

HC DrugFree

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

People wait all day for 5 pm
All week for Friday
All summer for winter
All winter for summer
& all of life for happiness.
Don't let the pursuit of tomorrow
diminish the joy of today.



—Unknown

Dates to Remember in January

January 9: National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day

January 13: Teen Advisory Council Meeting

January: Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month

January: Human Trafficking Awareness Month

January: Dry January

♥ Law Enforcement Appreciation Day ♥

January 9 is National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day. This day was established in 2015 to show support and gratitude for the service and sacrifices made by law enforcement officers across the United States and it's an opportunity for communities to reflect on the crucial role officers play in ensuring public safety, bridge gaps between law enforcement and the community, and increase mutual respect.

Thank you to the Howard County Police Department, Drug Enforcement Administration, Howard County Sheriff's Office, and the many law enforcement agencies keeping our community safe and partnering with HC DrugFree throughout the year. We appreciate you!! ☐☐♥







Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month



This January will be observed as the "first ever" Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month. The goal of this observation is to raise awareness of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) treatment strategies, including addressing barriers and stigma that prevent individuals from getting help. One major point of focus is reducing the stigma about medications used to treat SUD. The movement will also encourage those affected by addiction to seek recovery, maintain sobriety, and provide support for loved ones and professionals.

Because January is seen by many as a fresh start and the ideal time to better their lives, this is the perfect time to share information and resources for SUD. Whether for yourself or for a loved one, treatment is available and recovery is possible!

[Visit SAMHSA](#) to help raise awareness and share resources to connect people to the treatment they might need:

[Read SAMHSA's blog](#): "January is the Perfect Time to Pursue Treatment for a Substance Use Disorder"



Dry January

Dry January is a month-long challenge to take a break from drinking alcohol and reset your health. Participants often experience benefits like improved sleep, better focus, more energy, and even saving money!



This personal challenge also has lasting effects throughout the year, since it has been shown to reduce overall alcohol consumption. It's a powerful way to prioritize wellness, reflect on habits, and start the new year with a clear mind and refreshed body!

Some tips for maintaining an alcohol-free January:

- Reflect on your relationship with alcohol and be honest with yourself;
- Make a list of benefits for quitting drinking to increase motivation;
- Reduce accessibility to alcohol by moving it out of sight or getting rid of it completely; and
- Find a Dry January accountability partner and lean on social support

[Read NPR's article](#)

[Watch video](#) about the effectiveness of Dry January



Registration Open! Classes for Parents/Grandparents

Raising preteens and teens is tough. Wouldn't it be great if adults could take a class that taught us how to help our kids avoid risky behaviors, all while learning how to say NO to drugs and alcohol? There is!

Register to attend our Spring 2025 Guiding Good Choices® classes for parents, guardians and grandparents. Series will run **Tuesdays and Fridays on March 18, 21, 25, 28 and April 1 from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Zoom.**

More information can be found on our [website](#) and [flyer](#)

Below are some of their comments from parents/grandparents at our Fall 2024 class:

"I think this class is incredibly relevant to all parents & should be mandatory for parents and kids alike. The dangers of addiction and alcoholism are so real, and so tragic."

"Talking about these things is the only way children will know what is right vs. wrong. I come from a family where 'talking' was not encouraged, and communication was ineffective. I am making sure to teach my kids about these dangers myself, which is so much more powerful than just learning about it from other peers."

"This class presented by professionals, coupled with discussions at home, should be a solid deterrent for kids presented with risky behaviors in social situations."

"Super helpful sessions, would recommend to parents of middle-school children."

"I felt this class gave me a lot of ideas of how to approach different situations with my child and a lot of tools to work with my child on making good choices."

[Register Here!](#)

Registration Open! Life Skills Classes for Middle/High Schoolers

HC DrugFree will provide another series of FUN and interactive skills-based classes designed to promote positive health and personal development. This curriculum was designed for students in grades 6 to 9, but for slightly younger or older students, we will consider each request. High schoolers also have the opportunity to volunteer to assist our instructional team of college instructors and earn community service hours. The 8-class series will run across the following **Mondays February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, April 7, 28 and May 5 from 5:00 to 6:30 p.m. on Zoom.**

This program will use developmentally appropriate, collaborative learning strategies so students will learn skills that have been shown to help resist high-

risk behaviors including substance use (vaping, alcohol and other drugs) and more.

More information can be found on our [website](#) and [flyer](#)

Click here to register HoCo Middle School Students (and HoCo High School Students not wanting to join our team to earn Community Service Hours)

Click here to register HoCo High School Students wanting to join on our instructional team to earn Community Service Hours

Looking for HoCo-Raised College Students!!

