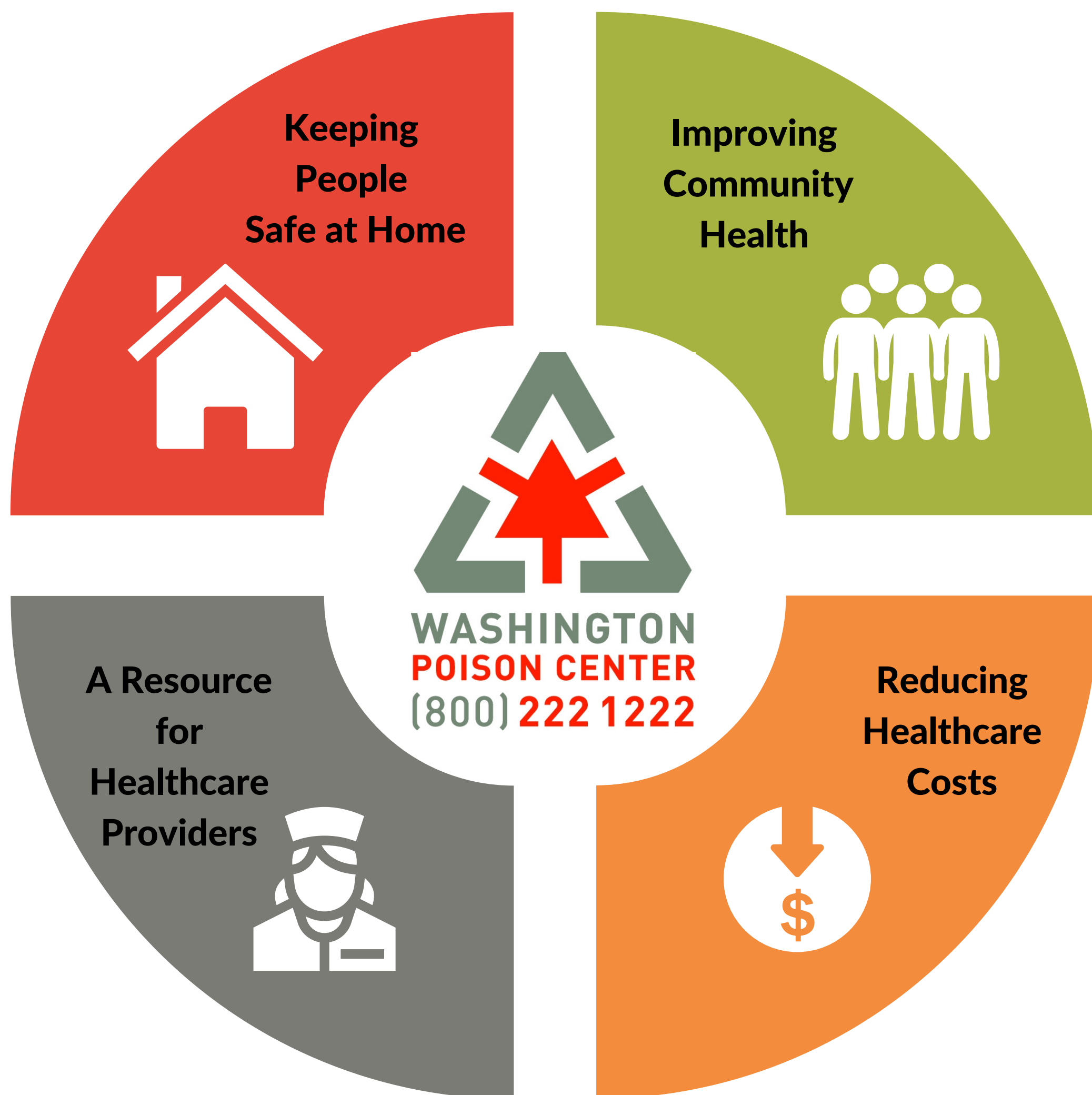


WASHINGTON POISON CENTER

ANNUAL REPORT 2021



What We're Here For 24/7/365

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

OUR VALUES: *Compassion, Integrity, Growth, Drive, Innovation*

Washington Poison Center
155 NE 100th Street Suite #100,
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)

FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT AND MEDICAL DIRECTOR



Steve Burgon, JD
Board President



Scott Phillips, MD, FACP,
FACMT, FAACT
WAPC Medical Director

Over 60 years ago, the Washington Poison Center (WAPC) was the first organization in the state to set up a medical advice telephone line (now commonly known as tele-health) and since that time we have continually served the medical community and citizens of Washington by anticipating, adapting and innovating. Our certified poison information specialists are available 24/7/365 and the calls are always free of charge.

