

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Washington Poison Center
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Seattle, WA 98125
www.wapc.org

Administrative Office:
(206) 517-2350
Emergencies: (800) 222-1222
TTY users dial 711 for the
Washington Relay service

501(c)(3) nonprofit (EIN 94-3214597)



**WASHINGTON
POISON CENTER**
(800) 222 1222

OUR MISSION:
To prevent and reduce
harm from poisoning
through expertise,
collaboration, and
education.

FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT AND EXECUTIVE/MEDICAL DIRECTOR

Last year, we communicated that our state was experiencing an increase in fentanyl use, and this year, we are disheartened to report that our community remains in the grip of the fentanyl epidemic. More tragically, our poison information specialists answer more than one call a week regarding fentanyl exposure to a child under age 5; the average age is 12 months.

In 2023, the Washington Poison Center (WAPC) increased staff efforts with the goal of curbing fentanyl's adverse effects on individuals, families, communities, and our state. For state, local, and tribal agencies, we created and provided toxicology education, in-person training, and opioid protocols and communications. Dr. Phillips visited and held trainings at over 40 Washington hospitals. We launched a naloxone distribution and training program tailored for community members, and visited a school or a community group at least once a week. Additionally, our public-health educators staffed booths at numerous events, allowing interaction with the community at large. Through televised media, press releases and social media, we furthered this life-saving informational campaign.

For 2024, not only do we remain steadfast in our efforts, but we will increase collaboration with the community and implement evidence-based curriculum for students.

Because mental health often is linked with drug abuse, we are partnering with 988 providers to establish warm hand off protocols as well as implement a care transition program for individuals leaving the hospital after self-harm or suicide attempts.

In Washington, we are the only entity that has dual capabilities of toxicology medical authority and public health expertise. This enables us to provide education, training, and harm-reduction to every community in Washington. During an overdose epidemic, the poison center is needed more than ever.

As the epidemic continues, there is increased opportunity to contribute and educate, inhibited only by our ability to afford and hire staff to help. We are working with our state and federal legislators to increase our government funding and are preparing a plan to increase our private fundraising efforts.

The Washington Poison Center extends sincere gratitude to the public, our partners, and our state legislators for their continued financial support. Investing in the WAPC is a proactive investment in the health and safety of individuals in our communities.



Anita Mires
Board President



**Scott Phillips, MD,
FACP, FACMT, FAACT**
Executive/Medical Director

Our Values

Compassion  Integrity  Growth  Drive  Innovation

TREATING OPIOID OVERDOSE WITH NALOXONE

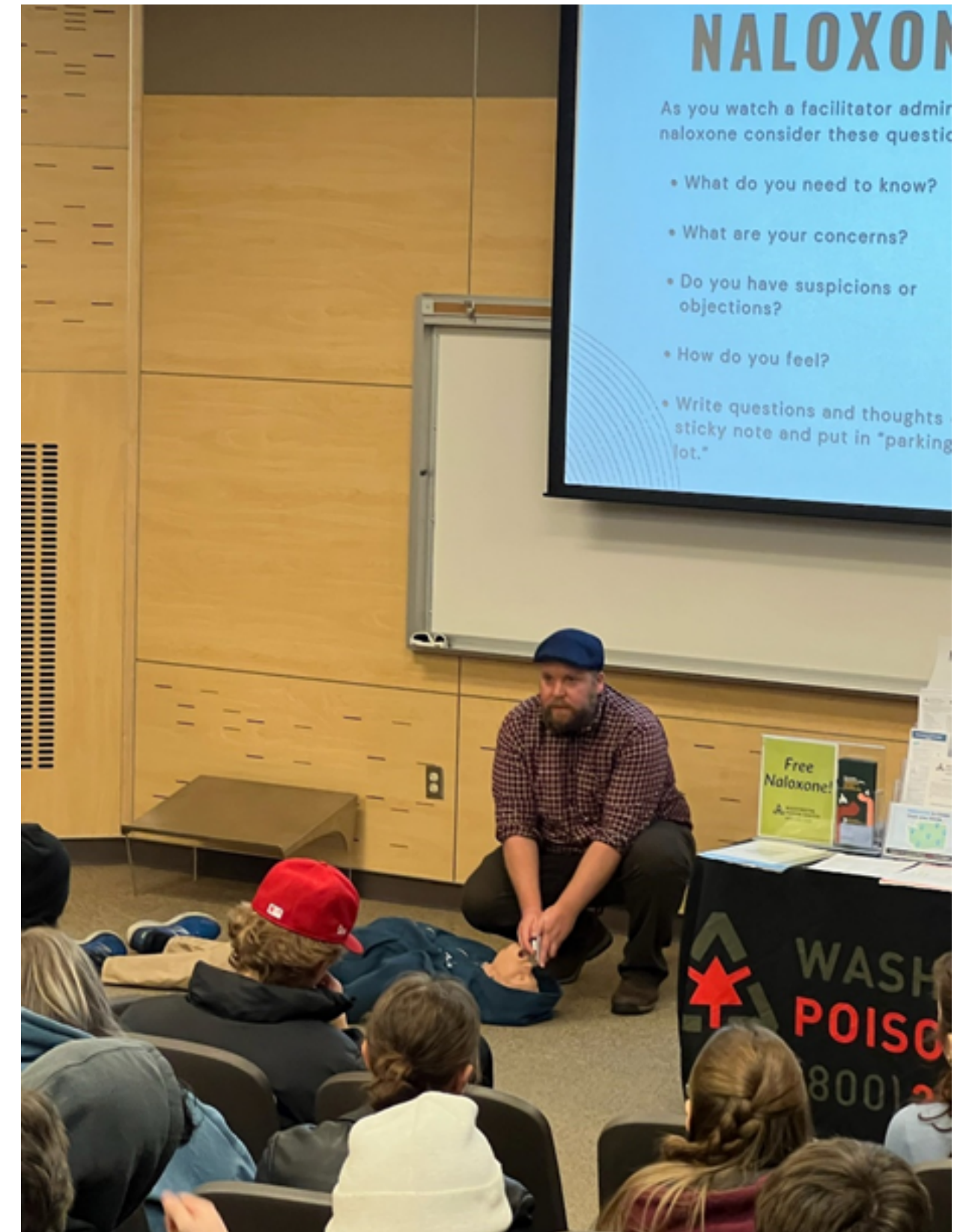
Between March of 2022 and March of 2023, Washington State saw the largest increase in opioid overdose rate in the country. When training, we ask for a show of hands, “How many people have been directly affected by an opioid overdose?” In some rooms, nearly every hand goes up. We are now also at a critical point where illicit fentanyl is breaking the age barrier and finding adolescent users. We must all take action to do what we can to prevent even greater loss of life to opioid overdose.

