

Alabama Poison Information Center

2025

Annual Report



ALABAMA
POISON
INFORMATION
CENTER

800-222-1222

Prepared by
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About the APIC

The APIC has been a long-term commitment of Children's of Alabama to the citizenry of Alabama since 1958. The APIC was the 14th center established in the United States, during a time period when serious morbidity and mortality were attributed to poison ingestion in children and adults. Since its inception, the center has provided the most accurate and rapid poison information, initially to physicians only in the early years and then to both professionals and the general public. The APIC provides free and confidential lifesaving information 24/7/365. The specialists in poison information (SPIs) who answer the APIC hotline are nurses and pharmacists trained in toxicology and are nationally certified. The APIC is a fully accredited poison center by the American Association of Poison Control Centers and serves the entire state of Alabama as the only accredited statewide center designated by the Alabama Department of Public Health.



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Children's of Alabama, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Alabama Caring Foundation, the Alabama Department of Education, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services/Health Resources and Services Administration, and the Alabama Department of Public Health provide operational and educational support for the Alabama Poison Information Center.



Clinical Director

JESSICA PESCATORE

PHARMD, DABAT



As I reflect on 2025 at the Alabama Poison Information Center (APIC), one theme stands out clearly: a year defined by both milestones and moments.

On the milestone side, 2025 was an accreditation year for APIC, and we are incredibly proud to have met the rigorous standards set before us. Accreditation is no small undertaking; it requires sustained preparation, commitment, and effort across all levels of the center. It was especially fulfilling to receive feedback from members of the credentialing committee highlighting multiple benchmarks in which our center excels, reinforcing the strength of our daily practices and our team's clinical expertise.

This year also marked the successful offering of two Advanced HazMat Life Support (AHLS) Provider courses in Birmingham and Huntsville. Reviving these courses has been a crucial step in advancing toxicology education and preparedness across Alabama, further positioning APIC as an all-hazards response resource.

One of the most defining professional moments of my year was the honor of speaking before The United States Congress as a representative of APIC and America's Poison Centers. I never imagined such an opportunity would arise in my career and testifying before members of the House Committee on Appropriations Subcommittee on Labor, Health and Human Services, Education, and Related Agencies carried a humbling responsibility. Highlighting the work poison centers perform every day and advocating for their essential role in public health was deeply meaningful and a natural extension of our service to our communities, healthcare partners, and the nation at large.

Balanced alongside these milestones are the moments that shape our work just as profoundly. Day in and day out, our APIC team shows up not only as skilled clinicians and educators, but as people who support one another through both celebration and hardship. From birthdays, graduations, and new life, to illness, surgery, and loss, the compassion and solidarity within this team are constant. That shared humanity is not separate from our work but is what helps to sustain it.



Among the year's moments were the transitions that shape our future. We welcomed new team members and celebrated the retirement of a valued colleague whose contributions helped build our center. These moments, centered around intentional training and thoughtful mentorship, though quieter than some milestones, are foundational to sustaining the level of care we provide every day. I am proud to see our team continue to navigate these transitional periods with the utmost professionalism and grace.

One of my favorite reflections of this balance was our annual end-of-year party. It offered a chance to step away from the phones, gather outside the center, and appreciate the people we move forward with. It was a moment to reset, reconnect, and recognize the collective effort behind another demanding and impactful year.

Like many poison centers across the country, APIC continues to experience increasing demands. The cases we manage are growing in both complexity and acuity. Our clinical acumen has never been more essential. I am incredibly proud of the progress we continue to make in updating clinical guidelines and strengthening ongoing clinical education to meet these challenges head-on.

2025 has reminded us that it is necessary to hold both the milestones and the moments. We continue working to advance our mission in meaningful ways while always meeting the needs of the day at hand. I am proud of the work we do, the care we provide, and the team that makes it all possible. Thank you for your continued support of APIC!



Medical Director

WILLIAM RUSHTON

MD, FACEP, FACMT



The Alabama Poison Information Center (APIC) has experienced an exceptionally successful year, marked by substantial growth in educational opportunities, research productivity, and an expanded clinical footprint.

Through these advances, APIC continues to strengthen its role as a vital statewide resource for medical toxicology, delivering expert patient care while advancing education and research in poison management across the state of Alabama.