Because our hospitals are flooded with COVID patients, keeping patients at home and out of emergency departments is more essential now than it has been in past decades. Advising and treating patients who remained at home alleviated real-time triage for overtaxed hospital staff, and resulted in \$41 million healthcare dollars saved and prevented many potential COVID exposures.

But, we are more than a passive telephone helpline. Our goal is to be the recognized name for poison prevention and treatment. As surely as the public knows to call 911 for a medical emergency, we'd like the public to know they should be calling 800-222-1222 for poison exposures and questions.

The steady rise in the variety and potency of prescription drugs has led to increased medication errors at home, especially in vulnerable populations; there was a 14% increase in errors just from 2020 to 2021. More people are consulting the Internet for just about everything, including medical advice and remedies; Ivermectin, hydroxychloroquine, and disulfiram have been more highly searched in the past two years than at any past time, and in less than two years, WAPC statistics show an 11-fold increase in Ivermectin misuse. Escalating opioid abuse continues, and most troublingly, as compared to 2020, there is a 29% increase in child and adolescent self-harm.

For us at WAPC, remaining abreast of exposure trends and treatments is the given, but the objective is to effect a transformation in public awareness through community collaboration. In other words, rather than talking at people, we aim to link with people, by partnering with crisis groups, schools, and community leaders.

The Washington Poison Center extends sincere gratitude to the public, our partners, and our state legislators for their continued financial support and recognition of our goals and programs.

