ordination and assistance to regional poison control cen-
8 ters for the establishment of a nationwide toll-free phone
9 number to be used to access such centers.

10 (b) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
11 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
12 \$2,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through
13 2004.

14 **SEC. 5. ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONWIDE MEDIA**
15 **CAMPAIGN.**

16 (a) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary shall establish a
17 national media campaign to educate the public and health
18 care providers about poison prevention and the availability
19 of poison control resources in local communities and to
20 conduct advertising campaigns concerning the nationwide
21 toll-free number established under section 4.

22 (b) CONTRACT WITH ENTITY.—The Secretary may
23 carry out subsection (a) by entering into contracts with
24 1 or more nationally recognized media firms for the devel-
25 opment and distribution of monthly television, radio, and
26 newspaper public service announcements.

1 (c) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
2 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
3 \$600,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through 2004.

4 **SEC. 6. ESTABLISHMENT OF A GRANT PROGRAM.**

5 (a) REGIONAL POISON CONTROL CENTERS.—The
6 Secretary shall award grants to certified regional poison
7 control centers for the purposes of achieving the financial
8 stability of such centers, and for preventing and providing
9 treatment recommendations for poisonings.

10 (b) OTHER IMPROVEMENTS.—The Secretary shall
11 also use amounts received under this section to—

- 12 (1) develop standard education programs;
- 13 (2) develop standard patient management pro-
14 tocols for commonly encountered toxic exposures;
- 15 (3) improve and expand the poison control data
16 collection systems;
- 17 (4) improve national toxic exposure surveillance;
- 18 and
- 19 (5) expand the physician/medical toxicologist
20 supervision of poison control centers.

21 (c) CERTIFICATION.—Except as provided in sub-
22 section (d), the Secretary may make a grant to a center
23 under subsection (a) only if—

- 24 (1) the center has been certified by a profes-
25 sional organization in the field of poison control, and

1 the Secretary has approved the organization as hav-
2 ing in effect standards for certification that reason-
3 ably provide for the protection of the public health
4 with respect to poisoning; or

5 (2) the center has been certified by a State gov-
6 ernment, and the Secretary has approved the State
7 government as having in effect standards for certifi-
8 cation that reasonably provide for the protection of
9 the public health with respect to poisoning.

10 (d) WAIVER OF CERTIFICATION REQUIREMENTS.—

11 (1) IN GENERAL.—The Secretary may grant a
12 waiver of the certification requirement of subsection
13 (c) with respect to a noncertified poison control cen-
14 ter or a newly established center that applies for a
15 grant under this section if such center can reason-
16 ably demonstrate that the center will obtain such a
17 certification within a reasonable period of time as
18 determined appropriate by the Secretary.

19 (2) RENEWAL.—The Secretary may only renew
20 a waiver under paragraph (1) for a period of 3
21 years.

22 (e) SUPPLEMENT NOT SUPPLANT.—Amounts made
23 available to a poison control center under this section shall
24 be used to supplement and not supplant other Federal,
25 State, local or private funds provided for such center.

1 (f) MAINTENANCE OF EFFORT.—A poison control
2 center, in utilizing the proceeds of a grant under this sec-
3 tion, shall maintain the expenditures of the center for
4 activities of the center at a level that is not less than the
5 level of such expenditures maintained by the center for
6 the fiscal year preceding the fiscal year for which the
7 grant is received.

8 (g) MATCHING REQUIREMENT.—The Secretary may
9 impose a matching requirement with respect to amounts
10 provided under a grant under this section if the Secretary
11 determines appropriate.

12 (h) AUTHORIZATION OF APPROPRIATIONS.—There is
13 authorized to be appropriated to carry out this section,
14 \$25,000,000 for each of the fiscal years 2000 through
15 2004.

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