



Minnesota Poison Control System 2015 Legislation Fact Sheet

Please support critical Poison Center funding ([HF 346/SF 359](#))

Minnesota Statute 145.93 defines Minnesota Poison Information Center services. **The Minnesota Poison Control System (Poison Center)** is nationally accredited by the American Association of Poison Control Centers and has been established by the Minnesota Department of Health as the designated vendor of poison information services for the state of Minnesota.

Proposed legislation requests an \$800,000 increase in its base appropriation beginning FY 2016. Funds will be used to maintain and enhance staffing to meet national accreditation standards and for: health care provider training; public health surveillance of emerging toxicology/poison issues; and outreach education targeted to children, disadvantaged communities, and immigrants. Funding will close a critical funding gap in the \$2.9 million budget (comprised of state general funds and federal grants) and ensure timely delivery of care. Failure to fund would trigger a cascade of losses, including:

- Loss of medical education funds, prevention education and public health surveillance
- Loss of national accreditation and more than \$400,000 of contingent federal funds
- Limited capacity of the 24-hour emergency call center

The Poison Center serves all of Minnesota

In 2014, the Poison Center answered 48,446 calls from all 87 Minnesota counties (*see map on page 2*).

- 23% of callers were health care providers and 77% were members of the public
- Education on poison prevention and Poison Center services is provided statewide
- The Poison Center trains physicians, pharmacists, nurses, and emergency responders

The Poison Center saves lives

The Poison Center is staffed, 24/7/365, with specially trained pharmacists and physicians. Poison information specialists assess, manage, monitor, and follow-up with people exposed to harmful substances (prescription drugs, drugs of abuse, chemicals, household products, and plants).

- Poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional injury related death in the U.S.
- 45% of poisonings involve a child under the age of 6 years.

The Poison Center saves millions of dollars of unnecessary health care costs each year

Every \$1 invested in poison centers saves more than \$13 in medical costs and lost productivity.¹

- 91% of public callers are treated at home with Poison Center assistance and follow-up.
- In 2014, the Poison Center **saved Minnesotans \$35 million** by avoiding unnecessary medical utilization and reducing hospital length of stay.
- 27,000 unnecessary Emergency Department visits were prevented in 2014.

The Poison Center provides critical public health services

Poison centers are often first to identify emerging public health threats (food-borne illnesses, tainted medications, new drugs of abuse). The Poison Center partners with state and federal agencies to provide critical public health surveillance, all-hazard disaster preparedness, and emergency response.

¹ Source: *Final Report on the Value of the Poison Center System. The Lewin Group Inc., Sept. 2012.*

