



Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA, Executive Vice President, CEO

March 21, 2006

The Honorable Michael O. Leavitt
Secretary
Department of Health and Human Services
Hubert H. Humphrey Building
200 Independence Avenue, SW
Washington, DC 20201

Dear Secretary Leavitt:

The American Medical Association's (AMA) House of Delegates, our policy-making body, requested that the AMA review the Institute of Medicine's (IOM) report entitled, *Forging a Poison Prevention and Control System*. The AMA's Council on Science and Public Health (CSAPH) conducted this review, and it has recommended that the AMA support the conclusions and recommendations of the IOM report.

The IOM report was requested by the Maternal and Child Health Bureau (MCHB) of the Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) within your Department. For this reason, I am urging you to carefully review and implement the recommendations of the IOM report.

Our nation's network of poison control centers play a vital role in providing timely, professional treatment advice to the public and health care professionals in response to telephone queries concerning poison exposures. More than 2.3 million human exposure calls were received by poison control centers in 2002. Unfortunately, as identified by the IOM, a number of shortcomings are associated with the current network of poison control centers. Among the issues of concern are financial instability, poor integration with the broader public health and emergency preparedness infrastructure, and lack of good data on service quality and outcomes.

The IOM has proposed the creation of a Poison Prevention and Control System in the United States that would include the network of regional poison control centers as a vital, but not exclusive, element of the overall system. Twelve specific recommendations are made to make such a system a reality.

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The AMA believes that the IOM's proposal and recommendations, if implemented, would greatly enhance the prevention and patient care services to the diverse population of Americans who are exposed to hazardous substances, and would also protect the nation from threats posed by biological or chemical terrorism or by other emerging public health emergencies. Therefore, I urge you to carefully review and implement the recommendations of the IOM report.

Your attention to this matter is appreciated.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Mike Maves". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned to the left of a vertical red line.

Michael D. Maves, MD, MBA