College students: Did you grow up in HoCo? Want to help teach Life Skills classes to HoCo middle/school students (even if you're across the State or US)? We are seeking College students to help with our online Life Skills classes. Previous instructors logged in from College Park, Baltimore County, Delaware, Virginia, Ohio, and more!

At least 2 paid positions and will accept volunteers wanting to expand their resumes. High school students will assist our instructional team to earn community service hours.

The course dates are on **Mondays. February 24, March 3, 10, 17, 24, April 7, 28, and May 5 from 5:00- 6:30 p.m. on Zoom**, but we ask College Instructors and High School Assistants to log on early at 4:30pm.

More information can be found on our [website](#) and [flyer](#)

Register Now! (HoCo-Raised College Students)

Link Between Alcohol and Risk of Cancer

Many people are not aware of the risk of cancer that accompanies alcohol consumption; it has been linked to 7 types of cancer. Therefore, the US Surgeon General Vivek Murthy is calling for warning labels to appear on alcohol products, much like the ones appearing on cigarettes and other nicotine, smoking, and vaping products.

Murthy states in an interview that "alcohol is responsible for about 100,000 cases of cancer in the United States each year and 20,000 cancer deaths." Raising public awareness about the long-term effects of drinking can hopefully help those statistics decrease. Currently, alcohol products come with the warning against drinking while pregnant and while operating vehicles and machinery, and Murthy aims to add a third warning about the risk of cancer.

For more information on the correlation between alcohol consumption and cancer risk, the US Surgeon General's public health efforts, [read NPR's article](#)

Are you In The **KNOW**?

Risk for 7 types of cancer has been linked to alcohol consumption...

...which is why the US Surgeon general has spoken out, calling for warning labels to be printed on alcohol products.

HCDrugFree

*In the **KNOW** about Fentanyl*

In the **KNOW**...

OPIOIDS

Of all drugs classified as opioids, fentanyl is once again proving to be one of the deadliest. As reported by the United States Drug Enforcement Administration, in 2023, 69% of drug-related deaths involved fentanyl; this equals about 200 deaths per day.

The DEA spearheads Operation OD Justice, a special investigative framework that aims to identify and stop drug traffickers and dealers across the US. So far, there have been over 500 investigations using the Operation OD Justice, and although there is more work to be done, overdose deaths have decreased in recent years. [Learn more](#)

In the *KNOW*...

about

FENTANYL



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

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community

In the *KNOW* about Medetomidine



Are you In The *KNOW* about Medetomidine?

Medetomidine, a potent veterinary sedative, has recently been detected as an adulterant in illicit street drugs, particularly in combination with opioids like fentanyl. This trend has been observed in various U.S. cities, including Chicago, Philadelphia, and New York City. The addition of medetomidine to street drugs poses serious risks, as its sedative effects are not reversible with naloxone, the standard treatment for opioid overdoses. This complicates emergency responses and increases the potential for fatal outcomes. Health officials and lawmakers are urging increased vigilance and action to address this emerging threat, emphasizing the need for public awareness and enhanced measures to combat the evolving drug crisis.

[Read NPR's article](#)

For more information, visit <http://www.hcdrugfree.org/2024/05/marylands-office-of-overdose-response-warns-of-medetomidine/>

Teen Meeting: Monday, January 13



HC DrugFree 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](#)

Donate Today!

A graphic for the 'Donate Today!' section. On the left, there is a grid of purple and green dots. To the right of the dots, the text reads 'HCDrugFree needs your support! Help us help Howard County'. Below this text is the website address 'www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/' and a QR code. To the right of the QR code is a red heart icon inside a white speech bubble. On the far right, there is a photograph of a group of people in green shirts standing in front of a brick building, holding signs that say 'HCDrugFree'.

Your support allows us to continue to provide our resources and programs free of cost to the community. Thank you if you **mailed your 2024 year end donation.**

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!](#)

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

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

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 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.



DEA's Drugs of Abuse Resource Guide:

Education plays a critical role in preventing substance use and misuse. Drugs of Abuse, A DEA Resource Guide, is designed to be a reliable resource on the most commonly used and misused drugs in the US and provides important information about the harms and consequences of drug use by describing a drug's effects on the body and mind, overdose potential, origin, legal status, and other key facts. [Learn more](#)



Free Narcan Training, Fentanyl Test Strips, Xylazine Test Strips Available in Maryland:

Free training and 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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