

HC DrugFree: Keeping Howard County *in the KNOW!* ...knowledge is power, so just say KNOW

“Everything can be taken from a man but one thing: the last of the human freedoms—to choose one’s attitude in any given set of circumstances, to choose one’s own way.”

Viktor Frankl

Save the Date: Upcoming Events

- **May 18:** [Town Hall on Youth Vaping](#)
- **May 22:** [Teen Advisory Council Meeting](#)
- **Summer 2023:** Free Life Skills Classes for HoCo Students (more info to come)

May 11: Howard County Wears Green Today!



People all over the country are wearing green today in support of National Children’s Mental Health Awareness Day!

In support of the Maryland public awareness campaign from [Children’s Mental Health Matters](#), HC DrugFree is also wearing green today, as we do every day, and we hope you will too, HoCo!

Talking with Kids and Teens about Vaping

When is the “right” time to start talking with kids about vaping? Probably earlier than you think! Results from the [2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey](#) indicated that 380,000 middle school students and 2.14 million high school students reported using e-cigarettes.

Not sure how to start the conversation or what to say? Check out the American Lung Association's [Vaping Conversation Guide](#), which includes important facts and tips on how to talk with kids and teens about the dangers of vaping. You can also use the video below as a discussion starter for tweens and teens.



[Watch Video](#)

To Learn more about how vaping is affecting young people at our virtual town hall [Vaporized Youth: Navigating the Effects of Teen Vaping May 18 @ 7:00 pm](#) (See Below)

Town Hall: The Dangers of Youth Vaping



HC DrugFree will present a virtual town hall about youth vaping on Thursday, May 18 at 7 p.m.

DID YOU KNOW...?

- Nearly 40% of high school students will try vaping
- More 8th-10th graders vape than drink or use cannabis
- Despite being promoted as a healthier alternative to smoking, vaping poses numerous health risks

This educational event features Joan Webb Scornaienchi, Executive Director of HC DrugFree, Mark Donovan, LCPC, LCADC of Congruent Counseling, and Dr. George Kolodner, DFASAM DLFAPA TTS Founder and Medical Director of Triple Track Treatment, a board-certified psychiatrist specializing in nicotine addiction. Learn about the consequences of youth vaping and what we can do about it. Registration required.

[Learn more, print flier, and register](#)

National Prevention Week is May 7-13

Prevention Saves Lives and Money!

The Purpose of National Prevention Week

- Involving communities in raising awareness of substance misuse and mental health issues, implementing prevention strategies, and showcasing the effectiveness of evidence-based prevention programs.
- Fostering partnerships and collaborations with federal agencies and national organizations dedicated to improving public health.
- Promoting and disseminating quality substance use prevention and mental health promotion resources and publications.



[Learn more](#)

KNOW about Fentanyl

In the *KNOW*...

about

FENTANYL



Did you know that only 2 milligrams of fentanyl can be fatal?

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community

National Fentanyl Awareness Day, which we observed on May 9th, is intended to raise awareness about the public health crisis caused by fentanyl in the illicit drug market. Currently, fentanyl overdose is the leading cause of death for people under the age of 50.

Fentanyl is:

- A potent prescription synthetic opioid drug approved by the FDA for pain relief and anesthetic.
- Fentanyl is 80-100 times stronger than morphine.
- A potentially lethal dose of fentanyl is the size of 2 grains of salt.
- According to the DEA, 6 out of 10 pills contain a potentially lethal dose of fentanyl.

Important things you need to know about fentanyl:

- You can't smell or taste fentanyl, and you cannot tell if a pill is fake just by looking at it.
- Do not take any pill that you do not directly get from a doctor or pharmacist.
- Pills purchased online or from social media are not safe — no matter what someone tells you.
- If you or someone around you takes an illegal pill, know how to recognize an opioid overdose.
- Never use illegal pills when you're alone.

Signs of an opioid overdose:

- Pinpoint pupils
- Slow, shallow, or no breathing
- Gurgling or snoring
- Difficult to wake or can't wake
- Extreme drowsiness
- Cold, clammy skin

- Gray/blue skin, fingernails, or lips

If you suspect that you or someone around you is experiencing symptoms of overdose, call 911 IMMEDIATELY. In Maryland you are protected by [The Good Samaritan Law](#).



[Download Fentanyl Safety Fact Sheet](#)

HoCo Student Film Festival 2023

The 2023 [HoCo Student Film Festival](#) was held at the Miller Library in Ellicott City at 7:00 p.m. on Friday, May 5, 2023.



Pictured above left to right: HC DrugFree Executive Director Joan Webb Scornaienchi with HCPSS advisors Binki McKenna (retired), Jill Lee (Reservoir High School), and Randi Trzesinski (Oakland Mills High School).

Pictured below: Back of HoCo Film Festival t-shirts



Congratulations to Alyssa Collins from Centennial High School for winning the HC DrugFree Category at the HoCo Student Film Festival on Friday, May 6 with her film **Don't Do Drugs, Live for Hugs**, featuring the acting talent of her sister Makalya Collins. [Watch the winning HC DrugFree Category film](#)

Watch the winning HC DrugFree Category film

Mental Health Awareness Month



Established in 1949, Mental Health Awareness month is a time to promote mental health and well-being, raise awareness about mental health conditions, reduce stigma surrounding mental illness, and provide resources and support for individuals who may be struggling with their mental health.

- If you or someone you know is struggling or in crisis, help is available. Call or text [988](#) or chat [988lifeline.org](#).
- To learn how to get support for mental health, drug, and alcohol issues, visit [FindSupport.gov](#).

- To locate treatment facilities or providers, visit [FindTreatment.gov](https://www.findtreatment.gov) or call SAMHSA's National Helpline at [800-662-HELP \(4357\)](tel:800-662-HELP).

Facts about Medication Disposal



Maryland residents often have prescription drugs and other pharmaceuticals that are either expired or no longer needed. It once was common practice to flush these medications down the toilet. Many prescription and nonprescription drugs are found at trace levels in treated wastewater discharged from wastewater treatment plants.

Some of these substances are bad for our environment and human health, like the opioid epidemic affecting the mid-Atlantic region. Pharmaceuticals can pass through wastewater treatment plants and septic tanks into surface waters, soils, and groundwater. The federal government has released guidelines to reduce the diversion of prescription drugs while also protecting the environment.

- Drugs like opioids can be scavenged and illegally used/sold or could poison children and animals.
- Unused medications improperly disposed of can harm you and your environment.
- When drugs are flushed, they may not be broken down by the wastewater treatment facilities and septic tank systems and can enter the soil, surface water and groundwater in public drinking water supplies.
- Research studies have shown that exposure to drugs found in waterways can have adverse impacts on certain species and other aquatic life.

[Learn more](#)

**Fun, Action and Heavy Lifting:
Thank You, Howard County! Enjoy the Slideshow!**

If you missed it, please take a few minutes to enjoy HC DrugFree's commemorative slideshow of our April 22 drive-thru medication and sharps collection held on the Drug Enforcement Administration's national **Drug Take Back Day**.



[Watch Howard County Video](#)

We Need YOU!

It's simple. If you like our work, please donate today.

[Donate](#)



Resources

Reverse Opioid Overdose: [Click here](#) to contact the Howard County Health Department to receive free training and Narcan kit.

Help for Depression, Suicidal Thoughts or Other Mental Health Issues: Call or text 988.

Substance Use Disorder Regional Residential Treatment Guide: [Click here](#) to download the guide.

Additional Resources: [HC DrugFree Hotlines & Resources Page](#)

For more information, contact

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