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OCA STATEMENT

Diphenhydramine and Safe Storage

OCA has received numerous media inquiries regarding recent deaths of three children involving apparent diphenhydramine overdose. OCA is issuing this statement to provide clarification and to provide information to the public. OCA can confirm that three children have died due to apparent diphenhydramine overdose in the last two months.

While OCA has not issued a report regarding these deaths, OCA did reach out to our partners at the Department of Public Health (DPH) to discuss prevention strategies. DPH, in conjunction with the OCA, issued a communication to treatment providers regarding the risks of diphenhydramine and the importance of discussing safe storage with parents and caregivers.

OCA has received media inquiries requesting information on whether the deaths are related to a Tik Tok Challenge. OCA cannot confirm such a connection. What is most important is that providers and parents be aware that adolescents may misuse the medication.

We want parents to be aware that any medication, including prescription and non-prescription medication, is potentially dangerous to children of all ages. We strongly encourage parents to store all medications safely, to ensure they are not easily accessible to children.

We also want parents to know that resources are available if their children are experiencing mental health needs. Every day in Connecticut, 17 children present to emergency departments around the state for self-harm or suicidal ideation.

Help is available through <https://www.connectingtocarect.org>; by dialing 211; and through the state's Urgent Crisis Centers.

The state's Urgent Crisis Centers are:

The Village for Families and Children
1680 Albany Avenue Hartford, CT
860-297-0520

Wellmore
141 East Main Street Waterbury, CT
203-580-4298

Child & Family Agency
255 Hempstead Street
New London, CT
860-437-4550