American Association of Poison Control Centers

NEWS RELEASE

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American Association of Poison Control Centers Applauds the Congressional Approval of the
Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015

ALEXANDRIA, VA – On Monday, January 11, 2016, the United States House of Representatives took a strong stance on the safety of American children by passing the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015, which had been previously approved by the Senate on December 10, 2015. The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) is squarely in favor of this legislation and applauds the bipartisan efforts leading to its approval.

“The approval of the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act represents significant progress in addressing an increasingly important child safety concern in our country,” said Stephen T. Kaminski, JD, AAPCC CEO and Executive Director. “AAPCC has been a proud supporter of this legislation since it was introduced by Senator Bill Nelson (D-FL) in 2014. This bill not only addresses public health challenges posed by liquid nicotine, but more importantly, takes strides to protect a child’s right to a healthy and safe home environment.”

A key provision of the Child Nicotine Poisoning Prevention Act of 2015 requires refillable e-cigarettes and containers of liquid nicotine refills to be packaged in accordance with the stringent child-resistant poison prevention standards.

Data from America’s 55 poison centers show that e-cigarettes and liquid nicotine refills have been implicated in increasing exposures reported to poison centers. In 2014, about 59 percent of all e-cigarette and liquid nicotine exposures reported to poison centers were for children ages 5 and under. In 2015, preliminary analysis shows that approximately 70 percent of these exposures were in kids, roughly 2,600 reported cases.

Ingestion of liquid nicotine is dangerous because it can cause acute nicotine toxicity. One teaspoon of liquid nicotine can be lethal to a child, and smaller amounts can cause severe illness, often requiring visits to the emergency room, with nausea and vomiting being the most significant symptoms. Toxic exposures to e-liquid can occur through not only ingestion and inhalation, but also absorption through the skin or eyes.

“This legislation is a considerable step forward in protecting our children’s safety,” said Jay L. Schauben, PharmD, DABAT, FAACT, Director of the Florida/USVI Poison Information Center - Jacksonville, and current AAPCC President. “E-cigarette poisoning cases are very challenging for us because liquid nicotine refills are not regulated, and we routinely don’t know how much nicotine is

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involved in any given ingestion by a child. Poison Specialists handling the emergency calls at the poison centers find themselves at the mercy of trying to find the packaging to figure out how much nicotine, and therefore how dangerous, an exposure is.”

The bill now proceeds to President Obama’s desk for his signature and will take effect 180 days after the President’s authorization.

While this legislation requires packaging that makes it difficult for children to open, as the experts at America’s poison centers know all too well, there is no such thing as “child-proof” packaging. Even with new packaging requirements, adults should take care to keep all tobacco and e-cigarette products up, away, and out of sight of kids. In addition, programming the Poison Help line, 1-800-222-1222, into your mobile telephone, and posting it in a visible place in your home is the best way to be prepared for poisoning emergencies.


For more information, the media may contact Angela Gonzales, AAPCC Associate Manager, Communications and Outreach, at 703-894-1865 or gonzales@aapcc.org.

AAPCC supports the nation’s 55 poison center members in their efforts to treat and prevent drug, consumer product, animal, environmental and food poisoning. Members staff the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians and poison information providers. In addition, AAPCC maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States, providing real-time monitoring of unusual poisoning patterns, chemical exposures and other emerging public health hazards. AAPCC partners with federal agencies such as HRSA, CDC, FDA and EPA, as well as private industry.

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