



American Association of Poison Control Centers

NEWS RELEASE

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AAPCC Issues Statement on the Synthetic Drug Abuse Prevention Act

ALEXANDRIA, VA. – The American Association of Poison Control Centers and the experts at America’s 57 poison centers are hailing the U.S. Congress for its recent passage of the Synthetic Drug Abuse Prevention Act and President Obama for signing the act into law. Today, AAPCC President Rick Dart, M.D., Ph.D., issued the following statement:

“On Monday, President Obama signed into law the Synthetic Drug Abuse Prevention Act of 2012 as part of Senate Bill 3187, the Food and Drug Administration Safety and Innovation Act passed by the U.S. Senate and House of Representatives. America’s poison centers commend the nation’s policymakers for addressing the threat of synthetic drugs with this important legislation.

“Poison center experts were the first to raise the alarm about the products known as “synthetic marijuana” in 2009 and those marketed as “bath salts” in 2010, when they began receiving calls about people having serious, life-threatening reactions to the substances. In 2010, poison centers nationwide responded to about 3,200 calls related to synthetic marijuana and bath salts. In 2011, that number jumped to more than 13,000 calls. Sixty percent of the cases involved patients 25 and younger.

“Our network of 57 poison centers is in a unique position to detect emerging public health threats, such as that posed by synthetic drugs. And once a threat is detected, the poison center network is a vital partner in local, state and federal response efforts.

“Data about every call made to a poison center are uploaded every 19 minutes to the National Poison Data System. This near real-time data collection provides the AAPCC and poison centers across the country the ability to detect new threats and quickly notify appropriate authorities at the local, state and federal levels.

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“Poison center experts, who have first-hand knowledge of the devastation these drugs cause for individuals and their families, say these substances are among the worst they have ever seen. People high on these drugs can get very agitated and violent, exhibit psychosis and severe behavior changes, and have harmed themselves and others. Some have been admitted to psychiatric hospitals and have experience continued neurological and psychological effects.

“Synthetic drugs have injured and killed too many people and destroyed too many lives. This federal ban will go far in helping to keep these dangerous drugs off the streets and in safeguarding the health of people across the nation.”

For more information, the media may contact Loreeta Canton, AAPCC communications manager, at 703.894.1863, 701.391.0626 (cell phone) or canton@aapcc.org.

The AAPCC supports the nation’s 57 poison centers in their efforts to treat and prevent drug, consumer product, animal, environmental and food poisoning. Members staff the Poison Help hotline at 1-800-222-1222 that provides free, confidential, expert medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week, 365 days a year from toxicology specialists, including nurses, pharmacists, physicians and poison information providers. In addition, the AAPCC maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States, providing real-time monitoring of unusual poisoning patterns, chemical exposures and other emerging public health hazards. The AAPCC partners with federal agencies such as EPA, HRSA and the CDC, as well as private industry.

To learn more, visit www.aapcc.org, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or read our blog at aapcc.wordpress.com. To join your voice with other poison center supporters, register for the AAPCC advocacy network at www.capwiz.com/aapcc – click on “Action E-List.”

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