

**PREVENTION EFFORTS KEY IN REDUCING UNINTENTIONAL POISONING,
WARNS OKLAHOMA POISON CONTROL CENTER**

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 53,000 calls were received in 2010 by the Oklahoma Poison Control Center, with approximately 55 percent involving children under the age of 6. Unintentional poisonings happen in a matter of seconds and often come in innocuous and unexpected forms.

To raise statewide awareness of the dangers of poisoning, National Poison Prevention Week is scheduled for March 20 through 26. The Oklahoma Poison Control Center, the host of Oklahoma's Poison Prevention Week, will partner with the Oklahoma SAFE KIDS Coalition and the Oklahoma Department of Education in the National Poison Prevention Week Poster Contest. The contest is open to children in grades one through five, with a first-, second- and third-place winner in each grade. Winning posters from the Oklahoma contest are sent on for national judging.

The posters selected as national winners become part of the National Poison Prevention Week media campaign for the following year. The winning posters are viewed across the country in schools, state capitols, hospitals, daycare facilities and many other locations. Oklahoma has produced 10 national winners in the past nine years, including last year's winners, Skyler Thurman and Kayla Handle of Maryetta Schools, who took first and second place in the younger division of the National Poison Prevention Poster Contest.

The Oklahoma poster winners will be invited to the state Capitol on Thursday, March 24, for an awards ceremony in their honor. They will be presented with a certificate of achievement and a citation by their district senator and/or legislator. Pictures will be taken to commemorate the event. After the event, winners, families and special guests will return to the Oklahoma Poison Control Center for a pizza party, where they will be honored with certificates and prizes.

For more information on National Poison Prevention Week and the Oklahoma Poison Prevention Poster Contest, please call Shannon Holcombe or Shirley Christie at (405) 271-5062.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the poison center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Call the Poison Help-line at (800) 222-1222. Do not e-mail the poison center or a member of the poison center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through e-mail. The Oklahoma Poison Control Center is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, please visit www.oklahomapoison.org.

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