

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

**"Ability is what you're capable of doing. Motivation determines what you do. Attitude determines how well you do it."**

*-Lou Holtz*

## Save the Date

February 5: Teen Advisory Council Meeting

March 12: Guiding Good Choices - Free Parenting Classes

**March 18: TAC Talks: Teen Listening Session**(More Info to Come)

**April 16: Parenting Strategies - How to Talk about Drug Use in Popular Media** (More Info to Come)

April 14 Films Due and May 3: HoCo Student Film Festival

## Celebrate Responsibly

# Keep Victory Alive

## Don't Drink and Drive

HC DrugFree



As the football playoffs touchdown in Baltimore this weekend, bringing the thrilling face-off between the Baltimore Ravens and the Kansas City Chiefs, we anticipate an electric atmosphere as fans cheer on the next Super Bowl contender. Regardless of who wins, we encourage all fans to celebrate responsibly and not to drive under the influence.

**Parents and Grandparents: Stay in the Game!**



**Learn the skills to stay in the game and score big with your kids and grandkids! Get your team (a.k.a. family) to bond and work together for a common goal.**

Guiding Good Choices® is an evidence-based curriculum that helps adults to build stronger relationships with their kids, all while teaching the kids how to deal with peer pressure and avoid risky behaviors. If you are the **parent, guardian or grandparent**, then this may be a powerful resource for you.

Learn how to:

- Strengthen family bonds
- Develop healthy attitudes and clear standards
- Manage conflict and express feelings constructively
- Prevent drug use in your family
- Avoid trouble and response to peer pressure
- and much more!

We urge you to attend all five of HC DrugFree's Zoom classes scheduled to be held on **Tuesdays, March 12, 19, April 2, 9, and 16** from **Noon – 1:30 p.m.**

[Learn more & register](#)

## Compete to Win

**Submit your Public Service Announcement (PSA) by April 14 to win the 2024 HC DrugFree Film Category!**

Join HC DrugFree and the HoCo Student Film Fest for another year of creative filmmaking fun!

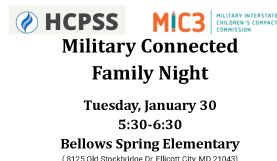


HC DrugFree is proud to have our own PSA category in the Film Fest, and our 2024 theme is "KNOW Your No." This category was chosen to showcase the ways teens stay true to their personal values, stand up to peer pressure, and avoid risky behaviors by using Refusal Skills, all while keeping their friends.

Enter now to flex your creativity, connect with other HoCo filmmakers, and have a chance at winning a prize for the best PSA. Contact HC DrugFree's staff if you have any questions. The 20th Annual HoCo Student Film Festival will be held on May 3rd at the Miller Library, 7 - 8:30 p.m. [Learn more and get involved](#)

## Military Connected Family Night

Bellows Spring Elementary School is hosting a Military Connected Family Night on Tuesday, January 30 from 5:30-6:30 p.m.



Join them to learn about the educational resources and supports available to military families.

Download the flyer for more information or [RSVP here](#).

We would like to invite our military connected families to a special event to network and learn about the educational resources and supports available to military families. The school liaison officer from Fort Meade will share resources and information and give an overview of the MIC3 law (Military Interstate Children's Compact Commission).

Please RSVP using the link: <https://forms.gle/7Zk8Rb6b11UCR3Q7>

If you have any questions about this event you may reach out to Eric Seidel, Leadership Intern @ Bellows Spring Elementary. [eric@hcpss.org](mailto:eric@hcpss.org) or 410.313.6675.

All Parts, Army Coast Guard, Marine Corps, Navy, Space Force, National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, Maryland National Guard, Army Reserve, Navy Reserve, Marine Corps Reserve, Air National Guard, Air Force Reserve, Coast Guard Reserve

## How to Talk to Kids About Mental Health

SAMHSA has provided a resource to help adults discuss mental health with children. It also outlines what to look for, what to do, and how to best support a child who is struggling with their mental health. [Read more](#)

## Cannabis-Linked Psychiatric Disorders on the Rise

The widespread use of cannabis (marijuana) and its increased potency are associated with a rise in cannabis-related psychiatric conditions, according to a University of Maryland School of Medicine (UMSOM) review article that was recently published in [The New England Journal of Medicine](#). It highlights the urgent need for doctors to screen for and treat patients who are experiencing symptoms of cannabis use disorder, which means they are experiencing significant problems from their use of the drug. [Read more](#)

## Year in Review: DEA Innovates to Fight Fentanyl

In 2023, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) marked its 50th anniversary as the only federal agency dedicated to fighting deadly drugs and drug-related violence. This milestone celebrated a half century of dedication to fighting drug trafficking in the United States and around the world, which threatens the public safety, health, and national security of our country.