2021 By The Numbers

**122,111 calls answered and
61,605 cases managed in 2021**

**127 public and
health care
education events**



**29 Medical, pharmacy,
nursing, & paramedic
students and physicians
were trained by WAPC staff**



**91% of patients were kept
at home when we were called
first, saving \$ 41 million in
healthcare costs**



**42% of all cases concerned
a Child under 6 years old
and over 13% of all cases
concerned Adults
over 60 years old**

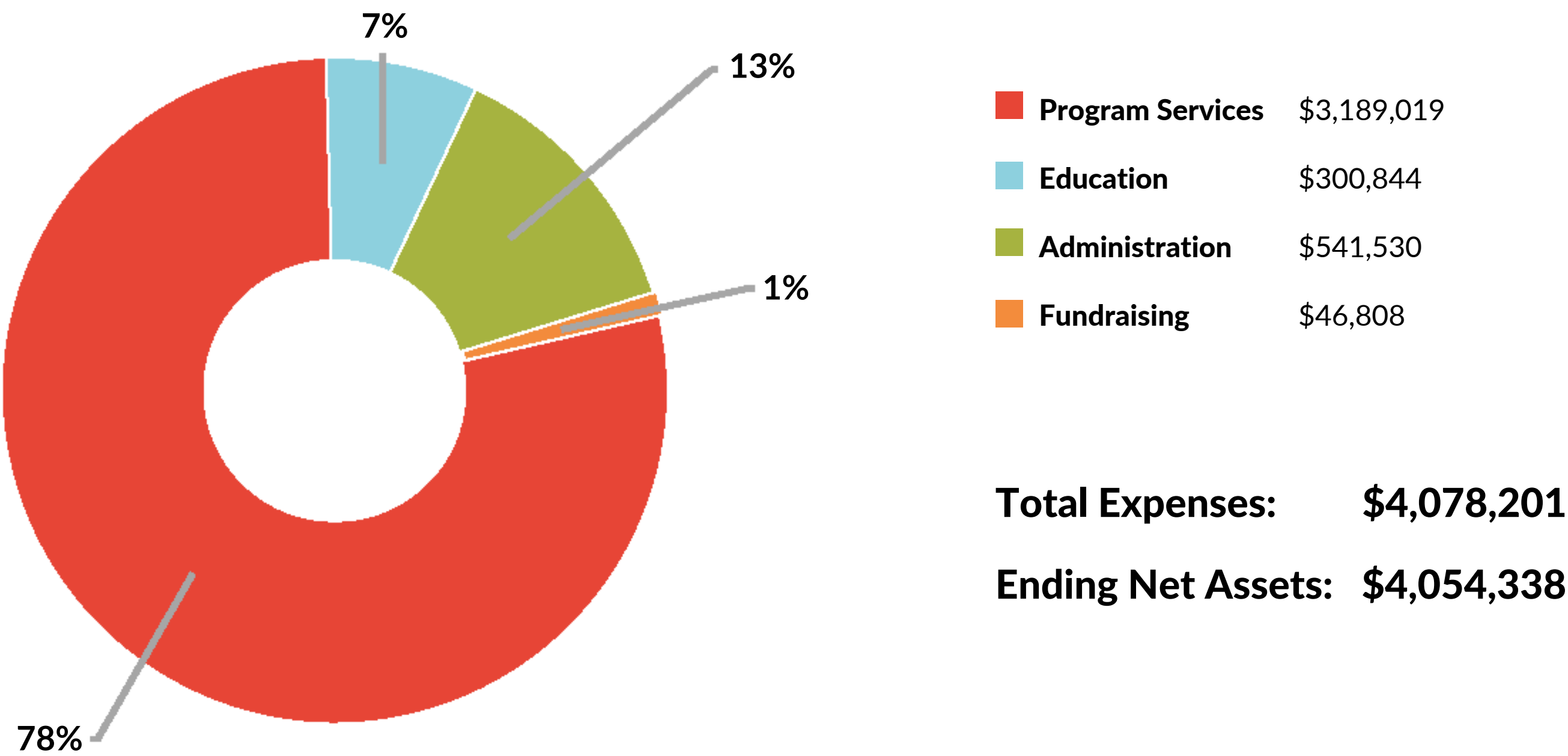


**25% of cases
involved a patient in
the hospital**

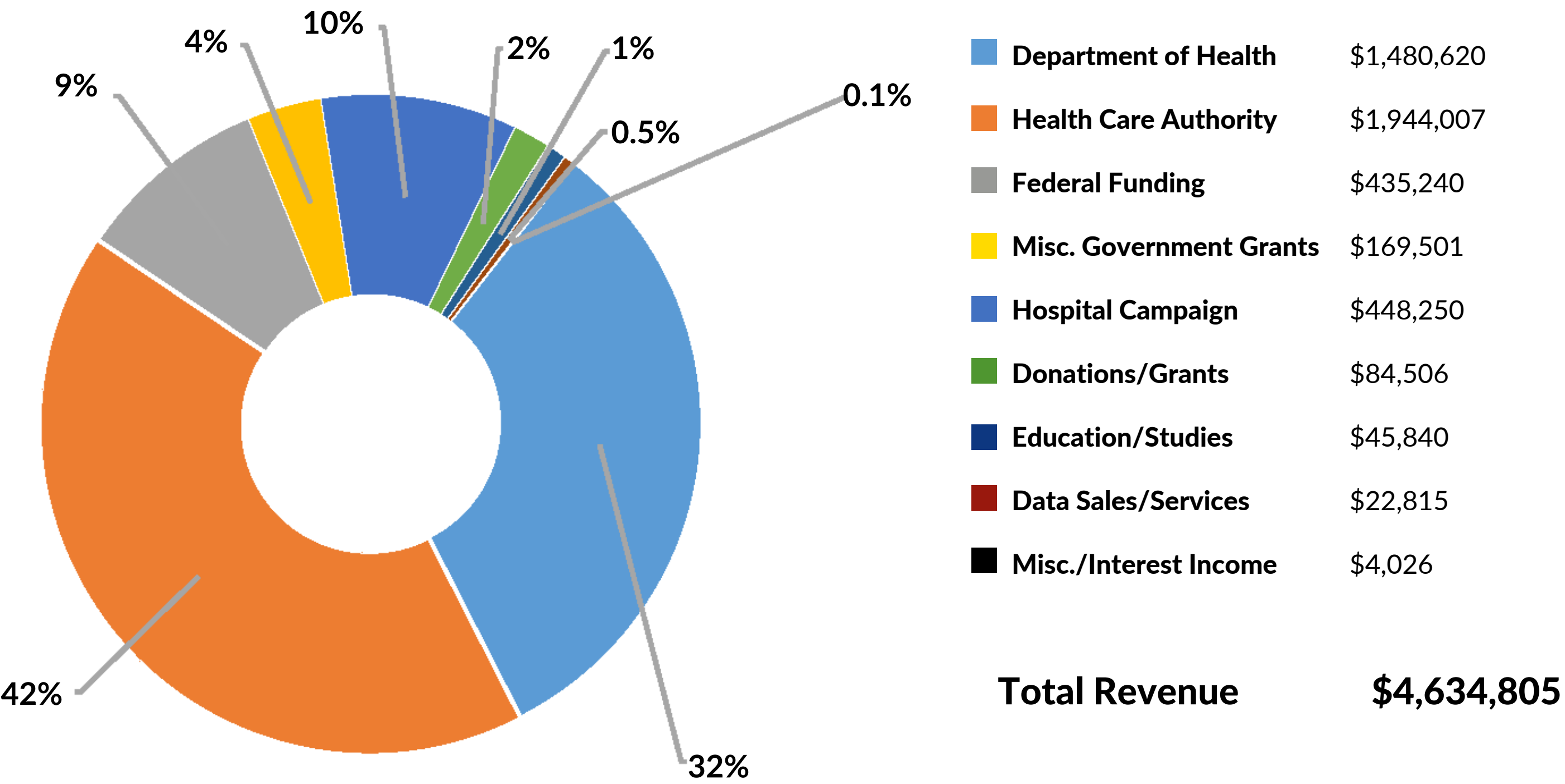


A WORTHWHILE INVESTMENT

