

# toxtidbits

THE MARYLAND POISON CENTER'S MONTHLY UPDATE.  
NEWS. ADVANCES. INFORMATION.

## The Value of Poison Centers

A report released on October 16, 2012 describes the value of poison center services in the United States. It concludes that **poison centers save over \$1.8 billion per year in medical costs and lost productivity!** That translates to a savings of \$13.39 for every \$1 spent on poison center services.

The Lewin Group, a healthcare policy research consulting firm, was commissioned by the American Association of Poison Control Centers to analyze the costs and benefits of the poison center system on medical utilization and to quantify the value of the system as a whole. The *Final Report on the Value of the Poison Center System* (The Lewin Group, Inc., September 2012) describes the impact of poison centers on the four most commonly referenced savings metrics: savings due to avoided medical utilization, reduced hospital length of stay, in-person outreach, and reduced work-loss days.

The report determined that poison centers save:

- \$752.9 million per year due to avoided medical utilization by keeping the majority of patients at home instead of unnecessarily using 911/emergency medical services and hospitals
- \$441.1 million per year due to a reduction in hospital length of stay of an average of 3.2 days when a poison center is consulted
- \$23.9 million per year due to educational outreach that helps to prevent poisonings and improve medical response
- \$603 million per year due to reduced work-loss days; productivity loss primarily due to unnecessary medical encounters

It was also determined that the cost to fund poison centers is just 43 cents per U.S. resident per year. This report confirms that the system of 57 poison centers in the U.S. is one of the most cost-effective public health programs in the nation. Despite this, poison centers have undergone severe cuts in federal and state funding. Further budget cuts will make it difficult for poison centers to continue to provide the same life-saving services.

*The full report is available at [www.aapcc.org](http://www.aapcc.org).*

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### Did you know?

**The Maryland Poison Center (MPC) has helped more than 2 million callers since it opened 40 years ago!**

More than 1.2 million of those calls were human poisonings, the rest being animal poisonings or non-emergency information calls. Since approximately 70% of poisonings were safely managed outside of a health care facility, the overall health care cost savings provided by the Maryland Poison Center since 1972 is \$439-\$878 million!

Read about the Maryland Poison Center experience in 2011 at [www.mdpoison.com](http://www.mdpoison.com).

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