

HC DrugFree

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

"Hope is being able to see that there is light despite all of the darkness."

—Archbishop Desmond Tutu



DEA Presented Executive Director with Award

On December 10, the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) presented HC DrugFree's Executive Director, Joan Webb Scornaienchi, with a Special Act or Service Award for Dedication to Duty and Outstanding Contributions.

The award was presented by Assistant Special Agent in Charge (ASAC) of the Baltimore District Office, Brian Crowe, and was signed by the Special Agent in Charge (SAC) of the Washington Division, Jarod A. Forget.



In partnership with the Howard County Police Department, Joan has spearheaded HC DrugFree's medication collection site on the DEA's National Drug Take Back Days since 2012. Congratulations, Joan, and thank you to ASAC Crowe and the DEA team for recognizing her many years of service to the Howard County community.

Pictured below: Joan was with the DEA's Baltimore District Office team at their Healthcare Summit held at the James N. Robey Public Safety Training Center in Howard County. Many of these faces should look familiar if you brought medications to HC DrugFree's site on Drug Take Back Days. HC DrugFree's team is proud to partner with ASAC Crowe and the Baltimore District Office's Diversion Control Program team throughout the year to keep our community safe.



Available Now! \$20 Lyft Credits from MDOT MVA

Instead of driving impaired during this season of celebrations, claim a \$20 Lyft Credit for FREE on behalf of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office!

You can "Add a Lyft Pass" with the code MAKEAPLAN2024 on the Lyft app, good for 24 hours once claimed.

For more information and instructions, visit:

<https://zerodeathsmd.gov/road-safety/impaired-driving/2024-holiday-rideshare-program/>



Make Your End of Year Donation

HCDrugFree
needs your support!
Help us help Howard County

www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/

There is still time to give and much work to do. Your support allows us to continue to provide our FREE resources and programs to the community. Make your donation before the end of the 2024 tax year.

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To support our mission, please visit hcdrugfree.org/donate or mail a check to: HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

[Donate here!](#)



We know winter and the holidays are not always easy with weather changes and added stress. Here are some tips for healthy coping and mental health management advice for this season from the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI). For more information, please visit their website <https://namihowardcountymd.org/> and in the case of a mental health emergency, please call or chat 988.

Mental Health Tips for the Holidays

When the season doesn't feel calm or bright

Tips for Managing Your Mental Health During the Holidays

Did the "most wonderful time of the year" turn into the most stressful time of the year?

Of all the things on your holiday preparation to-do list, the most critical one is maintaining your mental health and practicing self-care. **Here are 10 practical ways to protect yourself leading into a busy season:**

- 1 Stay in therapy.** If you can, keep your scheduled therapy sessions to ensure that you have built-in time to explore anything that comes up.
- 2 Stay hydrated.** Drink plenty of water. Hydration nourishes the brain and can improve your overall mood.
- 3 Spend time with loved ones.** Social interaction can help lessen the feelings of loneliness that may come around this time of year.
- 4 Find time to decompress.** Make sure you're taking the time to recharge and use your best coping skills. Pay attention to the practices that make you feel your best.
- 5 Remember that it's okay to feel the way you feel.** It's healthy to acknowledge your feelings and work through them, rather than suppressing them.
- 6 Don't feel pressured to uphold family traditions.** While they might be a comforting way to remember a loved one, sometimes family traditions are too painful to bear. Your family will find new ways to celebrate, and your traditions will adjust with time.
- 7 Come up with a plan.** What good are the holidays if you don't have the energy to enjoy them? Make a list, check it twice, and decide if there's anything you can remove.
- 8 Find the best time to shop.** Malls are less crowded on weekdays and weeknights. Practicing mindful activities while you wait in line can also help you stay calm among the holiday shopping chaos.
- 9 Be kind to yourself.** All you can do is your best, and your best is good enough. It's impossible to please everyone, but we are often our own harshest critics.
- 10 Remember that the NAMI HelpLine is available.** Our volunteers are ready to take your call, text, or chat to connect you with helpful resources during the holiday season and beyond. You are not alone.

If you or someone you know needs help facing the challenges of mental illness, the NAMI HelpLine is available Monday through Friday, 10:00 am–10:00 pm, ET. Call **1-800-950-NAMI (6264)**, text "HelpLine" to **62640**, or chat with us at nami.org/help.

In a crisis, call or text **988** or chat at 988lifeline.org.

Teen Meeting: Monday, January 13



HC DrugFree's invites all Howard County students in grades 8-12 to attend

our Monday, January 13 Teen Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

[Students: Register to Receive the January Meeting Zoom Link](#)

Members of TAC 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

[Learn More and Register](#)

This Holiday Season, Safely Store Meds

In the KNOW...

Medication Storage



Store medication out of reach and out of sight



Use child safety caps



Keep a medication inventory



Utilize a medication lockbox



Speak to family and guests about medication safety

Are you IN THE KNOW about proper medication storage? [Learn More](#)

We Are Now Hiring for January!



Work With Us!

**Make a difference in
Howard County.**

HCDrugFree

We are reviewing all applications now and scheduling interviews so we can start the new year with additional help. HC DrugFree is looking for self-motivated Howard County professionals with a heart for helping people of all ages. All candidates must pass a background check and possess strong organizational skills, writing skills, and computer skills.

[Learn More & Apply](#)

What Do You Think?

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

[Take Our Survey](#)

Resources

The 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:

Marylanders who are experiencing a mental health or substance use crisis should call or text 988. Learn more at 988.maryland.gov. Maryland veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and press 1 to transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line. Press 2 for Spanish. Press 3 for LGBTQIA+ support.



Free Narcan Training and Test Strips Available in Maryland:

Free Narcan training and free Fentanyl and Xylazine test strips available across Maryland. [Access Map](#) and [Learn More](#)

Free Support Meetings:

Looking for a list of Alcoholics Anonymous meetings in the Howard County area? [Learn More](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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