Allocation of Expenses by the WAPC

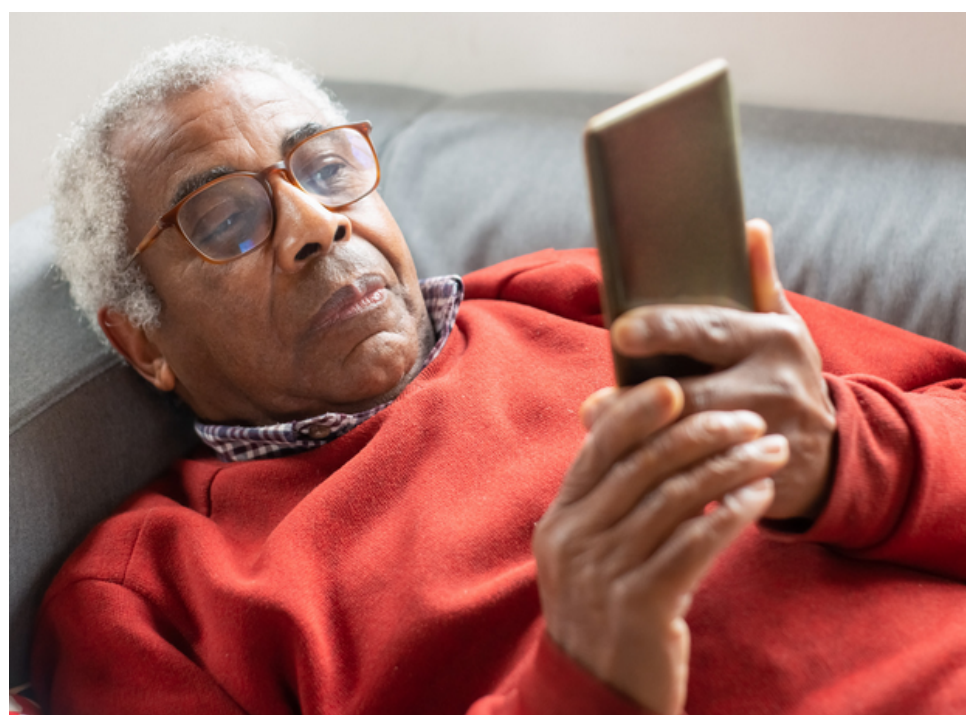


Sources of Funding for the WAPC



CASE REPORTS

An older adult on a fixed income called the center. He had been diabetic since he was a child and was aware that taking too much insulin could be life-threatening. He has always been careful and never knowingly had a medication error. The night he called, while he was preparing his insulin injection, the phone rang. He was so disgusted with the robo-call that interrupted him that afterwards he drew up the wrong insulin. He realized the error after the shot was given, as he was putting the bottle away. The pharmacy and



