

ONE HUNDRED THIRTEENTH CONGRESS
Congress of the United States
House of Representatives

COMMITTEE ON ENERGY AND COMMERCE

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December 13, 2013

Dr. Marsha Ford
President
American Association of Poison Control Centers
515 King Street, Suite 510
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Dr. Ford:

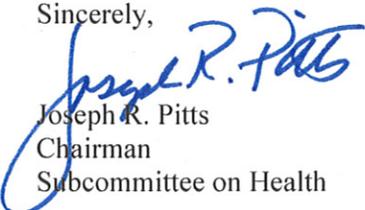
Thank you for appearing before the Subcommittee on Health on Wednesday, November 20, 2013, to testify at the hearing entitled "Examining Public Health Legislation to Help Local Communities."

Pursuant to the Rules of the Committee on Energy and Commerce, the hearing record remains open for ten business days to permit Members to submit additional questions for the record, which are attached. The format of your responses to these questions should be as follows: (1) the name of the Member whose question you are addressing, (2) the complete text of the question you are addressing in bold, and (3) your response to that question in plain text.

To facilitate the printing of the hearing record, please respond to these questions by the close of business on Tuesday, January 7, 2013. Your responses should be mailed to Sydne Harwick, Legislative Clerk, Committee on Energy and Commerce, 2125 Rayburn House Office Building, Washington, D.C. 20515 and e-mailed in Word format to Sydne.Harwick@mail.house.gov.

Thank you again for your time and effort preparing and delivering testimony before the Subcommittee.

Sincerely,


Joseph R. Pitts
Chairman
Subcommittee on Health

cc: The Honorable Frank Pallone, Jr., Ranking Member, Subcommittee on Health

Attachment

Attachment—Additional Questions for the Record

The Honorable Eliot L. Engel

1. Earlier this week, Representative Lee Terry and I, along with our Senate colleagues, Senator Patty Murray and Senator Richard Burr, introduced the Poison Center Network Act. This legislation would reauthorize the national toll-free number, media campaign and grant program which have helped make poison control centers a very successful public health program for the citizens in each of our states.

Dr. Ford, I think most of us with children remember either having a magnet on our refrigerator or a sticker on our phone providing the contact information for the poison center in our area. I know that a majority of the calls poison control centers take come from concerned citizens, but will you tell us what role poison control centers play for health care providers?

In my home state of New York, we have two poison control centers that, between the two of them, field over 164,000 calls a year. For the upstate New York poison center alone:

- 85% of calls are related to unintentional poisonings;
- 62% involve children under age 5; and
- most importantly, 82% can be managed over the phone and do not require a visit to a doctor or a hospital

Still, according to a 2011 Lewin Group report, poisonings accounted for over 2.1 million emergency room visits and 438,000 hospitalizations in 2009. I cannot imagine what these figures would look like in the absence of poison centers. When a visit to the emergency room can cost hundreds of dollars and a hospitalization can cost thousands of dollars, the fact a phone call to a poison control center only costs the government around \$30, proves poison centers continue to be a smart health care investment.

Poison centers are a true federal, state, local and private partnership. Will you tell the Committee how your center obtains the funding necessary to staff its center 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year? Will you please discuss how poison centers have been impacted by this challenging fiscal environment and why reauthorizing this program in a timely manner is important?