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**American Association of Poison Control Centers, Sen. Mike DeWine  
and Rep. Ed Towns Announce National Campaign To Promote  
New 24 Hour/Seven Days a Week Poison Hotline*****1-800-222-1222 Makes 65 Local Poison Centers  
Accessible through National Toll-Free Number***

WASHINGTON, D.C., January 30, 2002 - The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) today launched a nationwide public awareness campaign to promote 1-800-222-1222, a new lifesaving toll-free hotline that connects Americans to poison treatment and prevention experts 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The new hotline allows someone to call from anywhere in the United States and automatically be connected to specially trained nurses, pharmacists and doctors at the closest local poison center. These poison experts will respond to poison emergencies and answer poison-related questions about medicines, household products and other potentially dangerous substances. The service is free.

Sen. Michael DeWine (R-OH) and Rep. Edolphus Towns (D-NY), major proponents of poison center access for every U.S. resident, joined AAPCC President Alan Woolf, MD, MPH, to unveil the new hotline and education campaign at a day care center shared by employees of the Departments of Health and Human Services and Education.

“For the first time, this new hotline makes the country’s 65 local poison centers accessible by the same national toll-free number,” said DeWine. “The hotline is an invaluable and life-saving improvement to our public health network. Through this education campaign, I hope that we can ensure that all Americans know to call 1-800-222-1222 for fast, free, confidential and professional advice about all kinds of poison-related questions or emergency treatment.”

(More)

*Poison Centers Launch Toll-Free Hotline, cont.*

“This new hotline and campaign will help us raise awareness about the dangers of poisons, the best way to treat poisonings and most importantly, how to prevent poisonings in the first place,” said Towns. “Of the more than two million poison exposures reported to poison centers in 2000, the majority could have been prevented with simple information available from experts at poison centers. This hotline and public education campaign were created because we want more people to call and take advantage of this free and confidential service.”

Prior to the launch of 1-800-222-1222, each local poison center was accessible only through local or state-wide numbers. While these numbers will continue to operate, the AAPCC and local poison centers are encouraging Americans to learn and remember the new national hotline, so they can easily access it, anytime and anywhere in the United States.

“Throughout this campaign, local poison centers across the country will be working hard to make 1-800-222-1222 familiar to every parent, student, senior or caretaker and any person who may need help with a poison emergency or have a question about poison prevention,” said Woolf.

The AAPCC’s education campaign will include print, radio and television public service announcements, a wide distribution of stickers, magnets, brochures and posters with the new hotline number and Poison HELP logo and a new Web site, [www.1-800-222-1222.info](http://www.1-800-222-1222.info). Local poison centers across the United States are also engaging in their own promotional and outreach activities.

DeWine and Towns have also written their colleagues in Congress to ask them to take an active role in educating their constituents about the services of the new hotline. The congressmen were both instrumental in obtaining bipartisan congressional support for the creation and funding of the poison hotline and education campaign in February 2000.

The hotline is authorized and funded under the Poison Control Center Enhancement and Awareness Act (P.L.106-174). Funding is administered by the Health Resources and Services Administration, which works in collaboration with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC). The CDC oversees activities related to the toll-free number through a cooperative agreement with the AAPCC.

(More)

*Poison Centers Launch Toll-Free Hotline, cont.*

### **United States Poison Centers**

On average, poison centers in the United States manage a poison exposure every 14 seconds. The vast majority – 77 percent – of these exposures can be treated over the phone, right where they happen, with telephone advice and assistance from poison center experts. If emergency medical care is needed to treat a poisoning, poison center experts provide information on treatment to emergency personnel and other health care providers. Additionally, the expert staff at poison centers are available to answer non-emergency poison-related questions.

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*The American Association of Poison Control Centers is a nationwide not-for-profit organization of poison centers and others interested in the prevention and treatment of poisoning.*