doctor's office were closed so he called 911. Fortunately the dispatcher knew to

transfer the call to the poison center. The pharmacist who answered was reassuring and asked a lot of questions, then provided a plan for monitoring his blood sugar and diet in order to keep him safe at home. He lost a little sleep that night with the frequent follow-up check in calls from the poison center, but this was much less stressful emotionally and financially than a trip to the emergency room.

On a rainy Friday evening a busy mom was cooking dinner for herself and her 3 children, all under the age of 6. It had been a taxing day, she had a bad headache, and she just wanted the day to be over. As she was cooking she could hear the rain pounding

down outside and was relieved she and her kids were safe at home. Then she realized it was too quiet; all she heard



was the rain, there were no sounds of children playing. She walked into the living room and found them sitting beside an open diaper bag with an empty bottle of children's pain reliever on the floor. The bad day just got worse.

She knew she had to take the kids to the hospital to be checked out and could not wait until her spouse got home from their second job. As she was picking up the diaper bag and preparing to brave the rainy rush hour traffic, she found a sheet of Mr. Yuk stickers she'd received in the mail. It had the poison center number on it and she decided to call.

The nurse who answered the phone took a detailed history of what happened, made some calculations based on the number of tablets missing, the strength of the medication, and the children's weights. The nurse told her it was OK to stay home and reassured her that she could call back at any time. There was no disruption to this family's routine, no unnecessary blood draw for the kids, or cost for a hospital visit.



Meet one of our Board Members

Mark Martzen, PhD, CIP
Professor, Bastyr University
School Of Natural Health and Sciences



"Most people do not have the types of jobs that dramatically affect the well-being of others. The Washington Poison Center (WAPC) does this daily, oftentimes saving people's lives that might otherwise be lost.

I joined the WAPC as a Board member because the work of the Poison Center is a vital community service and it must remain available when people and consulting doctors need it. Every single member of the WAPC is dedicated to this mission of protecting and saving lives - every hour, every day, every month, every year. I am honestly humbled that my involvement as a Board member aids this critical mission and that, in my role, I am also afforded the opportunity to be a small part in helping to save people's lives. The feeling of doing that level of good for another has been enriching beyond words. It is an honor and a privilege to stand with all of the dedicated people of the WAPC and my Board service has truly been life changing for me."



Meet one of our Call Center Staff

Joan, R.N., CSPI (currently in her 35th year at the Poison Center)

"I had been a medical assistant for several years and was looking for something different, yet still in the medical field. I started at the Poison Center first as a Poison Information Provider (PIP) for several years before going to nursing school and then becoming a Certified Specialist in Poison Information (CSPI). I was seeking a better and higher understanding of medicine to further increase my knowledge in toxicology. I find everything fascinating about medicine, and appreciate that it is constantly evolving - it's impossible to get bored with it! I feel as though not only do I share my knowledge, I'm also adding to my own knowledge each workday.

Our job is an important one. It is stressful and challenging, but also very rewarding. Yes, there are sad cases when there is a sick patient or poor outcome. But hearing the relieved sighs of anxious parents, having a hurried emergency room provider say "thank you, you've given me everything I need", or a nurse tell me that if she hadn't just spoken to me and learned of the potential for seizures that our patient would not have fared as well, is reward enough for me. I have occasional tears at work, but they are well outnumbered by the satisfaction for the many patients that we help. Someone has to be available and properly trained to assist those dealing with poisoning or drug overdose, and I'm thankful to be one of them!"