Taking action is just what WAPC Naloxone Education Project Coordinator Sarah Mahan did during March of 2023, when she proposed a plan for the WAPC to distribute naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal agent. Sarah’s vision specifically targeted music festivalgoers and college students, as they are higher risk populations with limited outreach. Naloxone (also known as Narcan®), can be administered through nasal spray or intramuscular injection. Naloxone is safe and easy to administer to anyone suspected of having an opioid overdose. Naloxone can be purchased over the counter, prescribed by a pharmacist, mail ordered, or accessed for free at community events.

WAPC’s first naloxone distribution event was at Thing Music Festival in Port Townsend in late August. We collaborated with Jefferson County Public Health. Over the course of the three-day festival, we distributed 664 doses and trained 303 festival-goers to administer naloxone. The success of this event encouraged replication in Eastern Washington, where we worked with the Spokane Alliance for Fentanyl Education to distribute naloxone at a Maren Morris concert, and distributed again at the Okanogan Family Faire in rural northeastern Washington. When distributing naloxone, we take three to five minutes with each recipient to review how to recognize an overdose and how to administer naloxone.

Seeing this success, WAPC leadership requested the Public Health Education Team create a formal training on naloxone administration. We anticipated some people would be hesitant to participate due to fear, stigma against substance users, or misinformation about fentanyl. Accordingly, the training embraces experiential learning with activities and dialogue aimed at acclimating participants to carrying and administering naloxone.

Everyone should carry naloxone and we are here to help make that a reality



Washington Poison Center educator demonstrating naloxone administration for the student life program at Eastern Washington University

During a typical training, we present the science of how naloxone and opioids work in the body, address stigma by discussing why people use fentanyl, and use a hands on approach to teaching how to administer naloxone.

Since the program’s launch in August 2023, our educators have distributed close to 1,900 doses of naloxone & trained approximately 900 individuals. This year, we look forward to reaching even more groups and getting trainers prepared to disseminate both naloxone and trainings to reach every corner of our state. Together, we can prevent and reduce harm from poisoning and live in a state where poisoning is not the leading cause of accidental death. Reach out to the Washington Poison Center to schedule a training and find naloxone near you.