Clinical Operations

Direct patient care services at the Alabama Poison Information Center (APIC) have expanded substantially across Children's of Alabama and the University of Alabama at Birmingham, significantly enhancing our capacity to provide inpatient consultation services for critically ill poisoned children, adolescents, and adults.

This expansion includes continued growth in adolescent and adult addiction medicine lead by APIC's clinicians and close collaboration with other addiction medicine specialists.

APIC has also strengthened its statewide leadership in the management of poisoned patients through the annual review and refinement of evidence based treatment protocols, ensuring consistent, high quality care across Alabama. In collaboration with hyperbaric medicine specialists, APIC has developed a joint carbon monoxide poisoning program to optimize evaluation, triage, and treatment pathways. Additionally, our physician team continues to advance high quality snake envenomation care, with an emphasis on antivenom stewardship, comprehensive clinical management, and longitudinal follow up, further solidifying APIC's role as a regional leader in snakebite treatment.

Research and Scholarly Impact

Over the past year, APIC has made significant strides in research, publishing nine scholarly papers in the past 12 months on a variety of important topics within the field of toxicology. These publications range from outpatient snakebite follow-up protocols to the management of anti-hyperglycemic agents. Our center's expertise in drugs of abuse, lead poisoning, antidote usage, and snakebite management has positioned us as a recognized leader in these areas in 2025.

Education and Training

APIC remains committed to advancing medical education in toxicology, offering a month-long medical toxicology course that was attended by more than 16 EM and critical care physicians, 8 pharmacists and several medical students throughout 2025. These educational initiatives not only benefit our local medical community but also extend to regional, state, and national audiences through lectures and presentations.

A Vital Statewide Resource

APIC provides 24/7 phone coverage for medical toxicology consultations through the state of Alabama, offering critical expertise in the management of poisoning cases. Whether in the emergency department, intensive care unit, or in outpatient settings, APIC's medical toxicologists are available to assist healthcare providers statewide, ensuring that every poisoned patient receives the best possible care.



Administrative Director

LADONNA GAINES
DNP, MPH, RN, CSPI



2025 was an exceptional year for the Alabama Poison Information Center (APIC). We celebrated several major accomplishments, including the successful delivery of two Advanced Hazmat Life Support (AHLS) courses — one hosted at Children’s of Alabama and another at Huntsville Hospital. These courses represented over a year of planning and coordination, and we are proud to have provided this valuable training. We look forward to expanding these educational opportunities in 2026.

We were also honored to receive reaccreditation from the America’s Poison Centers Accreditation Committee. This achievement reflects the dedication, expertise, and educational efforts that continue to drive our work and mission.

Beyond the AHLS courses, 2025 was filled with meaningful progress and engagement. Our inaugural Pitts Blue Cross Blue Shield Clinical Toxicology Fellow advanced into her second year, continuing to make remarkable contributions both within our center and in the broader professional community. Her work included multiple publications, teaching engagements, and scholarly activities.

Throughout the year, our team remained active across Alabama, participating in professional education events, public education initiatives, and community health fairs. We also continued our strong commitment to training and mentorship by working with a diverse group of learners, including pharmacy students, medical and pharmacy residents and fellows, as well as nursing and physician assistant interns.

Interns played an important role in community outreach by distributing poison center educational materials to pharmacies and pediatric offices across the state.

Most importantly, our outstanding staff continued to deliver the critical services at the heart of our mission. Our Specialists in Poison Information (SPIs) — licensed nurses and pharmacists — consistently demonstrated professionalism, compassion, and clinical excellence while supporting callers with poison exposure and information needs. We are equally grateful for our three Poison Information Providers (PIPs), whose dedication and passion greatly enhance the care and assistance we provide.

As we move into 2026, APIC is already off to a strong start. We are confident that the coming year will bring continued growth, service, and success.

| By the Numbers

Total Calls

In 2025, the APIC handled 117,921 calls.

- **53,467** Incoming calls resulting in **37,991** cases
 - **35,312** human exposures
 - **1,815** information calls
 - **864** animal exposures
- **64,214** follow-up calls

Monitoring and Age Range

The APIC monitors 87% of poison exposure calls from home/school/work on site. In children <6 years old, >92% are monitored at home/onsite rather than being referred to a healthcare facility.

