

PREVENTION EFFORTS KEY IN REDUCING UNINTENTIONAL POISONING

sh/02-04-10

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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OKLAHOMA CITY — More than 53,000 calls were received in 2009 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 innocent and unexpected forms.

To raise awareness of the dangers of poisoning, National Poison Prevention Week is scheduled for March 14 through 20. The Oklahoma Poison Control Center, the Oklahoma SAFE KIDS Coalition and the Oklahoma Department of Education participate in the National Poison Prevention Week Poster Contest to create poison prevention awareness. The contest is open to children in grades one through five, with a first-, second- and third-place winner in each grade.

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 in many other locations. Oklahoma has had eight national winners in the past nine years.

The Oklahoma poster winners are invited to the State Capitol on Thursday, March 25, for an award ceremony in their honor. They will be presented with a certificate of achievement and a citation by Lt. Gov. Jari Askins and/or their district senator and 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 Prevntion 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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