MEET OUR NEW MEDICAL DIRECTOR

In 2021, the Washington Poison Center welcomed Dr. Scott Phillips as the new medical director. Dr. Phillips, whose Washington roots reach back three generations, is board certified in both internal medicine and medical toxicology.



During college, his interest in nature broadened into a curiosity about toxicology. As an EMT, he responded to calls about snake bites, overdoses and a notable ingestion of *Toxicoscordion venenosum*, commonly known as death camas, a plant that looks similar to wild onions.

Having authored hundreds of articles, chapters, and abstracts as well as nine books, and given innumerable presentations and academic lectures, Dr. Phillips is keen to educate both medical professionals and the public, both at home and abroad, about all things toxicology.

Dr. Phillips is a Fellow of the American College of Physicians, the American Academy of Clinical Toxicology and the American College of Medical Toxicology. Some of his many honors include the 2009 Laureate Award for internal medicine physician, four-time recipient of the Outstanding Clinical Faculty Award at University of Colorado School of Medicine, and the Medal of Honor, awarded by the Vietnamese Ministry of Health, for his contributions in global toxicology and healthcare.

With a high regard to continue the work of Dr. Robertson, the poison center's founding director, Dr. Phillips aspirations for the poison center are to sustain and grow funding and to create connection with all Washington communities with emphasis on the underserved.

2021 BOARD OF DIRECTORS



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Treasurer Erika Allen, CPA, Harrison Berkman Claypool
and Guard

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Ian Corbridge, MPH, WA State Department of Health

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Candace Jackson, Public Health Seattle & King County

Ed Mund, Lewis County Public Health & Social Services

Nathan Weed, MPH, Director, Office of Community

Health Systems, WA State Department of Health

Erika Henry, MSPCI, WA State Department of Health

Carrie Ulvestad, MBA, Independent Consultant

EXPOSURE TRENDS IN 2021:

Every year, the Washington Poison Center receives thousands of calls on exposures to potentially harmful substances. Trend analysis allows us to examine patterns of potential harm, which helps guide us in making treatment recommendations, public and professional education, and public health response. Our annual Data Reports answer many of those questions and highlight growing threats and toxic substances in the state that demand our attention.

Data reports on exposure trends are available on our [website](#). Special focus reports include:

- Nicotine
- Cannabis
- Adolescent Intentional Self-Poisoning
- Adults 60 and Over
- Opioids

Compared to 2020 we have found several interesting trends:

**Child & Adolescence
Self Harm**



**Adults >60 yrs who
took another person's
medication**

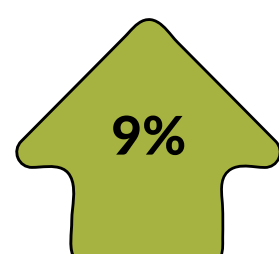


Ivermectin Misuse



Opioid Misuse/Abuse

Ages 21-59 yrs



Ages > 60 yrs



Find us on social media:



PUBLIC HEALTH EDUCATION



Despite the continuing change and ongoing intensity of the COVID-19 pandemic, our public health education team reached 10,237 Washington residents in 2021 – more than doubling their 2020 reach! The team achieved this through 111 public education events, including trainings and presentations, participation on expert panels, and more livestream discussions than ever before (27 total). Most of these events were held online, maintaining the momentum built in 2020 with remote education and outreach via online meeting and social media platforms. As pandemic restrictions and safety considerations allowed, however, our educators additionally participated in a small number of in-person events.

Public health education topics included medication management, cannabis/marijuana, vaping, opioids, lead, and general poison prevention; all topics emphasized the impact of COVID-19 on trends and exposures. Our education team co-presented with call center staff at 23 education events, which allowed for additional clinical content and increased utilization of storytelling techniques. In addition to public education, WAPC clinical staff provided 16 educational presentations to health care workers.

Continuing the precedent set in 2020, 2021 highlighted the necessity of our education remaining flexible and focused on community needs. While we are thrilled to have reached so many individuals, we are more determined than ever to find ways to reach those with less access and less awareness of our online services.

