

May 2, 2023

To: Joint Ways and Means, Subcommittee on Education
Subject: Support for Oregon Poison Center's Budget Request

Co-Chair McLain, Co-Chair Frederick and members of the committee,

My name is Tamara Lewis and I am a Childcare Consultant in Oregon for Cultural Care Au Pair. I write today in support of the Oregon Poison Center's request for additional state investment.

The Au Pair Program is a Cultural Exchange program through the U.S. Department of State (DOS). Au pairs come to the United States from countries around the world for a 12-month stay. They live with an American family and provide childcare for the families. The number of families in Oregon participating in the program is growing every year. Last year alone it grew 80%.

Cultural Care is the largest agency chartered with the DOS to provide support to host families and Au pairs during their stay. There are several ways we provide that support, and one especially important aspect is providing the families and au pairs with continuing safety education. We annually turn to the Oregon Poison Center's community education resources to provide training designed to prevent accidental poisoning primarily to children in Oregon. Families have learned how to label and secure medicines and poisonous household cleaners and other dangerous items. They have found the training to be eye opening. The information is generally new to the au pairs who have not had this type of training in their home countries. They come away with enhanced awareness of the many dangers in our homes and how to prevent tragedies from happening, as well as what to do if someone does accidentally become exposed to potentially deadly substances. They learn where to call for free, expert help and are instructed to put the Poison Center hotline number in their cell phones before they leave the training.

I would not be able to provide this training on my own and, without the Oregon Poison Center, these Oregon families and caregivers wouldn't have access to the valuable information on poison prevention. It is impossible to say how many cases of poisoning have been prevented by the important education and outreach work of the Oregon Poison Center, but prevention is always better than dealing with the serious health implications of poisoning after the fact.

On behalf of the hundreds of families, au pairs and children who have benefited from this wonderful community education resource, we urge you to support the Oregon Poison Center's budget request to keep these valuable trainings in place.

Cordially,

Tamara Lewis
Childcare Consultant – Oregon
Cultural Care Au Pair
Tamara.Lewis@LCC.Culturalcare.com
503-888-0221