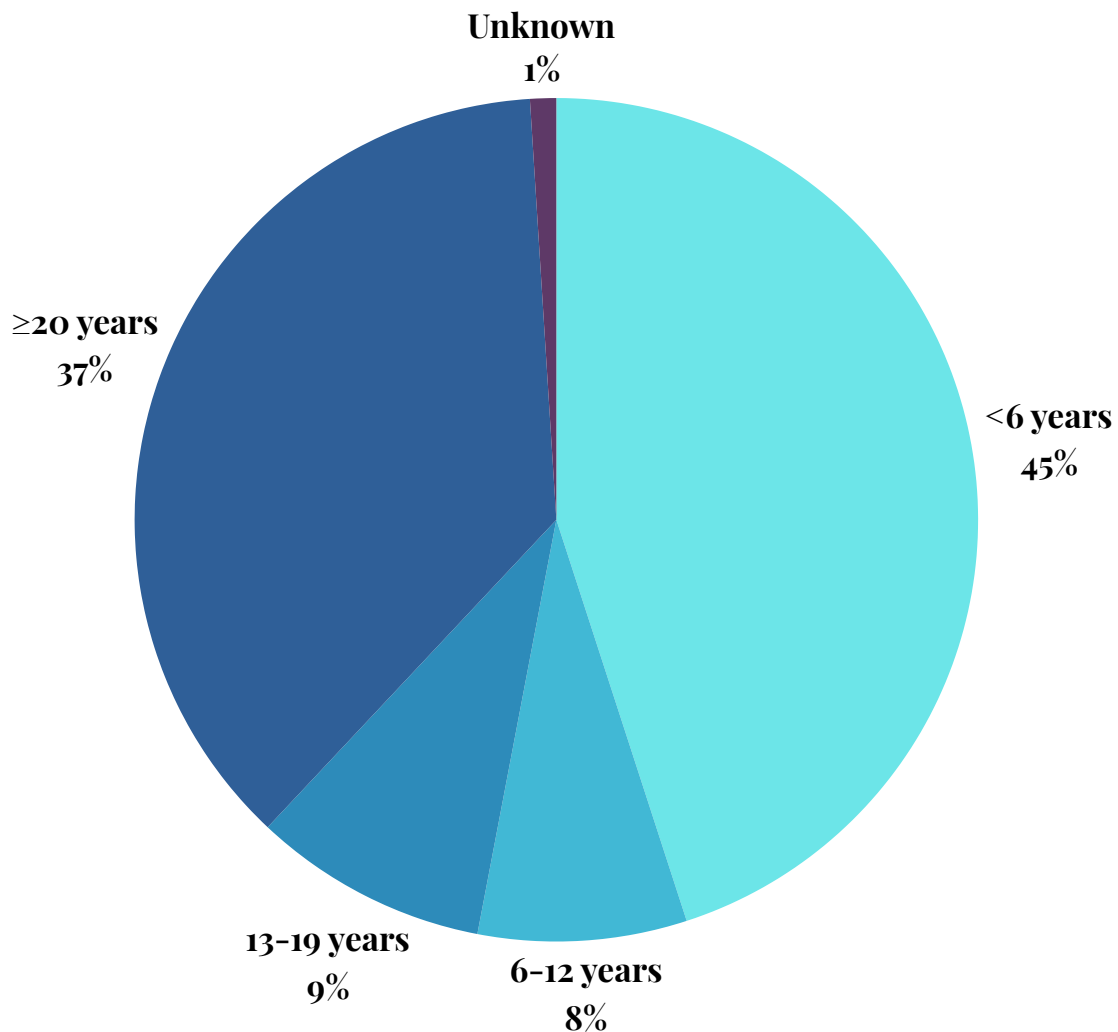
The APIC is available to patients of all ages. In 2025, the Center managed calls on patients that ranged from 3 days to 101 years old.

