Illinois Poison Center Marks Poison Prevention Month

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(Alton, IL - March 16, 2010) - Year after year, millions of accidental poisonings occur in America – the majority of them affecting children. Last year, the Illinois Poison Center (IPC) handled more than 102,489 exposure and information calls – 52 percent involving children age 5 and under – on everything from household chemicals and carbon monoxide to medicines and mushrooms.

Each year, the third week in March is recognized as National Poison Prevention Week (March 14-20). Gov. Pat Quinn has declared March 2009 to be Illinois Poison Prevention Month and encourages all residents to educate themselves about the potentially dangerous substances in their homes. This year's theme is "If you shouldn't have taken it, eaten it, touched it or let it bite you, call the experts who can help...1-800.222-1222."

"Poison prevention education is vital to the public's safety," said Michael Wahl, M.D., managing medical director of the IPC. "By using the entire month of March as a means to increase awareness of this serious health issue, we hope to reduce the incidence and injury caused by poisonings."

To help in the effort, SavvyDaddy.com and others are donating $1 for every new fan that joins the IPC Facebook during the month of March at www.facebook.com /illinoispoisoncenter.

According to Illinois Poison Center experts, preparing yourself and your family is the best way to avoid a potential poisoning.

• Store all food and beverages in a completely separate area away from cleaners,

medicines, automotive, yard and health care products.

• Keep medicines and household products in their original containers with original labels.

• Always read labels before using medicines, cleaners and other products.

• Teach children to ask first before eating or drinking anything.

• Never call medicine “candy” or make a game out of taking it.

• Keep the IPC phone number, 800-222-1222, near all phones in the house and store the number in your cell phone.

Free poison prevention training and educational materials are available to anyone living or working in Illinois at www.IllinoisPoisonCenter.org/outreach (available in both English and Spanish) and www.ipcblog.org.

Established by Congress in 1961, National Poison Prevention Week is an opportunity to educate communities on poison prevention and the dangers of unintentional poisonings. The Illinois Poison Center is staffed by trained experts who provide free, comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances to the public and health care professionals via a 24-hour hotline at 800-222-1222.