

HC DrugFree

Empowering the Community

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

November 12, 2020 Topics

- National Family Caregivers Month
 - Up and Away Medication Storage Safety
 - 3 Components of Connectedness: Fighting Loneliness During Covid-19
 - Heart of the Matter Podcast Featuring Elizabeth Vargas
 - Parenting Class Response from Attendee
 - HC DrugFree Presents TAC's FIRST Holiday Scavenger Hunt
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National Family Caregivers Month

[Mental Health America \(MHA\)](#) is proud to recognize November as National Family Caregivers Month - a time to celebrate the contributions of caregivers, provide them with tools that they need, and continue to advocate for individuals with mental illness.

There are over 53 million Americans who are unpaid caregivers to family, friends, and neighbors. Twenty-seven percent or nearly a third of adult caregivers are helping someone with a mental illness. Caregiving can often have a significant impact on the life of the caregiver in more ways than one. It can make maintaining your physical and mental health more difficult and may put a strain on work and social life.

If you think you or a loved one may be experiencing signs of a mental illness, visit www.mhascreening.org to take a free, quick, and confidential screen for depression, bipolar disorder, anxiety, PTSD, and/or Alcohol or Substance Use problems.

NOVEMBER IS NATIONAL FAMILY CAREGIVERS MONTH

ABOUT CAREGIVERS¹

Roughly

1 IN 5 U.S. ADULTS

(53 million or 21.3%) identify as caregivers

- ▶  **10%** are enrolled in college or other classes
- ▶  **89%** of those caring for adults are taking care of a relative
- ▶  **40%** live with the person they care for full-time
- ▶  **24%** care for two or more adults
- ▶  **27%** help someone with a mental illness

ISSUES FACING CAREGIVERS

Compared to those who care for someone with a physical condition, caregivers of people with a mental illness are:

-  **7%** more likely to feel they have been discriminated against at work because of their role²
-  **14%** more likely to report high difficulty finding affordable services³
-  **11%** more likely to say they didn't receive training⁴

CAREGIVER MENTAL HEALTH

Caregivers of people with a mental illness are **21% more likely** to feel high emotional stress than those who care for someone with a physical condition.⁵

-  One study found that over 1/3 of caregivers for people with bipolar disorder reported significant symptoms of depression⁶
-  Another study found that 31.5% of caregivers for people with schizophrenia reported psychological distress⁷

SELF-CARE FOR CAREGIVERS

- ▶  Talk to someone
- ▶  Ask for help if you need it
- ▶  Get enough sleep
- ▶  Take time for yourself
- ▶  Exercise
- ▶  Turn to faith for comfort

If you take steps to care for yourself but feel like you are still struggling with your mental health, visit MHAScreening.org to check your symptoms. It's free, confidential, and anonymous.



Sources

- <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/doc/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>
- Ibid.
- <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/pdf/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>
- <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/pdf/2015/caregiving-in-the-united-states-2015-report-revised.pdf>
- <https://www.aarp.org/content/dam/aarp/pdf/2020/05/full-report-caregiving-in-the-united-states.doi.10.26419-2Fppi.00103.001.pdf>
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- Ong, H. C., Ibrahim, N., & Wenah, S. (2016). Psychological distress, perceived stigma, and coping among caregivers of patients with schizophrenia. *Psychology research and behavior management*, 9, 211–218. <https://doi.org/10.2147/PBRM.S12129>

Information provided in partnership with Mental Health America. [Download full infographic here.](#)

Put Your Medicines Up and Away and Out of Sight



About 50,000 young children end up in emergency rooms each year

because they got into medicines while an adult wasn't looking. These emergency visits can be prevented by always putting every medicine up and away and out of children's reach and sight every time you use it.

Families take medicines and vitamins to feel well and to stay well. However, any medicine, including those you buy without a prescription, can cause harm if taken in the wrong way or by the wrong person. Practicing safe medicine storage, while at home and when on-the-go, can help keep children safe.

Put medicines up and away and out of children's reach and sight.

- Children are curious and put all sorts of things in their mouths. Even if you turn your back for less than a minute, they can quickly get into things that could hurt them.
- Pick a storage place in your home that children cannot reach or see. Different families will have different places. Walk around your house and decide on the safest place to keep your medicines and vitamins.

Put medicines away every time.

- This includes medicines and vitamins you use every day. Never leave medicine out on a kitchen counter or at a sick child's bedside, even if you have to give it again in a few hours

Make sure the safety cap is locked.

- Always relock the cap on a medicine bottle. If the bottle has a locking cap that turns, twist it until you hear the click or cannot twist anymore.
- Remember, even though many medicines have safety caps, children may be able to open them. Every medicine must be stored up and away and out of children's reach and sight.

Teach your children about medicine safety.

- Teach your children what medicine is and why you or a trusted adult must be the one to give it to them.
- Never tell children medicine is candy to get them to take it, even if they don't like to take their medicine

Tell your guests about medicine safety.

- Ask family members, houseguests, and other visitors to keep purses, bags, or coats that have medicine in them up and away and out of sight when they are in your home.

Be prepared in case of an emergency.

- Call your poison control center at 800.222.1222 right away if you think your child might have gotten into a medicine or vitamin, even if you are not completely sure.
- Program the Poison Help number into your home and cell phones so you will have it when you need it.

Take Action.

- Visit the [Up and Away Campaign's website](#) to learn more about storing medicines safely while at home and when traveling with young children. Share these safe storage tips with family and friends.

This content originally appeared at [cdc.gov](#).

