



# NEWSLETTER



LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

June 2026

Greetings Community of Practice Members!

New findings from Poisoning Prevention, Treatment, and Detection as Public Health Investments report by RAND quantify the vital impact of the nation's Poison Centers, highlighting significant cost savings alongside their role in emergency response, surveillance, and prevention.<sup>1</sup> This newsletter summarizes selected findings from the report. While this newsletter only provides a fraction of what was found, we aim to celebrate this report and the ongoing work between Poison Centers and their partnership with public health to protect communities every day. We hope to have a deeper discussion around this report during a webinar in the future, so look out for the invites! To access the report in its entirety, please visit Poison Information and Prevention Education Repository.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter and if you would like to hear more about a specific topic in a future newsletter, please feel free to reach out to our team. Thank you all for your support and continuing to make PCPHCoP a success!

Sincerely,  
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## Summary of RAND Report Prepared by the CDC Tox Team

### Economic and Societal Value of Poison Centers

Poison Centers deliver significant value to the United States and its territories, both in terms of cost savings and improved health outcomes. The report estimates that Poison Centers save the nation approximately **\$3.1 billion annually** in avoided medical costs and productivity losses.

Additionally, the report estimates that for every \$1 invested, Poison Centers generate **\$16.77 in benefits**.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

These savings are driven by the following benefits:

- Avoided emergency department visits
- Reduced hospital admissions and shorter lengths of stay
- Improved clinical outcomes and reduced mortality risk
- Enhanced public health surveillance and early hazard detection

These findings underscore the strong return on investment that Poison Centers provide, demonstrating their public health value and their importance in a cost-conscious healthcare environment.



### ***Value to the Public***

For individuals and families, Poison Centers provide immediate access to expert guidance during stressful and potentially life-threatening situations. This timely support often prevents unnecessary emergency department visits and allows patients to safely manage exposures at home, when appropriate. The result is not only cost savings, but also reduced anxiety, quick answers, and improved health outcomes.

### ***Value to Healthcare Systems***

Healthcare providers rely on Poison Centers for specialized toxicology expertise. This support enhances clinical decision-making, reduces uncertainty, and contributes to more efficient use of healthcare resources. Poison Centers act as an extension of the healthcare workforce, particularly in areas where toxicology expertise may be limited.

## **Core Public Health Roles of Poison Centers**

Poison Centers play a vital role in strengthening the nation's ability to respond to toxic exposures and emergencies. Their services span a wide range of threats, including inappropriate use of medications, chemicals, environmental hazards, occupational exposures, and envenomation.

**Poison Emergency?**  
**Call 1-800-222-1222 OR**  
**Visit [POISONHELP.ORG](https://www.poisonhelp.org)**

### ***24/7 Expert Guidance***

Poison Centers provide free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. They are staffed by specialists in poison information (SPIs) who are trained as toxicology experts and have experience as pharmacists, nurses, physicians, or in other highly skilled fields. This around-the-clock availability ensures that individuals and providers have access to trusted information when it matters most, helping to reduce delays in care and improve outcomes.

### ***Real-Time Surveillance and Data Systems***

Through the National Poison Data System® (NPDS), Poison Centers contribute to a robust, real-time surveillance network. NPDS aggregates data from Poison Centers nationwide, enabling a comprehensive view of exposures and trends.



This system enables the following benefits:

- Rapid detection of emerging public health threats
- Identification of clusters and unusual patterns of exposure
- Situational awareness during outbreaks and emergencies
- Data-driven decision-making for public health agencies

This information can help bridge the collaboration between Poison Centers and public health agencies to inform interventions, guide communication strategies, and support emergency response efforts.

### ***Prevention and Education***

In addition to responding to exposures, Poison Centers are deeply engaged in prevention and education efforts. These activities include community outreach, public awareness campaigns, and tailored education for high-risk populations.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

Prevention efforts help reduce the incidence and severity of poisonings, particularly among disproportionately affected groups such as young children, older adults, and individuals with limited access to healthcare.

### ***Strengthening Public Health Partnerships***

Collaboration between Poison Centers and public health agencies is a critical component of an effective national response to toxic exposures and environmental threats. Poison Centers routinely partner with several different agencies, including but not limited to:

- State and local health departments
- Federal agencies (e.g., CDC, HRSA, FDA)
- Emergency management organizations
- Healthcare systems and providers

These partnerships support coordinated responses to incidents such as chemical spills, contaminated consumer products, drug-related outbreaks, and environmental exposures. Continued engagement across sectors will be essential to addressing emerging challenges and improving health outcomes.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

## **System Modernization and Service Trends**

Poison Centers have adapted to changing communication preferences and healthcare needs. While telephone services remain central, many centers now offer additional ways to connect, including both text messaging services and online chat platforms.

These innovations improve accessibility, particularly for younger populations and individuals who may prefer digital communication channels, by meeting people where they are.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

### ***Shifts in Case Complexity***

The nature of cases managed by Poison Centers is evolving. There is an increasing proportion of instances that involve more severe outcomes where healthcare providers seek input from poison centers.

This shift reflects the growing clinical complexity of exposures and highlights the importance of Poison Centers as a critical resource for healthcare professionals managing serious and high-risk cases. As case complexity increases, so does the need for sustained investment in staffing, training, and infrastructure to ensure that Poison Centers can continue to provide high-quality and timely care.