OVERDOSE AWARENESS SERIES

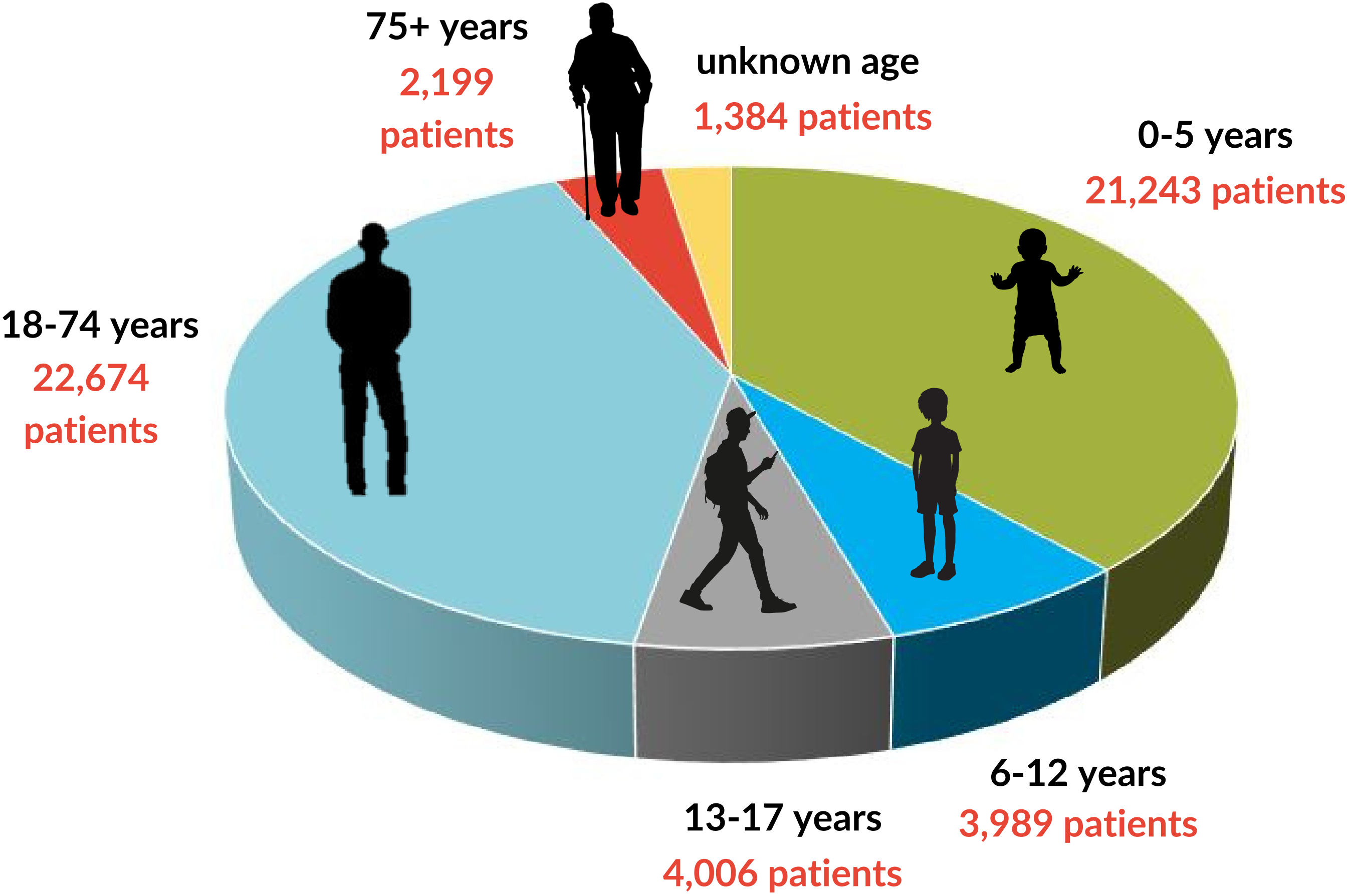
The Washington Poison Center held its 4th annual Overdose Awareness Series in August. Through 23 sessions over 3 days, a total of 375 participants explored unintentional and intentional overdose, how to prevent and reduce harm from overdose, and how to access resources and treatment. As in previous years, the series was free and held online. This year, we added an educational track designed for medical providers and other clinicians.

Sessions were led by professionals from University of Washington, Washington State University, Oregon Health & Science University, Medical College of Wisconsin, representatives from the Washington State Department of Health, Washington State Health Care Authority, and various community health organizations. Additionally, lectures were given by WAPC Specialists in Poison Information and medical toxicologists. Recordings of the sessions can be accessed [here](#).



POISON CENTER PATIENTS BY AGE GROUP

Ages ranged from newborns to centenarians



Total Patients: 55,495

WHY WASHINGTONIANS CALLED US

Unintentional Reasons	Number of Patients	Percentage of Total
Accidental	20,858	37.59%
Environmental	1,750	3.15%
Occupational	1,154	2.08%
Medication error	10,483	18.89%
Product misuse	7,051	12.71%
Bite / sting	306	0.55%
Food poisoning	879	1.58%
Adverse reaction	1,659	2.99%
	44,140	79.54%
Intentional Reasons		
Self-Harm	6,845	12.33%
Incorrectly used Medication or Products	1,906	3.43%
Abuse & Withdrawal	1,434	2.58%
Other and Unknown	1,170	2.11%
	11,355	20.46%
	55,495	100.00%

NEW FACES AT THE WAPC

5 Specialists in Poison Information to answer your calls



Kiana



Devin



Jenna



Shukri



Katie

and 1 Community Health Educator
working out of Spokane



Justin

CASE REPORTS

Lead Poisoning



A clinic physician called the WAPC about a child with an elevated lead level. The family did not know where the lead was coming from. While a single exposure to lead can cause immediate poisoning, ongoing lead exposure in children can also cause many dangerous long-term effects. One major concern is developmental and cognitive impairment, so identifying the source of the lead is important. Our specialist helped the physician contact the local pediatric environmental health specialty unit (PEHSU), to work with the family to test and identify the source of the lead in the infant's environment. We consulted with our Medical Toxicologist to develop a treatment plan for the patient.

