**Marijuana Calls to the Poison Center Increase**

lb/07-09-18

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE CONTACT: Laura Brennan, (405) 271-5062

[Laura-Brennan@ouhsc.edu](mailto:Laura-Brennan@ouhsc.edu)

OKLAHOMA CITY – Marijuana-related calls to the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information nearly doubled in 2017. Reasons for the increase are unclear, but may be related to increased use of marijuana in the state, people feeling more comfortable reporting adverse effects related to marijuana use or other reasons that have not yet been identified.

In 2017, the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information received 94 calls regarding exposure to marijuana and marijuana-related products, compared to 54 such calls in 2016. Records from 2015 and earlier are difficult to interpret, as synthetic cannabinoids like “K2” and “Spice” were included in the numbers.

Scott Schaeffer, managing director of the Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information reports, “The number of calls roughly doubled across all age groups, from children to adults. More than half of the calls in 2016 and 2017 were regarding young people between the ages of 13 and 19. While two years’ worth of data isn’t enough to reach firm conclusions, we’re keeping a close eye on marijuana-related calls.”

People sometimes call the poison helpline (1-800-222-1222) because they are inexperienced with marijuana, consume more marijuana edibles than required, or they mistake a marijuana product for regular food. The effects from edibles may take one to four hours to reach peak effect after ingesting.

Symptoms of using too much marijuana may include:

• Severe nausea or vomiting

• Fast heart rate

• Extreme confusion or anxiety

• Panic and paranoia

• Hallucinations and delusions

Children may mistake "edible" marijuana products (like candy or cookies) for regular food. Small children are at higher risk for overdose based on their weight. Many children who consume marijuana edibles require hospital admission due to the severity of their symptoms. In order to reduce the risk of injury or illness, store all products and medications up and away from children.

Pharmacists and registered nurses at the poison center are available 24 hours a day, seven days a week at (800) 222-1222. Please do not email the poison center or a member of the poison center staff, as poisoning emergencies are not handled through email. The Oklahoma Center for Poison and Drug Information is a program of the University of Oklahoma College of Pharmacy at the OU Health Sciences Center. For more information, visit OklahomaPoison.org.

###