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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Illinois Poison Center Celebrates 60 Years of Saving Lives

Illinois Department of Public Health Commemorates Milestone

(Chicago, IL) February 14, 2013 - The Illinois Poison Center (IPC), the nation's oldest poison center, is celebrating 60 years of ensuring public health safety for Illinoisans this year. Established in 1953 as a response to the increased production of potentially hazardous chemicals, drugs and household products following World War II, the IPC serves the largest single population of any poison center in the country and manages more than 80,000 calls per year.

"For 60 years, the IPC has played an integral part in protecting the citizens of Illinois, and has saved many lives and helped prevent many public health crises through the dissemination of targeted, critical information," said Dr. Lamar Hasbrouck, Director of the Illinois Department of Public Health.

The IPC, housed at the Metropolitan Chicago Healthcare Council, has been instrumental in contributing to the safety of Illinoisans during various public health emergencies including the spread of synthetic drugs, threats of bioterrorism after the September 11th attacks and concerns about the H1N1 influenza outbreak in 2009. Additionally the IPC plays a crucial role in health surveillance, acting as a canary in the coal mine for various potential public health threats.

"When you think about six decades of saving lives, it's an incredibly humbling feeling," said Dr. Michael Wahl, IPC Medical Director. "I'm honored to be a part of this organization's legacy and can't wait to see what accomplishment the IPC makes over the next 60 years."

The IPC handles 90 percent of calls from the general public without a referral to health care facility, easing the burden on hospital and treatment centers while saving Illinois taxpayers \$50 million per year.

"I don't want to run to the ER or call the doctor every time I have a question. It is so nice to have a service where you get a quick, reliable and up to date answer," said a recent caller named Mara. "Being able to get accurate answers that even your doctors rely on is an amazing service!"

Throughout 2013, the IPC will honor volunteers and advocates who have helped the center serve the dynamic needs of the state. For more information on the IPC's 60th anniversary or to share testimonial about an experience with the IPC, please contact Janine Sheedy at (312) 906-6175 or at jsheedy@mchc.com.

If you or someone you know has been exposed to a potentially harmful substance, please call the IPC at 1-800-222-1222.

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The Illinois Poison Center is a non-profit health service that provides the people of Illinois with comprehensive and trusted information and treatment advice on potentially harmful substances via a free, confidential 24-hour hotline staffed by specially trained doctors, nurses and pharmacists.