The WAPC Specialist also identified one key possible source of lead for the child: the mother's breast milk. Lead can be passed in breast milk from mother to child. We recommended testing the mother's lead level, and she was found to have an elevated lead level too. We used interpreters to follow up with the family. The likely source of the lead was a cooking pot. This is one of many calls we get about lead. In this case the WAPC was a vital resource for poison prevention, identifying multiple patients, interpreter services, coordinating community resources, medical consultation, and follow-up.

62,166 cases and 119,731 calls managed in 2023
(many cases involve more than one call)

Overdose

The poison center received a call from a worried daughter about 30 minutes after her mom's diphenhydramine overdose. Due to the drug's effects, they were immediately referred to the Emergency Department (ER). The ER called the poison center to request help as the mother was having difficulty breathing and her heartrate was too fast. After she was stabilized, our poison specialist reviewed further anticipated symptoms and supportive management. When her condition worsened and she failed standard treatments, the ER physician called us again to request further help. The poison specialist and WAPC medical



toxicologist offered several last line treatments and the patient was stabilized enough to transfer to the ICU. The first 6 hours are most critical in this type of overdose; the ICU physician and PC were in constant communication every hour in order to ensure treatments were effective, and strategized possible next scenarios. This mother improved and her daughter took her home after 36 hours.

WE ARE HERE FOR YOU

Older Adults



Sometimes older adults take the wrong medication or a double dose by accident. We are there to advise them on what to do.

Parents



Young children can get into anything... it only takes a minute for them to put something in their mouths. We can determine if it is toxic or not, and what to watch for or if they need to be seen.

Teenagers



We get many calls from teenagers. Remember The Good Samaritan law protects WA residents from being prosecuted for being under the influence when seeking help for themselves or a friend.

EMTs & Paramedics



When EMTs respond to poison exposures, overdoses, or drug interactions, they can call us for advice on symptom management, assessments, and more.

Health Care Facilities



19% of our calls come from healthcare facilities who need our expertise in treating patients with toxic diagnoses. Our trained staff follow up on patients until they are stable.

Local health jurisdictions



Through a contract with the state Department of Health, we provide after hours coverage for many of the local health jurisdictions in the state, freeing them up for other responsibilities.

Visit wapc.org to see annual statistics on the top 10 most common exposures, seasonal health alerts, data reports, to check out Yukboxes, and to order materials.

CALLER QUOTES

What did they say about our services?

"I am a school nurse in Spokane Valley. I have used the Poison Center line a number of times. I have great confidence in the care provided and have recommended it to others a number of times. Exceptional advice and care always."

And, here's a comment from a parent:

"...I called in a state of panic about my child, and was ready to rush him to ER based off Google searches. The man who helped me was calm and kind and didn't make me feel any worse than I already did about my child getting ahold of medication. He offered great advice for future storage of my medications...I would definitely recommend this resource to any parent as the internet can be very misleading. Thank you again!"

We get repeat callers and new callers like this one:

