



**Oregon Poison Center**  
Serving Oregon, Alaska and Guam

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April 3, 2019

To: Oregon Joint Ways and Means Subcommittee on Education  
From: Sandy Giffin, RN, MS  
Director, Oregon Poison Center

RE: The impact of the Oregon Poison Center on Oregonians

Co-Chair Frederick, Co-chair McLain and members of the committee,

As the director of the Oregon Poison Center, I would like to thank the legislature for its support of our center's efforts to prevent and address accidental poisoning or toxic exposure in children and families throughout Oregon.

The Oregon Poison Center is a statewide, 24-hour health care information and treatment resource staffed by physicians, pharmacists and nurses trained in toxicology. The center was established by an act of the Oregon Legislature in 1978 to provide emergency treatment information for patients experiencing a poisoning or toxic exposure. The Oregon Poison Center is also responsible for providing public outreach and education to health care professionals.

Our small, but mighty, team of experts produces significant impact for the state of Oregon. The center fields over 37,000 calls per year with about half of those calls addressing accidental poisoning or toxic exposure in children and teens. In 2018, the Oregon Poison Center successfully managed 87% of cases it received over the phone, preventing Oregonians from having to drive to the hospital, and saving over an estimated \$21 million in health care costs.

We enjoy a strong, collaborative relationship with the state of Oregon and strive to deliver significant returns on the state's investment in our center. With state general fund investment, the center is able to leverage federal dollars on a two-to-one ratio. We closely work with our public health partners at the Oregon Health Authority in order to actively assist in surveillance monitoring and patient management regarding many emerging public health concerns such as opiates, cannabis and e-cigarettes. We are very proud of this collaboration, and have been asked to present on this work at national conferences so that Oregon can serve as a model for other states.

An estimated four million poisonings occur in the United States each year. The majority of these occur in children, and nearly all of these are preventable. In an effort to reduce the incidence of accidental poisoning, the Oregon Poison Center maintains a commitment to providing poison prevention information and education to our state's citizens, and always answering the call during their time of greatest need.

Thank you for your time and support.

Sandy Giffin, RN, MS  
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