

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

**SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK, MARCH 20-26, 2011**

**COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS**

**LINK TO STRATEGIC FRAMEWORK: STUDENT, PARENT, AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT**

The National Poison Prevention Council has reported that more than two-million poisonings are registered every year with various Poison Control Centers across the country. More than 90 percent of those poisonings occur in the home. The majority of non-fatal poisonings occur in children younger than six years old. Among adults, poisonings are listed as one of the leading causes of death.

National Poison Prevention Week is held during the third week in March each year, with programs geared towards highlighting the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. In observance of this life/safety initiative, the Florida Poison Information Center-Miami (Florida Poison Information Center), in collaboration with the Miami-Dade County Injury Prevention Coalition, promotes community involvement in poison prevention all year round, with special highlights during the month of March.

In this regard, the Florida Poison Information Center is urging the community to take the following three steps now to protect families from accidental poisonings:

1. Program Your Phone for Poison Help: program your cell phones to include the free national Poison Help line (1-800-222-1222). This phone number provides all callers with immediate access to a doctor, nurse or pharmacist with expertise in treating poisonings. This service is confidential and is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
2. Clean Out Your Medicine Cabinets: clean out your medicine cabinets of old and unnecessary medications. Keep all necessary medications in a secure area, away from children, ideally in a locked storage box. This step should also include medicine cabinets in a grandparent's home. According to the American Association of Poison Control Centers, one in five child poisonings occur while the child is in the care of a grandparent.
3. Install a Carbon Monoxide Detector: buy and correctly install a carbon monoxide detector in your home. New homes are required to have these life-saving devices, but older homes or rental properties may not have them. Common causes of carbon monoxide poisoning include vehicles left running in an attached garage and running a gasoline powered generator too close to a home or window. Carbon monoxide is called the "silent killer," as it cannot be seen or smelled.

To advance this important safety initiative at Miami-Dade County Public Schools, it is recommended that the School Board endorse the third week in March as National Poison Prevention Week, and promote the annual event at all public schools.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR**

**PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse National Poison Prevention Week, March 20-26, 2011.