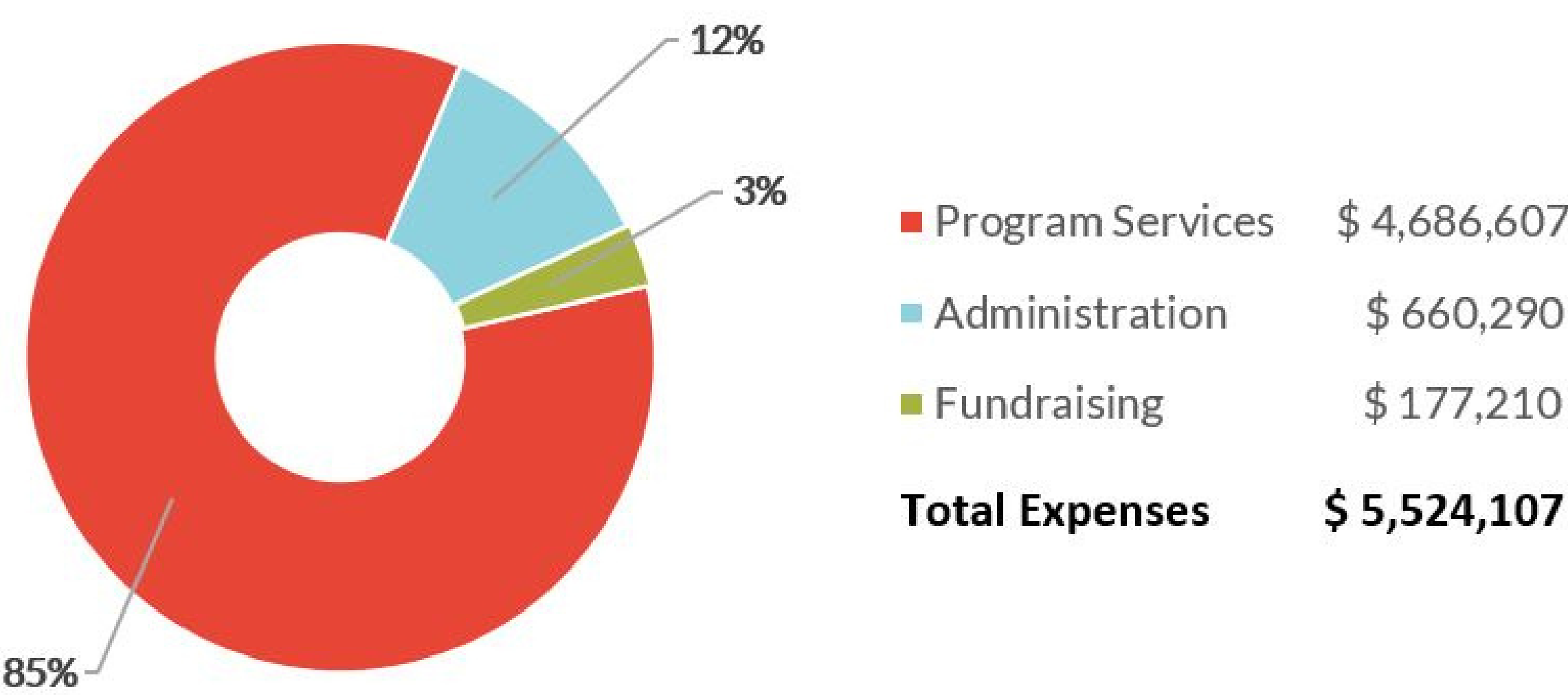
"First time using them very impressed! They answered right away and listen to my needs and took charge gave complete instructions on what to do and very helpful and calming."

We treated 91% of our patients at home when we were called first, preventing a costly trip to the hospital & saving Washingtonians, insurance companies, & Apple Health over \$53.4 million in healthcare costs

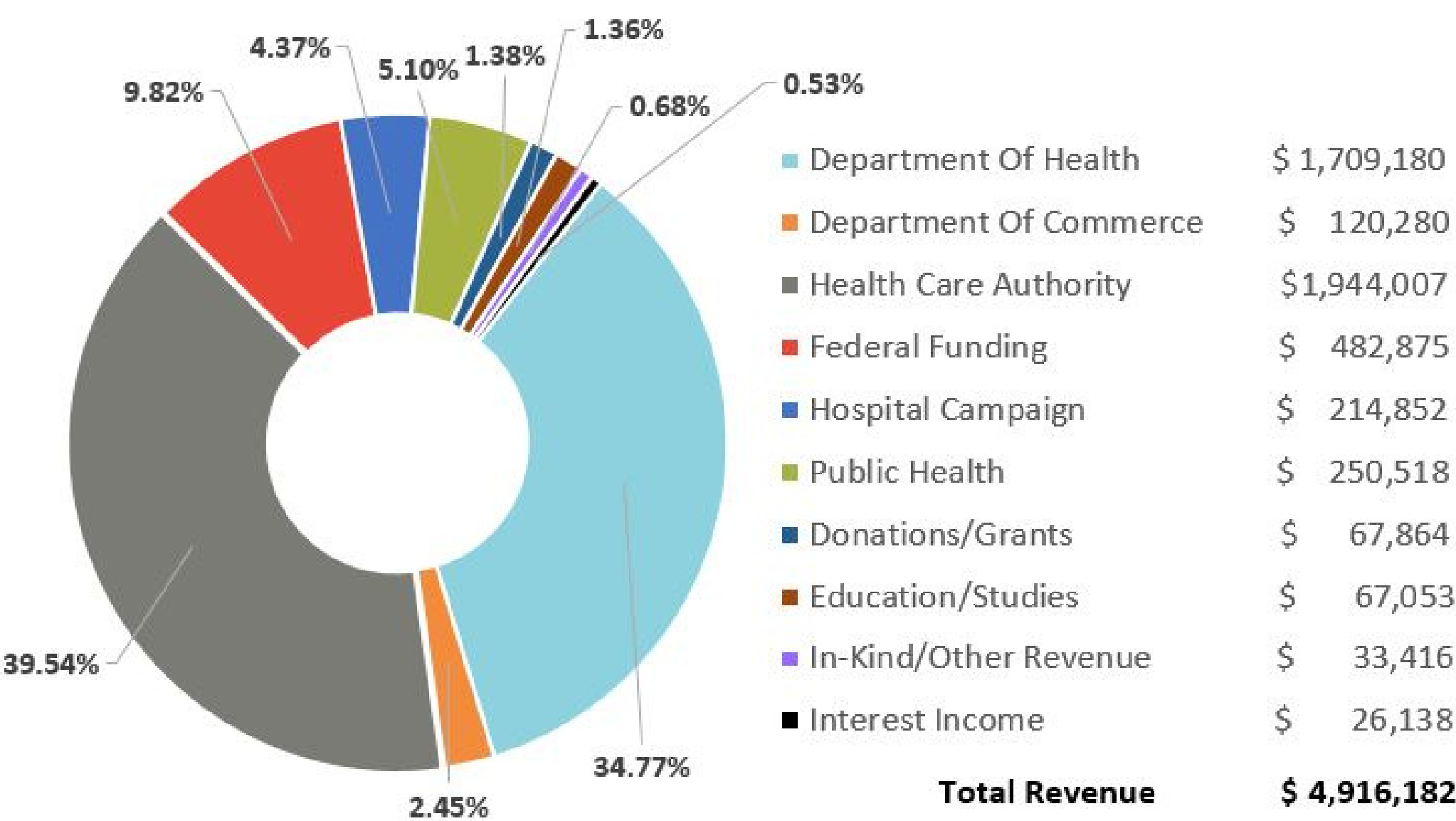
A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Fiscal Year Data (July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023)

