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Fund poison control

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Having spent over 13 years as a member of the Illinois General Assembly, I fully understand the complexities and the limitations of our state's budget. Illinois legislators are charged with the duty with ensuring the safety and welfare of our citizens. This includes staying fiscally solvent and getting a good return on our investments. Investing taxpayer dollars wisely is one of the most important, challenging and humbling parts of my job. When talking about programs that the state gets a great return on investment from, one program that comes to mind is the Illinois Poison Center (IPC), Illinois' only poison control center.

Poisoning is the leading cause of injury-related death or hospitalization for children between the ages of 18 and 36 months. It is also the number two cause of injury-related death regardless of age in the United States. The IPC helps protect Illinois families by providing poison control, treatment and information services around the clock. It handles approximately 100,000 poison-related cases annually - 52 percent of which involved children ages 5 and under. Through its outreach efforts, the IPC provides poison prevention education to hundreds of thousands of Illinois' residents.

Funding for poison control is a wise and an important investment for the taxpayers of the State of Illinois. Approximately 90 percent of all cases from the general public that come to the IPC are handled safely onsite where the poisoning occurred, thus saving families and individuals the time and expense associated with an emergency department visit or utilization of the local emergency medical services system. The IPC is one of those unique programs that the state invests in that actually saves Illinois taxpayers more than \$50 million annually by helping avoid unnecessary medical costs. The IPC is also a key component within Illinois' disaster and emergency response infrastructure.

I have been a proud supporter of full state funding for the IPC in the past, and I continue to be one today. This is why I am urging the governor to restore funding to IPC to ensure that all Illinoisans can continue to get access to timely poison control, treatment and prevention services that IPC provides.

*--John Fritchey
State Representative*

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