HEAR WHAT OTHERS HAVE TO SAY

"I spoke with a pharmacist who discussed with the toxicologist then got back to me with a treatment protocol, if needed. So far the patient has been asymptomatic but is still being monitored closely. Thank you very much for your quick help! It was greatly appreciated and wonderful." —Grays Harbor Community Hospital MD

"The Department of Health appreciates having the Poison Center in our state and the work they do to prevent and reduce harm from poisoning through expertise, collaboration, and education." —Washington State Department of Health

"You are providing a great service to those whose cases you handle by phone. Plus you are making space in our hospitals for another patient! Keep up the good work. Enclosed is my check for \$3,250 to cover 50 cases." —from a donor

"We were so afraid when we suspected that our mother had taken our brother's medicines. The pharmacist who answered our phone call was very calm and reassuring. We completed our call feeling much calmer, thanks to her collected demeanor"—from a caller

"An accidental poisoning is a terrifying occurrence, and a situation individuals and parents hope to never experience. The Washington Poison Center provides invaluable education and treatment advice to residents of Washington, including the over 2 million lives enrolled in Apple Health."

**—Dr. Charissa Fotinos
Washington State Health Care Authority
Acting State Medicaid Director**

FUNDRAISING



HOSPITAL FAIR SHARE

*Washington Poison Center
partner in healthcare*

The Washington Poison Center relies on a combination of state and federal funds, as well as hospital donations and grants, to sustain our core services. We provide free telehealth support, which often includes physician to physician medical toxicology consultations, to hospitals and healthcare providers for complicated overdose patients. Our Hospital Fair Share program is vital and provides financial support for this increasing demand in specialized toxicology services.

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

Learn of several ways to donate at

www.wapc.org/support-us/donations



Hospital Partners

Astria Health	Providence Regional Medical Center Everett
•Sunnyside Community Hospital	Providence Healthcare SW
•Toppenish Community Hospital	• Centralia Hospital
Capital Medical Center	• St. Peter Hospital
Columbia Basin Hospital	Providence Health Services SE Region
Coulee Medical Center	• St. Mary Hospital
Columbia County Health System	Providence Health Care Eastern WA Region
Confluence Health	• Mount Carmel
• Wenatchee Valley Hospital	• Holy Family
• Central Washington Hospital	• St. Joseph
East Adams Rural Healthcare	• Sacred Heart Medical Center
EvergreenHealth	Pullman Regional Hospital
EvergreenHealth Monroe	Quincy Valley Medical Center
Forks Community Hospital	Samaritan Healthcare
Garfield County Public Hospital	Seattle Children's Hospital
Island Hospital	Skyline Hospital
Jefferson Healthcare	Snoqualmie Valley Hospital
Kadlec Regional Med. Center	Swedish Health Services
Kaiser Foundation Health Plan	• Swedish Ballard
Kittitas Valley Healthcare	• Swedish Cherry Hill
Lake Chelan Community Hospital	• Swedish Edmonds
Lincoln Hospital	• Swedish First Hill
Mason General Hospital	• Swedish Issaquah
Mid-Valley Hospital	• Swedish Mill Creek
MultiCare Health System	• Swedish Redmond
• Allenmore Hospital	Tri-State Memorial Hospital
• Auburn Medical Center	Trios Southridge Hospital
• Covington	Three Rivers Hospital
• Deaconess Hospital	UW Medicine
• Good Samaritan Hospital	• Harborview Med. Center
• Mary Bridge Children's Hospital	• UW Medical Center
• Tacoma General Hospital	• Northwest Hospital & Med. Center
• Valley Hospital	• Valley Medical Center
North Valley Hospital	Virginia Mason Franciscan Health
Ocean Beach Hospital	• St. Michael Medical Center
Odessa Memorial Healthcare Ctr.	• St. Anne Medical Center
Othello Community Hospital	• St. Anthony Hospital
Overlake Medical Center	• St. Clare Hospital
PeaceHealth Columbia Network	• St. Elizabeth Hospital
•Southwest Medical Center	• St. Francis Hospital
•St. John Medical Center	• St. Joseph Hospital
PeaceHealth Northwest Network	• Virginia Mason Medical Center
• Island Medical Center	Virginia Mason Memorial
• St. Joseph Medical Center	Whitman Hospital
• United General Med. Center	Willapa Harbor Hospital
• PMH Medical 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.

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.