Allocation of Expenses 2023



Sources of Income 2023





MEET ONE OF OUR BOARD MEMBERS

Janessa M. Graves, PhD MPH
Associate Professor
University of Washington School of Medicine

I credit my involvement in the WAPC board to both my academic background in injury prevention and my experiences as a parent. After finishing my doctorate, I completed a two-year fellowship in pediatric injury prevention and research at the Harborview Injury Prevention and Research Center. I developed a healthy respect for the healthcare and public health infrastructure that keeps us all safe. The WAPC functions in this capacity, serving as an essential resource, always on standby to provide help and guidance in an emergency or time of stress.

Over the years, the WAPC has been a reliable resource for our family. As a mother of two, I can vividly recall the relief I felt when I called the poison center and was reassured that my child would be fine after exposure to hydrocortisone cream, garden fertilizer, or some other household substance discovered by a curious toddler. I remember reflecting on the value of the poison center-the ability for anyone to call and promptly access knowledge and guidance, regardless of insurance or distance from a physical clinic or ER. It was this appreciation for WAPC's vital role in public health and health equity that motivated me to join the board. In this role, I hope to raise awareness of the poison center and its services to more families around Washington, especially those in rural areas.

MEET ONE OF OUR STAFF

Alex Sirotzki, MPH,
Public Health Education & Communications Specialist
(Western Washington)



Alex started at WAPC in 2019 as a Public Health Educator after completing his student capstone project with us in 2018. The project, "Let's Talk Cannabis: The Development of a Capacity-Building Training for Influential Adults", fit well with his interests in tobacco, cannabis, and other substance use.

In the course of Alex's five years at WAPC, two projects have stood out for him. The first was when the Manson School District in Chelan County reached out to us requesting education directly to teens. To create a presentation that was effective, Alex needed to avoid scare tactics and build trust. This was done by involving the school staff, parents, and then the teens. The program was very successful, and Alex said the work "felt positive, like I'd really done something." The second project was co-facilitation of Naloxone Education with Justin Mauger, our eastern Washington educator. Justin's training was based on a very different style of education using facilitation skills and Alex said it was gratifying seeing "folks connect with each other" and the transitions in the audience as they interacted.

Alex was proud of how he and Meghan King, our other western Washington educator, kept education going during COVID. Many of the approaches and projects we use now, e.g. the Overdose Series, came from that time. Moving forward, Alex would like to see our education continue to grow as it adapts to new trends, considering lessons learned from past educational programs while finding ways to innovate.

EDUCATION

Public Education

We reached 15,165 people through 108 community fairs, workshops, presentations, and other events.



