

Ms. Perla Tabares Hantman, Chair

SUBJECT: SCHOOL BOARD ENDORSEMENT OF NATIONAL POISON PREVENTION WEEK, MARCH 16-22, 2014

COMMITTEE: INNOVATION, EFFICIENCY AND GOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS

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

National Poison Prevention Week (NPPW), designated by Congress as the third week in March each year, highlights the dangers of poisonings and how to prevent them. The NPPW initiative was established over five decades ago, with remarkable achievements in preventing deadly poisonings, especially among young children. Data from the National Center for Health Statistics and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention show that deadly poisonings today overwhelmingly involve medications and drugs. Most of these poison deaths occur in youth and adults, and medications for pain now cause more calls to poison centers in the U.S. than any other class of products. Many of these calls involve substances known to be addictive, and most people who develop addictions initiate use during their teen years. According to the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, every day over 2,000 children between the ages of 12-17 use a prescription drug non-medically, i.e., without a legitimate medical purpose or prescription. This same report notes there are approximately 148 emergency department visits every day for youth exposed to products available only by prescription, such as medications for pain, anxiety, depression or hyperactivity disorders. Many young people get these medications from friends or even family.

The Florida Poison Information Center-Miami proudly serves the South Florida community, in partnership with Miami-Dade County Public Schools and the Miami-Dade County Injury Prevention Coalition, educating our students, parents, and grandparents about poison hazards in our environment. This year, the Miami Poison Center is offering a series of posters with the theme "Sharing Pills Can Kill" to all middle and high schools. Each poster features a Quick Response Code (QR Code) that links to a brief public service video highlighting the problem of students sharing pills in school. The placement of posters (and the accompanying video) was found to be effective in reducing calls to poison centers by youth at the Carolinas Poison Center, who deigned and launched the original campaign.

By increasing awareness of this problem and reinforcing the Miami-Dade County Public Schools' policy against students carrying any medication on school grounds without authorization, this initiative is aimed at reducing the risk of students being exposed to dangerous and potentially addictive medications. The Florida Poison Information Center-Miami takes calls every day about people who have made dangerous mistakes with medications, and provides immediate expert advice, 24 hours, seven days a week to callers in English, Spanish or Creole. The Poison Help line is available at 1-800-222-1222. Calls are free and confidential.

**ACTION PROPOSED BY CHAIR
PERLA TABARES HANTMAN:**

That The School Board of Miami-Dade County, Florida, endorse National Poison Prevention Week, March 16-22, 2014.

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