| By the Numbers



Call Volume by Age

<6 years	16,024
6-12 years	2,793
13-19 years	3,032
≥20	13,192
Unknown	271



Top Substances

Top 10 Substances in Pediatric Exposures in Alabama*

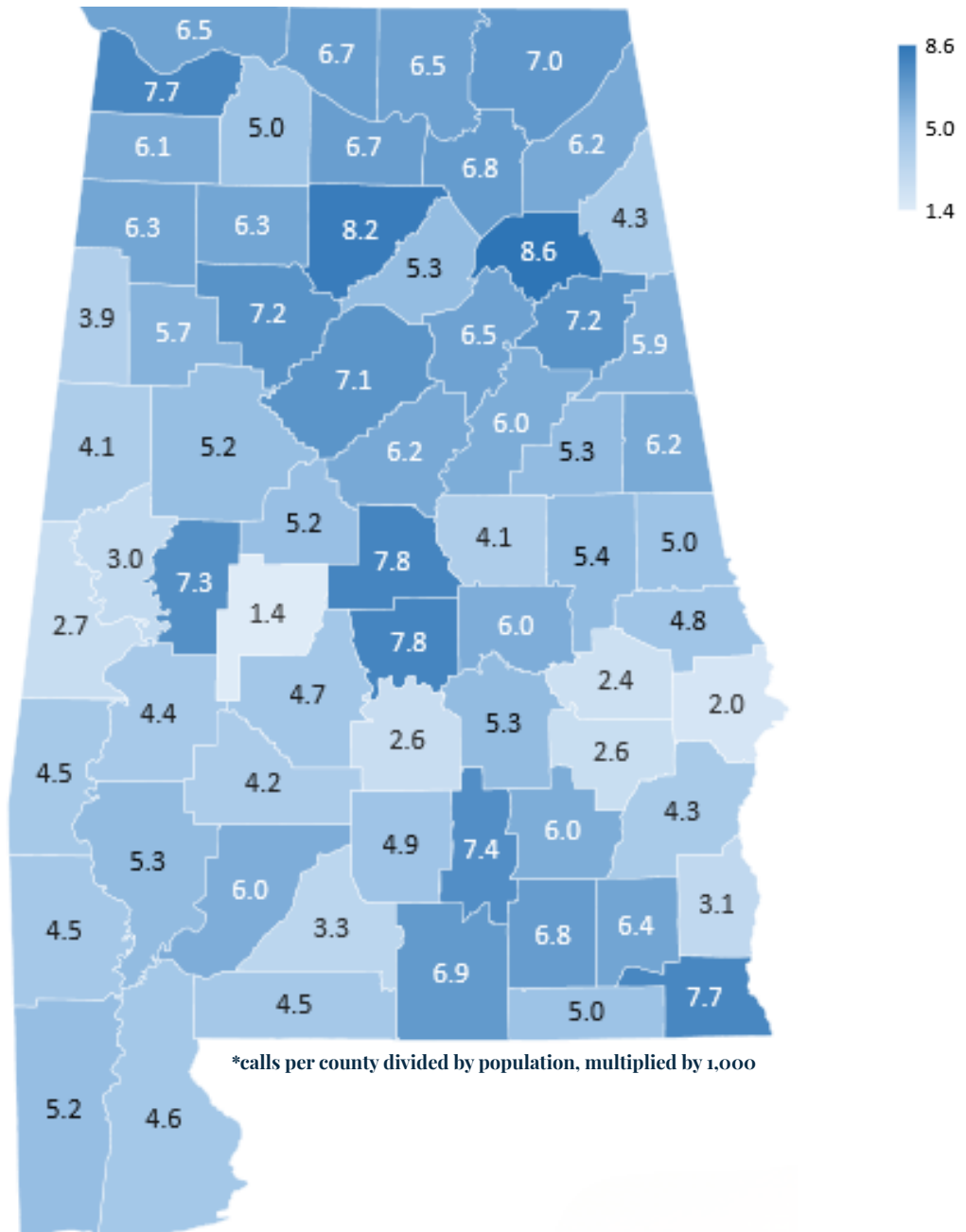
1. Cleaning Products
2. Cosmetics
3. Analgesics
4. Dietary Supplements
5. Foreign Bodies
6. Antihistamines
7. Pesticides
8. Vitamins
9. Topicals
10. GI Preparations

Top 10 Substances in Pediatric Exposures in the US*

1. Cleaning Products
2. Analgesics
3. Cosmetics
4. Foreign Bodies
5. Dietary Supplements
6. Vitamins
7. Antihistamines
8. Pesticides
9. Topicals
10. Plants

*Pediatric patients less than 6 years of age

Calls Per County per 1,000 Residents



APIC Patient Satisfaction Survey

1256 Responses	If the Poison Center was not available, home callers (that were monitored at home) would have called or visited their:
Physician	35%
Emergency Department	35%
911	18%
Other healthcare provider, friend/family, or tried to find information on the internet	12%

They were some of the kindest people I have ever met. They seemed to really know their stuff and put my mind at ease. Never hesitate to call them!!! They are so knowledgeable.

