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Poison Centers Report New Family Figures

National Poison Prevention Week Fast Approaching

WASHINGTON, DC (PR Web) February 27, 2007 -- The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) will kick off National Poison Prevention Week with data on calls to US poison centers. Please feel free to excerpt this information for national print or broadcast stories, with acknowledgment of source.

During National Poison Prevention Week, March 18-24, AAPCC and the nation's 61 poison centers remind you to keep your family safe by taking simple steps to prevent poisonings. In 2005, 50.9% of all exposure calls managed by poison centers involved children under six. These pediatric calls most frequently involved the following substances:

- Cosmetics and personal care products, 13.4%
- Household Cleaning substances, 9.8%
- Pain relievers, 8.2%
- Toys and foreign bodies, 7.4%
- Topical preparations and creams, 7.2%
- Cough and cold substances, 5.7%

The most dangerous poison exposures involved medicines, cleaning products, automotive products, hydrocarbons (gasoline, kerosene, lighter fluid, furniture polish), and pesticides.

Poisoning is a family matter, affecting all ages. In 2005, teenagers comprised 7.1% of poison exposure calls to poison centers, and 5.1% of calls regarded seniors ages 60 and older. 35% of calls regarded adults ages 20 and over, with the highest percentage of reported poison-related deaths affecting the adult population.

The AAPCC encourages all members of your family to prevent poisonings by taking household precautions for young and old:

- Always store medicines and household products up high. Lock them up and out of reach of children.
- Use child resistant packaging on medicines and household products. Remember: they're child-resistant, not child-proof.
- Take your medicines when children cannot watch. Children learn by imitation.
- Every time you give or use a product, read the label and follow safety precautions.
- Keep products in their original containers. Mistaken identity could cause a serious poisoning.
- Turn on fans and open windows when using household and chemical products.

The AAPCC also advises you to know where to call for help -- for all members of your family:

- Put the emergency number of your poison center, 1-800-222-1222, on or near every telephone, and program into your cell phone.
- If you think there has been a poisoning, call 1-800-222-1222 immediately. Don't wait to find out what might happen; call the experts at your local poison center right away.

For more information, visit www.1-800-222-1222.info, or call your local poison center directly to request poison prevention materials and learn how you can participate in National Poison Prevention Week in your area. Also visit www.poisonprevention.org to learn how to enter the National Poison Prevention Week Poster Contest going on now, through June 1.

The AAPCC network of 61 poison centers serves every US resident, 24 hours a day, seven days a week. When you call 1-800-222-1222, you are automatically connected to the poison center serving your area. Callers speak to nurses, pharmacists and other experts specially trained to provide appropriate treatment recommendations and poison prevention information. More than 70% of all human exposure calls to poison centers are able to be managed on site, avoiding unnecessary visits to health care facilities. With an average emergency room visit costing \$560, poison center calls potentially saved \$997,395,280 in annual medical expenses in 2005.

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