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# Safe Cleaning for COVID-19: A Targeted Educational Intervention to Prevent Hazardous Exposures While Reducing the Spread of COVID-19 in Texas Child Care Homes.

 Sunday, June 13, 2021

 11:00 AM - 3:00 PM

 *Virtual*

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**BACKGROUND:** Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend increased cleaning and disinfecting to reduce the spread of COVID-19. Since the start of the pandemic, American Association of Poison Control Centers reported a nationwide increase in calls for exposures to cleaning products, disinfectants and hand sanitizers, mainly in young children (< 5 years old). Licensed and registered child care homes in Texas are required to follow CDC guidance for intensified cleaning and disinfecting efforts. Texas Choose Safe Places Program at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) designed an educational intervention for child care homes for safe and effective use of cleaning and disinfectant products.

**METHODS:** The program collaborated with stakeholders from government, academia and community with expertise in pediatric environmental health, child care, health education, epidemiology, sanitation, and infection prevention and control to design and implement an educational intervention for home-based child care providers. We used county-level COVID-19 case fatality ratio (CFR), social vulnerability index (SVI), and number of licensed, registered and listed child care homes, to identify priority communities for target outreach. Priority level 1 (highest) criteria included counties with high CFR and SVI higher than median with more than 15 (median) child care homes. Priority level 4 (lowest) were counties with CFR and SVI lower than the median and less than 15 child care homes in the county.

**RESULTS:** I. An online training with five modules focused on: 1) COVID-19 transmission methods and prevention measures, 2) chemical hazards and identifying safer products 3) exposure pathways and ways to reduce

exposures to harmful chemicals, 4) safe and effective cleaning and disinfection practices, and 5) a review and guided exercise in developing a plan for safe and effective cleaning and disinfecting during the pandemic. II. An electronic toolkit with further resources and tools. III. A toolkit with print educational materials and tools to promote safe and effective practices designed for targeted outreach to priority communities. IV. A pre and posttest and follow-up survey to measure effectiveness of the educational intervention.

**CONCLUSIONS:** This intervention will provide training and tools to home-based child care providers to increase their knowledge of safe and effective cleaning and disinfectant practices. Implementing safe and effective practices will reduce health risks to children and staff from potential chemical exposures and reduce the spread of COVID-19. These activities will also promote awareness among child care providers about children's environmental health and prevention of hazardous exposures.

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