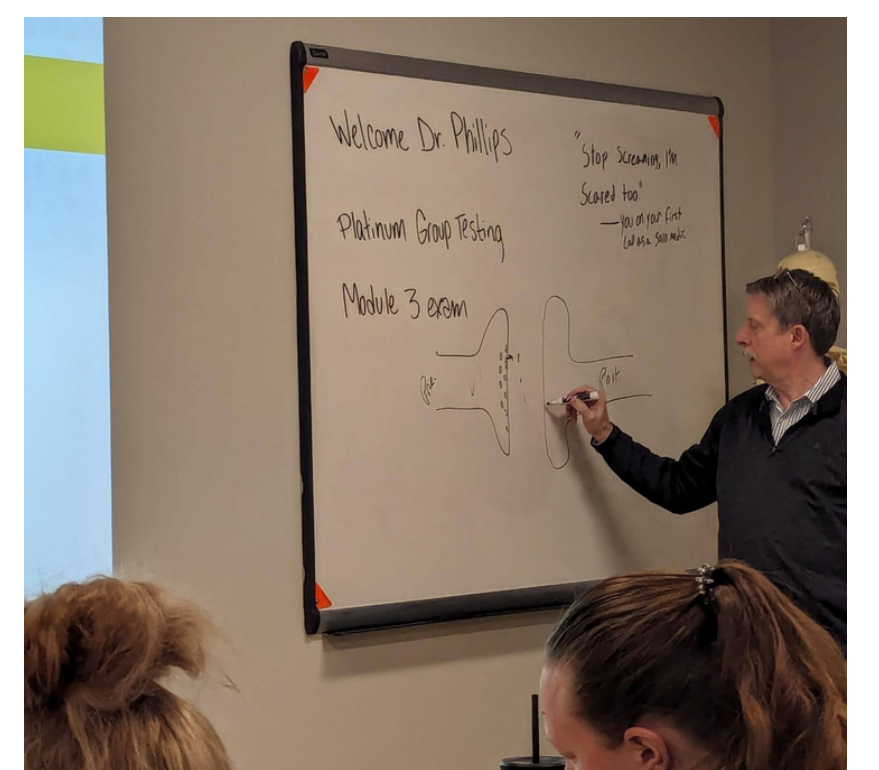
With Washington's precipitous rise in fentanyl overdose deaths over the last few years, our Education Team heavily focused in 2023 on overdose prevention and harm reduction. We launched a new naloxone training and distribution program, participated in numerous state and local workgroups to develop communications materials and dispel fentanyl misinformation, and provided opioid-related education to schools, universities, community organizations, and more. We began building relationships with tribal entities to support their efforts with overdose prevention, which we will continue to strengthen over the coming year.

2023 also contained significant changes for our Public Health Education Team. After seven incredible years of service to central and eastern Washington communities, we said farewell to our Eastern Washington educator Jared O'Connor. In May, we welcomed Justin Mauger as our Eastern Washington Community Health Educator. Born and raised in eastern Washington, Justin holds a BA in Social Work and an MA in International Education. He brings a wealth of educational and community-centered experience, including expertise in experiential learning. Justin is developing our naloxone programming, launching education for refugees and recent immigrants, and implementing effective medication management strategies for older adults. Reach out to Justin at jmauger@wapc.org.

Clinical Education

5,461 clinical attendees were trained at 89 healthcare practitioner education events

The Washington Poison Center prioritizes education through a three-pronged approach. First, we offer real-time guidance and support to individuals seeking help through our call center. Second, we raise public awareness through various community outreach efforts. Finally, the Associate Medical Director, Dr. Kaiser, spearheads the clinical education program. Dr. Kaiser and Dr. Phillips deliver both on-site and virtual lectures to healthcare professionals such as resident physicians, pharmacy, medical, and nursing students. In 2023, Dr. Kaiser and Dr. Phillips provided 89 lectures to further strengthen clinical learning.



Dr. Kaiser and Dr. Phillips go beyond physical boundaries to actively engage with healthcare professionals across the state. They delivered numerous lectures to hospital staff throughout Washington, spanning locations from Walla Walla to Forks. Recognizing the crucial public health concern, 2023 also saw lectures to public health specialists, particularly focusing on the opioid epidemic. This dedication to education across various levels ensures comprehensive knowledge dissemination and empowers individuals to make informed decisions regarding potential poisoning hazards.

Student Education

29 medical and pharmacy students and physicians were trained by WAPC staff in 2023

The Washington Poison Center is committed to ongoing education and training for pharmacists, medical residents, and students, providing valuable insights into a range of topics crucial to poison prevention and management. Through tailored programs, participants delve into areas such as common poisoning incidents prevalent in Washington State, envenomations specific to the region, and emerging recreational drug trends. These training sessions offer a platform for healthcare professionals to stay updated on evolving challenges and best practices in poison control, empowering them to provide effective care and support to their communities.



Our Board plays a pivotal role in supporting our organization by providing strategic guidance, oversight, and invaluable expertise. It consists of community members with backgrounds including healthcare, law, education, leadership, and business, who support our mission. Their participation creates a supportive framework that empowers the organization to navigate challenges and capitalize on opportunities for growth and impact.

2023 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



President Anita Mires, Anita Mires & Associates, Inc.

Treasurer Marlayna Geary, CPA, DP&C, P.C.