This was hands down the easiest most polite experience over the phone. I wish all customer service areas of work serviced as well as poison control. Thank you.

Very professional and genuinely concerned about my health. A genuine asset to the people of the state of Alabama.

**The Alabama poison control center is absolutely not replaceable.
They are always an available, supportive and helpful.**

This was the first time I have ever used the Poison Control Hotline, and I am very thankful for the service. It was the perfect resource for our situation and we got the advice we needed to proceed at home without having to seek other medical care for my toddler.

I loved that I received multiple phone calls checking on my child. Everyone I spoke to radiated calm and compassionate energy. I was terrified when I called, but there was no judgement or criticism. Everyone I spoke with during follow up calls seemed to genuinely care. I'm sure they had multiple people they were talking to, but at no point did I feel they were burnt out or tired. Fantastic experience despite the scary reason for needing to call.

Government Affairs



Our very own Clinical Director, Jessica Pescatore, went before Congress's Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education Committee to testify on behalf of America's Poison Centers. She gave a Witness Statement and Witness Truth in Testimony. Poison Centers received an increase in funding for the next fiscal year, no doubt, in part to Jessica's statement. We are so proud of you Dr. Pescatore! The video is linked below.



Learners



In 2025 the APIC hosted 8 PharmD candidate rotators, 1 PGY2 Pharmacy Resident, 1 PA intern, and 1 pre-nursing intern. The rotation involves many activities, including researching and presenting information about toxic substances, trips to the Birmingham Zoo to see snakes native to Alabama, and taking calls in the Poison Center. Eight PharmD students completed the Current Topics in Toxicology elective at the McWhorter School of Pharmacy.



We also provide a medical toxicology elective to senior medical and pharmacy students and residents. The course focuses on care of the poisoned patient through direct bedside consultations at UAB and COA, daily review of APIC cases, didactics focusing on critical care toxicity, simulations in managing the intoxicated patient, and regional field trips to identify poisonous plants, mushrooms, and snakes of Alabama. Faculty is multidisciplinary with expertise in pharmacology, toxicology, hyperbaric medicine, wilderness medicine, and international medicine. In the current academic year, 16 EM medical residents/fellows, 7 medical students, and 4 pharmacy EM residents completed the course.



Community Health Events and Conferences



In 2025 the APIC participated in 170 hours of community health events, engaging with the public and distributing poison information to > 10,000 Alabamians. Along with Healthy Child Care Alabama (HCCA) the APIC provided 1,905 poison prevention programs reaching a total of 10,693 parents throughout all 67 counties. HCCA nurses distributed 10,237 poison prevention items provided by the APIC.

The APIC also attends the North American Congress of Clinical Toxicology and the Poison Center Leadership Meeting annually.



| APIC in the Media

Interviews:

[Talk of Alabama - National Poison Prevention Week](#)

[CBS42 - National Poison Prevention Week](#)

[WBRC - GLP-1 Warning](#)

[Clinical Toxicologist with UAB and Children's of Alabama Shares Snakebite Tips](#)

[How to Keep You and Your Loved Ones Safe During Snake Season](#)

[Doctors Warn About Dangers of Banned Drug Still Found in Jefferson County](#)

Online Newsrooms:

[Minute with Children's: Summer Poison Concerns](#)

[Partners In KidsHealth: Essential Oils: Safety and Risks](#)

[Partners In KidsHealth: Holiday Hazards 2025](#)

[Partners In KidsHealth: Holiday Safety](#)

[Latino News - Toy Safety \(Facebook Post\)](#)

APIC Media Mentions:

[Supporters, opponents clash over Alabama hemp bill in House hearing](#)

[Harmful If Swallowed: Protecting Kids From Adult Products](#)

[It's time Alabama reins in delta-8: op-ed](#)

Taking Time to Celebrate and Have Fun



We celebrate milestones and events, such as staff anniversaries, retirements, passing of the certification exam, poster presentations, Nurses and Pharmacists Weeks, and National Poison Prevention Week. We also take some downtime as a team.



How You Can Find and Reach Us



800-222-1222



apic@childrensal.org



www.childrensal.org/APIC



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