

For Immediate Release

March 18, 2009

Contact:

Autumn Allen
1-800-222-1222

Mr. Yuk Visits the Capitol

On Monday, a special and very green visitor toured the state Capitol building. Armed with magnets and stickers with the poison help phone number, 1-800-222-1222, he spread the word about poison safety. The Washington Poison Center's (WAPC) Mr. Yuk was at the Capitol to celebrate the 48th year of National Poison Prevention Week, March 15-21, 2009.

“National Poison Prevention Week was established by Congress in 1961 to raise awareness of unintentional poisonings,” stated Autumn Allen, Public Relations Director of the WAPC. “Governor Christine Gregoire signed a proclamation asking all citizens to join her in this special observance.”

The WAPC receives on averages 258 calls a day, nearly 210 of those calls are about people or animals exposed to a potential poison. “Many of these poisonings could have been prevented,” said Allen. Poison centers nationally organize events during this special week to educate about poisonous products, how to prevent poisonings from occurring and to call this national toll-free number, 1-800-222-1222, for poison help.

To help observe Nation Poison Prevention Week, the WAPC held a Mr. Yuk poster contest for 6-12 year olds in Washington State. A 7th grade student, Ivyanne Smith of Redmond, was recognized on the Capitol steps as this year's contest winner. Her poster will be on billboards throughout the state for the next few weeks.

State Representative Scott White (D-Seattle) was with Mr. Yuk to congratulate Smith and show his support for the Poison Center. National Poison Prevention Week comes at a time when many poison centers, including the WAPC, face potential funding cuts. Washington State's proposed 2-year budget will cut funding to the WAPC in half. For more information about Poison Prevention Week, or the current budget crisis visit www.wapc.org.

“We need to find a way to fund our Poison Center,” said White. “It is an essential service that is needed for all our citizens.”

XXX