Secretary Janessa Graves , PhD, MPH, WSU College of Nursing

Immediate Past President Steve Burgon, JD, Ogden Murphy
Wallace, PLLC

Jenny Arnold, PharmD, BCPS

Melanie Asher, MBA, Omicle

Aneet Bains, Northshore School District

Mark Martzen, PhD, Bastyr University

Faith Njeri, FNS Consulting

Mary Selecky, Retired Secretary of Health

Stacy Tarango, MD, Spokane Emergency Physicians

Captain Joseph Wubbold III, Captain, US Coast Guard, Retired

Biruk Yitbarek, Microsoft

Tammy York, MHA, BSN, CPN, Seattle Children’s Hospital

Non-Voting Members

Scott Hogan, MHA, Board Member Emeritus

Jennifer Landacre, MPA, WA State Department of Health

Terms ended:

Erika Allen, CPA, Harrison Berkman Claypool and Guard

Danica Pytte, MBA, BSN, Seattle Children’s Hospital

SUPPORT THE POISON CENTER

The Washington Poison Center is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit and relies upon a combination of state contracts; federal, corporate, and foundation grants; and donations from people like you to sustain our core services and expand our reach to provide public and clinical education promoting prevention, intervention, and harm reduction.

To make a donation go to:

www.wapc.org/support-us/donations

or scan our Venmo QR code



venmo



We need to replace our aging generator. Your donation will support the cost of a new propane generator, a new cement pad, safety enclosure, and labor/installation. Click on the graphic to go to our GoFundMe.

Put our phone number in your list of contacts: **1-800-222-1222**
and tell your friends to do the same

Find us on social media:



PARTNERING WITH HEALTH CARE FACILITIES

In 2023 10,599 cases (19%) involved a patient in a healthcare facility



The Washington Poison Center relies on our Fair Share program (in 2024 renamed Hospital Engagement program) to provide about 10% of our overall budget; yet approximately 25% of all exposure cases come from healthcare facilities, consulting nurses, and clinics.

- We support access to care by allowing patients to request help from home by managing minor and non-toxic exposures without a healthcare referral.
- We provide free telehealth support, which often includes medical toxicology consultations, to hospitals and healthcare providers for complicated overdose patients.
- We allow resources to be reallocated, help shorten hospital stay length, reduce patient mortality and morbidity rates, and decrease the burden on Emergency Departments and EMS services.

Please see the list of participating hospitals.
Thank you to our partners for their ongoing support!

Fair Share Participants

- | | |
|--|--|
| <p>Astria Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">•Sunnyside Community Hospital•Toppenish Community Hospital <p>Cascade Medical Center
Columbia Basin Hospital
Coulee Medical Center
Columbia County Health System
Confluence Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Wenatchee Valley Hospital• Central Washington Hospital <p>East Adams Rural Healthcare
EvergreenHealth
EvergreenHealth Monroe
Ferry County Memorial Hospital
Forks Community Hospital
Garfield County Public Hospital
Island Health
Jefferson Healthcare
Kadlec Regional Med. Center
Kaiser Permanente
Kittitas Valley Healthcare
Lake Chelan Community Hospital
Lincoln Hospital
Mason General Hospital
MultiCare Health System</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Allenmore Hospital• Auburn Medical Center•Capital Medical Center•Covington• Deaconess Hospital• Good Samaritan Hospital• Mary Bridge Children's Hospital• Tacoma General Hospital• Valley Hospital• Yakima Memorial <p>North Valley Hospital
Ocean Beach Hospital
Odessa Memorial Healthcare Ctr.
Olympic Medical Center
Othello Community Hospital
Overlake Medical Center
PeaceHealth Columbia Network</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Southwest Medical Center• St. John Medical Center | <p>PMH Medical Center
Providence Health Services SE Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• St. Mary Hospital <p>Providence Health Care Eastern WA Region</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Mount Carmel• Holy Family• St. Joseph• Sacred Heart Medical Center <p>Providence North Puget Sound</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Providence Regional Medical Center Everett• Providence Swedish Edmonds• Providence Swedish Mill Creek <p>Pullman Regional Hospital
Quincy Valley Medical Center
Samaritan Healthcare
Seattle Children's Hospital
Skyline Hospital
Swedish Health Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Swedish Ballard• Swedish Cherry Hill• Swedish First Hill• Swedish Issaquah• Swedish Redmond <p>Tri-State Memorial Hospital
Three Rivers Hospital
UW Medicine</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Harborview Med. Center• UW Medical Center• Northwest Hospital & Med. Center• Valley Medical Center <p>Virginia Mason Franciscan Health</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• St. Anne Medical Center• St. Anthony Hospital• St. Clare Hospital• St. Elizabeth Hospital• St. Francis Hospital• St. Joseph Hospital• St. Michael Medical Center• Virginia Mason Medical Center <p>Whitman Hospital
Willapa Harbor Hospital</p> |
|--|--|