## **Funding and Resource Challenges**

Despite their demonstrated value, Poison Centers face ongoing funding challenges. The RAND report highlights that overall funding has declined by approximately **8% in inflation-adjusted terms from 2011 to 2024**.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

Many Poison Centers rely on a combination of federal, state, and local funding streams, including programs such as Medicaid and the Children’s Health Insurance Program. The report indicates that changes to these funding sources can create uncertainty and impact the ability of centers to maintain consistent, 24/7 services.

### ***Federal Funding and Report Findings***

The report found that federally appropriated funding supports Poison Center operations and was associated with substantial healthcare cost savings. These funds alone are estimated to **generate \$450 million annually in healthcare cost savings**, demonstrating a strong return on public investment.

The report notes that funding variability may affect workforce capacity, service availability, and modernization efforts. Without adequate funding, Poison Centers may face challenges such as reduced staffing, limited service hours, or decreased capacity to respond to complex cases. These risks could have significant implications for public health and healthcare systems, particularly during emergencies.

## **Broader Impact Beyond Cost Savings**

Beyond direct cost savings, Poison Centers provide critical support to the broader healthcare and public health ecosystem.

### ***Reducing Strain on Healthcare Systems***

By managing many cases outside of emergency departments, Poison Centers help alleviate pressure on an already burdened healthcare system.<sup>2</sup> Their guidance often allows patients to safely remain at home, reducing unnecessary utilization and preserving healthcare resources for more critical cases.



Source: Adobe Stock Photos

### ***Supporting Emergency Preparedness and Response***

Poison Centers play an important role in emergency preparedness and disaster response. They provide subject matter expertise during disasters and emergencies in the following areas:

- Chemical incidents and hazardous material exposures
- Public health emergencies
- Weather-related incidents with environmental health impacts

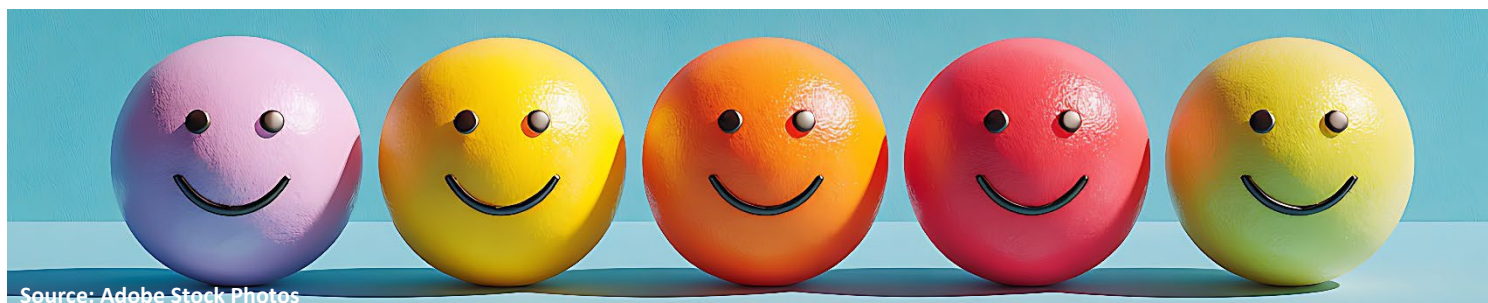
Their integration into emergency response systems enhances coordination and improves the effectiveness of response efforts.

### ***Supporting First Responders and Clinicians***

First responders and clinicians frequently rely on Poison Centers for rapid consultation during emergencies. This support helps ensure appropriate treatment, reduces uncertainty, and contributes to better patient outcomes.

### ***Providing Peace of Mind***

For both the public and healthcare providers, Poison Centers offer reassurance and expert support during uncertain situations. Their accessibility and expertise contribute to safer communities and improved confidence in public health systems.



## **Looking Ahead: Sustaining Impact Through Collaboration**

The findings from this report reinforce the critical importance of Poison Centers as an integral part of the nation's public health infrastructure. As healthcare systems evolve and new threats emerge, the role of Poison Centers will continue to expand.

There are several opportunities for continued growth:

- Strengthening partnerships with public health and healthcare organizations
- Expanding use of data for surveillance and decision-making
- Enhancing communication strategies to reach diverse populations
- Investing in workforce development and training

Through the PCPHCoP, members have opportunities to share best practices, exchange stories and experiences, and strengthen relationships that enhance collective impact.

## **Announcements**

Thank you again to everyone who joined our last webinar on May 27 to discuss preparing for this summer's international soccer competitions at both the poison centers and for public health departments. It was great to hear about all the work that is being accomplished to allow everyone to have an enjoyable experience while also keeping them safe.

The next quarterly PCPHCoP webinar will be held **August 26, 2026, from 3:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. ET**. The topic will be shared with the PCPHCoP listserv once it is finalized. Please don't hesitate to email us if you have an idea for a future webinar.

If anyone wants to be added to the PCPHCoP email distribution list, a request can be sent to [PCPHCoP@cdc.gov](mailto:PCPHCoP@cdc.gov).

## References

1. RAND Corporation. Poison Prevention, Treatment, and Detection as Public Health Investments. 2026. Available at: [Poison Information and Prevention Education Repository](#)
2. America's Poison Centers. New RAND Study Shows U.S. Poison Centers Save \$3.1 Billion Each Year. 2026. Available at: [America's Poison Centers - New RAND Study Shows U.S. Poison Centers Save \\$3.1 Billion Each Year](#)