NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate Release

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America’s Local Poison Centers Urge Urban Outfitters To Stop Selling Products That Promote Prescription Drug Abuse

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) and America’s 57 local poison centers are urging the retailer Urban Outfitters to stop selling its line of products designed to look like prescription medicine bottles.

Urban Outfitters, a national retail store popular with teens, sells pint glasses, flasks and shot glasses made to look like prescription pill bottles. Unfortunately, these products make light of prescription drug misuse.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention calls the problem of prescription painkiller overdoses a “public health epidemic,” as about 15,000 people in the U.S. die every year from overdoses involving prescription painkillers.

In 2011, local poison centers managed 209,909 cases of exposures to painkillers. Of those, 21,752 were teens ages 13 to 19.

“America’s poison centers are asking Urban Outfitters to show their commitment to safeguarding the health of their customers by removing these products from their stores and website immediately,” said AAPCC President Marsha Ford, MD, FACMT, FACEP.

Text of today’s letter to Urban Outfitters follows:

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June 10, 2013

Richard A. Hayne, CEO and Chairman  
Urban Outfitters, Inc.  
5000 South Broad St.  
Philadelphia, PA 19112-1495

Dear Mr. Hayne:

We are writing on behalf of America’s 57 local poison centers to urge Urban Outfitters to stop selling its line of products designed to look like prescription medicine bottles. Unfortunately, these products promote the misuse and abuse of painkillers.

According to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, overdose deaths from prescription painkillers have skyrocketed in recent years. About 15,000 people die every year of overdoses involving prescription painkillers. In 2010, one in 20 people 12 and older reported using prescription painkillers for nonmedical reasons. The CDC is calling the problem of prescription painkiller overdoses a “public health epidemic.”

Local poison centers experts know firsthand the dangers of medicine abuse and misuse. In 2011, they managed 209,909 cases of exposures to painkillers. Of those, 21,752 were teens ages 13 to 19.

Poison centers work very hard to prevent poisonings – including the misuse and abuse of painkillers and other drugs. Products such as these minimize the dangers of medicine abuse and misuse and are very dangerous. Please indicate your commitment to safeguarding the health of your customers by removing these products from your stores and website immediately.

Sincerely,

Marsha Ford, MD, FACMT, FACEP  
AAPCC President  
Debbie Carr, MEd  
AAPCC Executive Director

For more information, contact Loreeta Canton, director of public relations and member services for the American Association of Poison Control Centers, at 703.894.1858 or canton@aapcc.org.

About the American Association of Poison Control Centers:
The AAPCC supports the nation’s 57 poison centers in their efforts to prevent and treat poison exposures. Poison centers offer free, confidential medical advice 24 hours a day, seven days a week through the Poison Help Line at 1-800-222-1222. This service provides a primary resource for poisoning information and helps reduce costly emergency department visits through in-home treatment. To learn more, visit www.aapcc.org, like us on Facebook, follow us on Twitter, or read our blog at aapcc.wordpress.com. To join your voice with other poison center supporters, register for the AAPCC advocacy network at www.capwiz.com/aapcc – click on “Action E-List.”