

Poison Control Center Network Enhancement Act of 2019

Senator Patty Murray (D-WA) and Senator Richard Burr (R-NC)

Poisonings in the United States cause nearly 700,000 emergency room visits and more than 35,000 deaths per year. Poison Control Centers (PCC) operate a hotline through which toxicologists and other health professionals provide information to help individuals prevent or respond to toxic exposures and poisonings when they occur. The PCC Network currently includes 55 PCCs across the United States (as seen in the map below) that are supported by a combination of public and private funding.

The *Poison Control Center Network Enhancement Act of 2019* reauthorizes the PCC Network program, including the Poison Control National Toll-Free phone number and other communications capabilities, through 2024. This legislation strengthens and supports the valuable role that PCCs play in communities across the country by modernizing the PCC Network program to reflect new communications capabilities and update existing authorities.

The *Poison Control Center Network Enhancement Act of 2019*:

- Updates communications capabilities for PCCs by authorizing the establishment and maintenance of other methods of communication technologies (such as text messaging) to access PCC services.
- Directs the Secretary of the Department of Health and Human Services to work with the Federal Communications Commission to ensure that communications are routed to the appropriate PCC by physical location of the individuals making contact, rather than the area code of their device.
- Aligns the health promotion activities of PCCs to reflect their current activities, including toxic exposure prevention, poison prevention, assistance during applicable public health emergencies, and outreach to health care providers.
- Strengthens accountability for grantees and HHS by requiring a report to Congress every two years on the volume of contacts received by PCCs, a description of the types of poisonings and toxic exposures that PCCs are addressing, and an assessment of PCCs' public awareness campaigns.

