



Utah Poison Control Center

Talking Points—2016 Utah Legislature’s General Session

Funding Concerns

After a thorough review of our operations in a 2014–2015 legislative audit, the UPCC implemented audit recommendations and operational efficiencies. The implementation of the outlined recommendations has led to *a funding gap of \$626,644* needed to continue to provide 24-hour service and meet accreditation standards.

The UPCC is reliant on state funding. Less than 10% of the operating budget comes from federal funding through the Poison Center Network Act. Since 2011, the UPCC’s federal funding has dropped more than 40%.

From 1998–2014, the UPCC was funded through a \$0.07/month telephone surcharge. In 2014, the Utah Legislature redirected the telephone surcharge funding from the UPCC to support a computer-aided dispatch system. The legislature allocated \$2,100,000 from the general fund to support the UPCC, an 18–20% reduction in funding.

Background

The UPCC was established in 1954 with the primary mission of preventing and minimizing the adverse health effects from poisonings in Utah through education, service, and research. Since that time, the UPCC has been consulted on the management of more than 1.7 million potential poison emergencies—more than 45,000 cases annually, or about 120 cases a day—from individuals, health care providers, and public health officials across all 29 of Utah’s counties.

As a nationally recognized Certified Regional Poison Control Center, the UPCC offers poison information, clinical toxicology consultation, and poison prevention education 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, 365 days a year. The Center is staffed by 12 specialists in poison information, 2 certified health education specialists, and 2 board-certified toxicologists.

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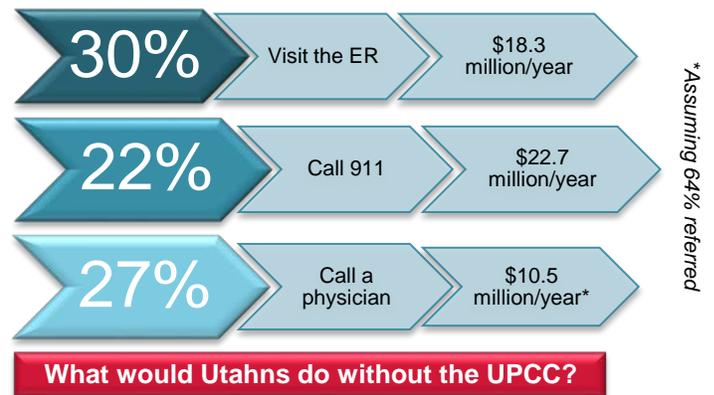


Our Value

The UPCC averts unnecessary healthcare spending.

Because more than 85% of the cases the UPCC consults on that originate outside of a healthcare facility can be managed on-site (e.g., without a trip to the emergency room), the UPCC saves millions of dollars in unnecessary healthcare spending each year. The UPCC has one of the highest utilizations of any poison center in the United States, so these savings are huge—more than **\$51 million annually**.

With a population of more than 2.9 million, this total represents an annual, per resident savings of \$17.59.



With about 20% of the UPCC's callers participating in Medicaid, CHIP, or other state insurance, **the UPCC creates more than \$10 million in direct savings to the state**. These savings will become costs if the UPCC's funding is cut.

The UPCC helps to reduce the burden on healthcare providers.

Because UPCC specialists in poison information (SPIs) are able to manage the majority of poison exposures outside of a healthcare facility, the UPCC frees up the time and resources of 911 dispatchers, emergency department staff, and EMS staff. Our center saves ambulance use for more critical runs and allows other health care providers to focus on the critically ill. This is especially important for areas with fewer health care providers and resources, including Utah's rural communities.

The UPCC is a vital part of Utah's public health infrastructure.

In addition to providing poison prevention and education services, the UPCC plays a critical role in disease surveillance, disaster readiness and response, and prescription drug epidemic response. Public health officials also rely on the UPCC for its expertise and state-of-the-art resources when responding to public safety issues, including hazardous chemical spills, contaminated water supplies, and product tampering.

The UPCC plays an important role in training the next generation of poison specialists and healthcare professionals.

Each year, the UPCC trains pharmacy students, emergency medical residents, family practice residents, and pediatric emergency medicine fellows. The UPCC also teaches clinical toxicology to pharmacy, medicine, and physician assistant students at the University of Utah.

With Your Support

The UPCC needs the Utah Legislature's support to increase our ongoing appropriation by \$626,644 to ensure that the UPCC can continue to offer critical programs and services to the state of Utah for years to come.