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California Poison Control System Launches the First Ever Free, Bilingual Mobile Health Service for Poison Prevention *National Poison Prevention Week is March 14 – 21*

San Francisco, CA (March 15, 2010) – As National Poison Prevention Week begins, the California Poison Control System announces ground-breaking new programs, including a free text messaging service, Facebook quizzes and e-cards to provide essential tips, news and information on poisoning, the 2nd leading cause of childhood injury in the U.S. With more than 2 million poisonings reported each year to poison control centers across the country, this information is potentially life-saving.

Launching this week, an innovative bilingual text messaging service will provide consumers with tips, facts and news about accidental poisoning prevention in both English and Spanish. For the first time ever, consumers who opt-in to the service by texting the word TIPS or PUNTOS for Spanish to 69866 will receive one tip each day during National Poison Prevention week and then once a week for the rest of the year.

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POISON PREVENTION WEEK
2-2-2-2

In addition, the California Poison Control System will launch a new fun game every day during National Poison Prevention week, starting with a game at www.pillsvscandy.org, which will test people's ability to tell the difference between an array of colorful medicines and sugary treats that astonishingly look alike. Playing this game shows how easy it can be to mistake everyday items and will reinforce the importance of keeping medications in a safe place away from small children.

Quizzes designed to provide curious minds a way to test their knowledge of poison-related myths, folklore and incidents in popular culture will debut on the California Poison Control fan page on the hugely popular social networking website, Facebook.

Finally, sharing poison prevention tips will be simple and rewarding at www.calpoisoncards.org where consumers can personalize funny, engaging or surprising images and share them with friends.

The California Poison Control System (CPCS) is dedicated to providing residents with the most up-to-date information and 24-hour help in case of poisoning. National Poison Prevention Week, March 14-21, provides the ideal opportunity to remind Californians about poison prevention as well as to provide information about potentially hazardous situations that exist in their own homes.

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POISON PREVENTION WEEK
3-3-3-3

“We know that more and more of our consumers are getting information on their cell phones, through social media and community websites. As a result, we need to reach our audience where they are,” said Dr. Stuart E. Heard, Executive Director of the California Poison Control System. “It is critical that all consumers are aware of the potential hazards in their own homes.”

The following are some additional poison prevention tips from the CPCS:

- Keep the number 1-800-222-1222 on or near all phones.
- Keep medicines and cleaning products out of reach of children and in locked cabinets.
- Always keep products in the containers they originally came in.
- Never keep cleaning products, gasoline, antifreeze, pain and paint thinners, or lighter fluid in something you would use for food or a beverage.
- Do not store food and household cleaners in the same cabinet.
- Never call medicine candy.
- Do not take medicine in front of children; they love to do what adults do.
- If you are in the middle of taking medicine or using a cleaning product and you need to answer the door or phone, take it with you.
- Keep things like make-up perfume, cigarettes, alcohol and vitamins where children can't reach them.

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POISON PREVENTION WEEK
4-4-4-4

In case of an accidental poisoning, consumers should immediately call the CPCS at 1-800-222-1222 for advice. Pharmacists, nurses, physician-toxicologists and poison information providers are available 24 hours a day, 365 days a year to help. In most cases a poison exposure can be safely managed at home with the help of a CPCS poison center expert, avoiding a call to 911 or a visit to a crowded hospital emergency room. Many parents think about contacting the poison control services only in case of an emergency, but experts are available to answer questions anytime.

In addition to the new programs launched this year, the CPCS offers many written materials free of charge. Brochures, magnets, telephone stickers and materials in ten languages can be requested by going to www.calpoison.org.

The CPCS has four Divisions located at- UC Davis Medical Center in Sacramento, San Francisco General Hospital in San Francisco, Children's Hospital Central California in Fresno/Madera and the UC San Diego Medical Center in San Diego. The CPCS is part of the University of California San Francisco School of Pharmacy and responsible to the California Emergency Medical Services Authority.

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