

May 4, 2023

To: Joint Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education

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

My name is Jennifer Eskridge and I am the Community Outreach Educator for the Oregon Poison Center at OHSU. I'm here today to discuss the important work of our center in Oregon communities, specifically to prevent poisonings and promote the critical services we provide. In my role as health educator, my mission is to prevent poisonings through education, awareness and outreach. Through community partnerships, family and child education and public information, our poison prevention messages and resources find their way to communities throughout Oregon every year.

Oregonians access our education services online through resources on our website, online training, social media. Safety messages and resources shared through channels that reach tens of thousands of people throughout our service area every year. About 300 businesses, organizations, medical practices and families order Poison Help magnets, stickers and brochures from our website every year. This important service allows us to disseminate our hotline to thousands of people in far reaches of our state.

We connect with workplaces, daycares, individuals and families about poison prevention and share the Poison Help hotline through the dozens of partnerships with health departments, community-based organizations, healthcare agencies, schools and other non-profits the staff at our center works hard to maintain.

Tabling at health fairs and attending community events allows us to introduce the poison center to those who have never heard about us and remind others that we are a resource for people of all ages in many circumstances. From an employee who had a chemical exposure in the workplace, to child who got into the diaper cream as well as an adult who's experienced a medicine mix up—the nurses, pharmacists and doctors who answer the Poison Help hotline can help them all. My goal at these events is to ensure everyone who comes by my table leaves with our hotline, either programmed into their phone or on a magnet for their fridge.

Family and caregiver presentations and classes provide a unique opportunity to educate adults about poisoning risks in the home and how to prevent poisonings. I show visuals such as “look-a-likes”—potentially poisonous substances that look like every day products: household cleanser and a sports drink; bleach and parmesan cheese; hand sanitizer and eye-drops. A reminder to store these products separately and away from children who may not know the difference. I discuss the importance of reading labels and following the instructions for use, safe storage and securing medication with cabinet locks or medicine safety lock boxes. I introduce simple steps that adults can take to reduce the risk of poisoning at home.

I also have the opportunity to work directly with children to provide poison prevention resources and education in schools, camps and clubs. Children learn about the dangers of poisons and through our mascot, Mr. Yuk,<sup>™</sup> they learn not to touch, taste, or smell something that hasn't been given to them by a trusted adult. We talk about look-a-likes and how hard it is to tell if a loose pill is candy or medicine. The literature, activity books, and parent resources carry this important education the families at home.

Poisonings are preventable and this type of outreach and education in communities is vital to keeping Oregonians safe and healthy. Thank you for your consideration of our budget request and your support of our efforts at the Oregon Poison Center.

Thank you.

Jennifer Eskridge