At this extraordinary moment in time, the United States confronts the deadliest drug threat our country has ever faced—fentanyl. [Read more](#)

## Dr. Drew on Schizophrenia, Vomiting & More Marijuana Risks

"When this first started coming up, I actually was somewhat doubtful. It seemed too much to me," addiction medicine specialist Dr. Drew Pinsky said on The Bottom Line. "We were always aware that cannabis was associated with psychotic episodes, but the previous suspicion was it was primarily people who were sort of heading that way already, perhaps that's why they were using the

drug."

But according to data from recent analysis and studies, people who have had at least one psychotic episode after using cannabis are almost 50% more likely to develop schizophrenia or bipolar disorder, and that the risk is even higher for teens and young adults.

"Particularly in the states where it's legal for recreational use, the concentration of the cannabis is so spectacular, it's approaching 100% that, literally, it's a different drug, it has a different effect on people," Dr. Drew explained. "And now, very commonly, we're seeing hyperemesis, people that develop these vomiting episodes that are uncontrolled." [Read more](#)

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## Fentanyl and Xylazine Continue to Be a Deadly Combo

Drug dealers mix fentanyl with the powerful animal sedative xylazine. NBC News was able to arrange overseas purchases of the drug within minutes. [Read more](#)

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## Interview with ONDCP Director

In a recent interview, Dr. Rahul Gupta, Director of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) at the White House, said that 90 percent of fentanyl arrives in the United States through legal and commercial points of entry. The impact of these illegal drugs in the country has prompted President Biden to ask Congress to act immediately to continue to dismantle trafficking of illicit fentanyl. [Listen now](#)

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## HoCo Students: Get Involved

HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to attend our monthly meetings and serve as student ambassadors in their schools and in the community.

### Why join TAC?

- Earn Community Service Hours
- Gain experience for job & college applications
- Volunteer opportunities year round
- Be a leader and role model in Howard County!

Join our teens at the next TAC meeting on **Monday, February 5** from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Zoom. Register early to get the meeting link. [Learn more](#)

[Learn More and Register](#)

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# TAC TALKS



## Teen Listening Session: Bridging the Gap Between Middle & High School



**New date: March 18**

**Combined Teen Advisory Council Meeting and Teen Program**

Join HC DrugFree for a very special Teen Advisory Council Meeting/Program as we allow our students to take the reins and host a unique community program designed to give parents, teacher, and younger students a window into the life of a Howard County high school student. The meeting/program will be held on Zoom on **March 18** from 5:30 to 7 p.m. **More info coming soon!**

## Medication Safety

They're still your babies.  
Keep them safe by disposing  
of unused opioids.

[www.fda.gov/DrugDisposal](http://www.fda.gov/DrugDisposal)

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH & HUMAN SERVICES - USA  
FDA  
Remove  
the  
RISK

Learn how to safely store and dispose of medication to remove the risk of intentional or unintentional misuse in your home. [Learn more](#)

## Become a Friend of HC DrugFree

Please consider becoming a [Friend of HC DrugFree](#). Your support shows funders that you value the work that we do. Thank you for your continued support of the important work we do at HC DrugFree!

[Donate Now](#)

Or mail your **2024 donation** to HC DrugFree's office:

HC DrugFree  
5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206  
Wilde Lake Village Center  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

## Please...Tell Us What You Think!

Please take our 2 second survey to let us know what you think of the content provided in this newsletter!

[Survey](#)

## Resources



Struggling with anxiety

**THERE IS HOPE.**  
**Text or Call 988**  
to connect with someone who cares.

**988** SUICIDE & CRISIS LIFELINE

#MentalHealthAwareness #988Lifeline 24/7

**You matter!** If you need it, support is at your fingertips. People in distress, in crisis, or struggling with alcohol or substance use can text, call, or chat 988 anytime, day or night. Learn more at [988lifeline.org](https://988lifeline.org)

## [Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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