

Alaskans urged to take part in poison prevention

Commissioner of Health and Social Services Frank Williamson joined the U.S. Product Safety Commission to urge Alaskans to actively participate in National Poison Prevention Week, March 21-27, 1976, by making certain that all toxic household substances are far from the reach of children.

Each year, hundreds of thousands of children are accidentally poisoned through ingestion of improperly packaged or stored household substances. The vast majority of poisonings happen to children under five years of age who cannot distinguish between food and paint thinners stored in paper cups; candy and multi-colored pills; and soda and furniture polish.

The Poison Prevention Packaging Act which requires a number of household substances to be sold in child-resistant packaging is administered by the CPSC. Furniture polish, drain cleaner, turpentine, aspirin products and prescription drugs are among those products which must be safely packaged.

For the sake of the elderly and handicapped who often cannot open such containers, the act provides that a regulated product can be packaged in one non-complying size provided it

carries a warning that it is not recommended for use in households with children and provided that the product is also supplied in complying packages.

Prescription drugs are also available in non-child-resistant packaging upon the specific request of the prescribing physician or the patient.

President Ford, in declaring March 21-27, 1976 as National Poison Prevention Week, noted that in the two years since aspirin products were first required to be packaged with child-resistant closures, the number of deaths from aspirin poisonings among children under five dropped 48%.

The observance of National Poison Prevention Week is intended as a means for local communities to emphasize the dangers of accidental poisonings and take such preventive measures warranted by these dangers.

In this effort, the CPSC joins with 28 professional medical, youth-oriented, public health and welfare, government and industrial organizations sponsoring NPPW in offering simple, effective tips for eliminating the hazards of accidental poisonings:

- * Store kitchen and cleaning products such as detergents, disinfectants and drain cleaners on top shelves of cabinets. If possible, put a lock on the storage space.

- * Do not store food and cleaning products together.

- * Keep cleaners, detergents and disinfectants in their original containers.

- * Keep all medicines out of the reach of children or in a locked box. Use child-resistant containers as an added precau-

tion. Make certain all medicines are packaged in child-resistant containers.

- * Clear the garage and basement of gardening weed killers, house paint, pesticides, lighter

fluids and other toxic substances and store them under lock and key.

For additional information on how to prevent poisonings, contact the CPSC toll-free hotline at 800/638-2666.