3 Components Of Connectedness: Fighting Loneliness During COVID-19

Check out the video below for three tactics to help you in the fight against loneliness during the COVID-19 coronavirus pandemic, so you can feel happier and healthier through this tough period of isolation.

Closer Social Distancing provides education to help you stay healthy, inspiration to help you stay happy, and resources to connect you with services you may need. Visit <https://www.closersocialdistancing.com/>



Heart of the Matter Podcast



[Heart of the Matter hosted by Elizabeth Vargas](#) gives guests the opportunity to share their personal, candid stories about addiction. It offers a space to open up about substance use and mental health, to share the ways in which people are shifting their narrative – in their own relationships and across communities – to support the cause of ending addiction in our country.

In this episode, Elizabeth sits down with former U.S. Representative Patrick J. Kennedy. He has been open about his addiction and mental health challenges and has learned how to navigate this deeply personal issue while also being in the public eye.

Kennedy was a co-sponsor of the 2008 Mental Health Parity and Addiction Equity Act, a testament to his commitment to making mental health treatment accessible to all Americans. In 2013, he founded the Kennedy Forum, a nonprofit that unites advocates, business leaders and government agencies to advance evidence-based practices, policies, and programming in mental health and addiction.

Patrick Kennedy works tirelessly on behalf of all those who are struggling with substance use and mental health, and this episode gives great insight into the stories behind his struggles and recovery.

[Listen to EPISODE 2: Patrick Kennedy discusses Family, Recovery, and Policy](#)

Response To Parenting Class

"HC DrugFree's Guiding Good Choices parenting class has exceeded expectations and we are only 2 classes in...The class teaches us how to have difficult conversations with our kids and continue to have these conversations...To anyone who is interested in taking this class, I would highly recommend it."

[Read the full response here.](#)

HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council presents
KNOW CONNECTION:
(a socially-distanced) Scavenger Hunt



'Tis the Season to be Socially Distant...but we want to be Jolly, too! This holiday season looks a lot different than it has in years past, and many people are having a difficult time due to lack of connection. But what can we do about it? We would like the Teen Advisory Council to safely spread holiday cheer to their friends, family, and greater community by participating in our **FIRST EVER scavenger hunt**.

This isn't just any scavenger hunt! It's a socially-distanced, community-service based scavenger hunt designed to make the world a better place through creativity, generosity, AND health conscious consideration of others. We want to show our community how HC DrugFree and TAC can help our community KNOW Connection, one act of kindness at a time.

On the first day of the scavenger hunt a list of scavenger hunt items will be released and you can pick and choose as many or as few as you wish to do. Each item will be worth a certain number of points, which will be tallied and counted at the conclusion of the scavenger hunt...and we have some cool prizes waiting for the Winner(s!)

The scavenger hunt will run from Friday November 20th through Sunday December 6th.

[Learn more here!](#)

Teen Advisory Council Updates

Save The Date: The next TAC Zoom meeting will be on **Monday, December 7th** from **5:30 pm-7:00 pm**

Not a Member of the Teen Advisory Council Yet? Become One!

Are you looking for a meaningful AND fun way to earn your community service hours, all while making our community a better place to live? Then HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council (TAC) may be the perfect place for you.

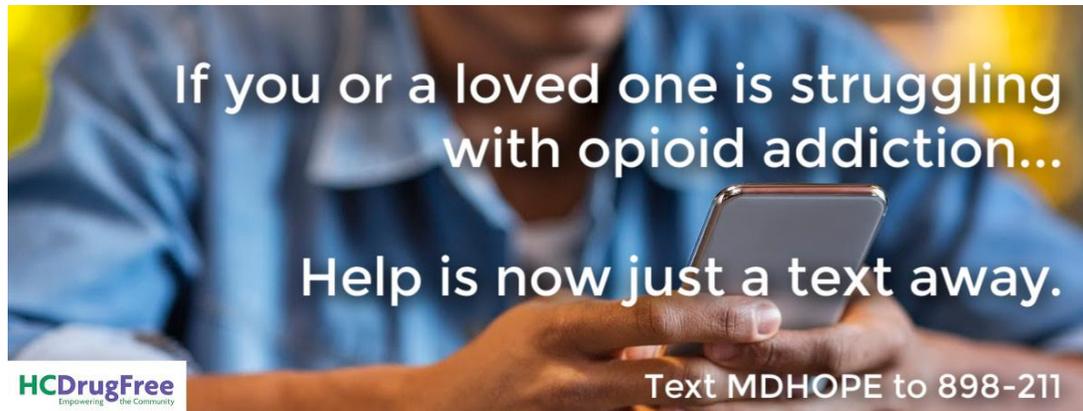
TAC is open to all Howard County High School Students! Public School,

Private School, and Homeschool students are encouraged to join! To access the 2020-21 school year registration form please [click here](#).

Email your registration as well as a photo to admin@hcdrugfree.org or mail a hard copy to:

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

Additional Resources



If You Need Help

If you need help with depression, suicidal thoughts, or other serious mental health issues, please contact:

Grassroots Crisis Intervention: 410-531-6677

The Maryland Crisis Hotline: Dial 211 and then choose option 1

The Crisis Text Line: Text 741741 and a trained counselor will respond

The National Suicide Prevention Hotline: 1-800-273-8255

The Howard County Health Department: 410-313-6202

Gambling with Your Future

Call, text or chat 1-800-GAMBLER for free confidential, compassionate help with gambling problems.

For more information, contact

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