

HC DrugFree

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

"Life's most persistent and urgent question is,
'What are you doing for others?'"

—Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.

Dates to Remember in January

January 20: Martin Luther King Jr. Day

January: Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month

January: Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Dry January: A movement encouraging people to refrain from drinking alcohol for the month to raise awareness about health impacts of alcohol and promote mindful drinking.

Screen Time on Children's Brains

A new ground-breaking look at the impact of screen time on kids' brains:

Cincinnati Children's Hospital in Ohio is at the forefront of research on how screen time impacts children's brains. A study found that children with high levels of screen time show lower development in areas vital for language, literacy, and decision-making. Researchers now consider increased screen time the "new tobacco." [Watch video](#) about the work being done and what parents can do to reduce screen time for kids.



DEA Drugs of Abuse Resource Guide

Education plays a critical role in preventing substance use and misuse. Drugs of Abuse, A Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) Resource Guide, is designed to be a reliable resource on the most commonly used and misused drugs in the United States.



This comprehensive guide 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. [Download the Resource Guide](#)

HoCo Film Fest - HC DrugFree PSA Category

Join HC DrugFree for another year of creative filmmaking fun at the HoCo Student Film Festival.



The film submission deadline: **Midnight on April 1.**

HC DrugFree's 2024-25 Category theme is: ***Make the Call: Help Without Hesitation***. This category was chosen to allow teens the opportunity to create public service announcements (PSAs) informing their peers and the community about Maryland's **Good Samaritan Law**. [Learn more about our PSA Category](#)

Maryland's Good Samaritan Law protects individuals who seek help during a

medical emergency related to drug or alcohol use. Under this law, people who call 911 to assist someone experiencing an overdose or other serious medical issue are protected from arrest, prosecution, and certain legal penalties for minor drug and alcohol offenses. [Learn more about the Good Samaritan Law](#)

Help Your Kids Thrive with Self-Care!

Self-care isn't selfish—it's essential! Teaching kids simple, fun routines like belly breathing, journaling, or taking short breaks builds emotional resilience and healthy habits that last a lifetime.



Here are a couple of easy ways to start:

- [Take a Breath](#): Teach kids to calm down by pretending to blow out birthday candles or cool hot soup.
- [Get Moving](#): A quick dance break or 15 jumping jacks can release stress and reset their mood.
- [Stay Hydrated](#): Empower kids to refill their water bottles for a moment to pause and recenter.

By teaching your child simple acts of self-care and including nurturing routines in your family life, you can show that taking care of ourselves and each other is important. [Learn more](#) practical self-care tips for kids and how to make them part of your daily life.

Combatting Stigma with Knowledge

Substance Use Disorder (SUD) is a chronic brain condition that affects millions, with only 25% of people who use alcohol or drugs meeting the criteria for a diagnosis, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Despite its medical basis, stigma often leads to discrimination, like job loss or limited access to care, and discourages many from seeking treatment.

Research shows stigma isn't just social—it exists in health care, too, where unconscious biases can reduce the quality of care. Internalized stigma, where individuals feel ashamed, worsens isolation and mental health, making recovery more challenging. Educating health professionals on addiction science can improve patient care, while peer support and recovery stories foster understanding. Anti-discrimination protections and expanded treatment coverage can also support recovery efforts. By treating SUD like other health conditions, we can create a more supportive environment for recovery.

[Read SAMHSA's article](#) on breaking the stigma around SUDs.

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.

The 5 class series will run **Tuesdays and Fridays, 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](#).

[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](#)

In the *KNOW* about Carfentanil

In the *KNOW*... OPIOIDS



Are you In the *KNOW* about Carfentanil?

Fentanyl has long been in the spotlight, but don't forget about Carfentanil, a synthetic opioid that's 100 times stronger than fentanyl and 10,000 times more potent than morphine. It has seen overdose deaths rise by over 700% in just one year. Carfentanil is not only lethal in tiny doses but also easily mixed with other drugs like heroin and cocaine, increasing the risk of accidental overdoses. Often disguised as prescription pills, it poses a significant threat, especially to young people.

Experts stress the need for increased awareness, rigorous monitoring, and open communication between parents and children about the dangers of synthetic opioids. Discover how carfentanil is reshaping the overdose crisis and what you can do to protect your loved ones. [Read the full article](#) to learn more.

Store Meds Safely

Don't be your loved ones' drug dealer!

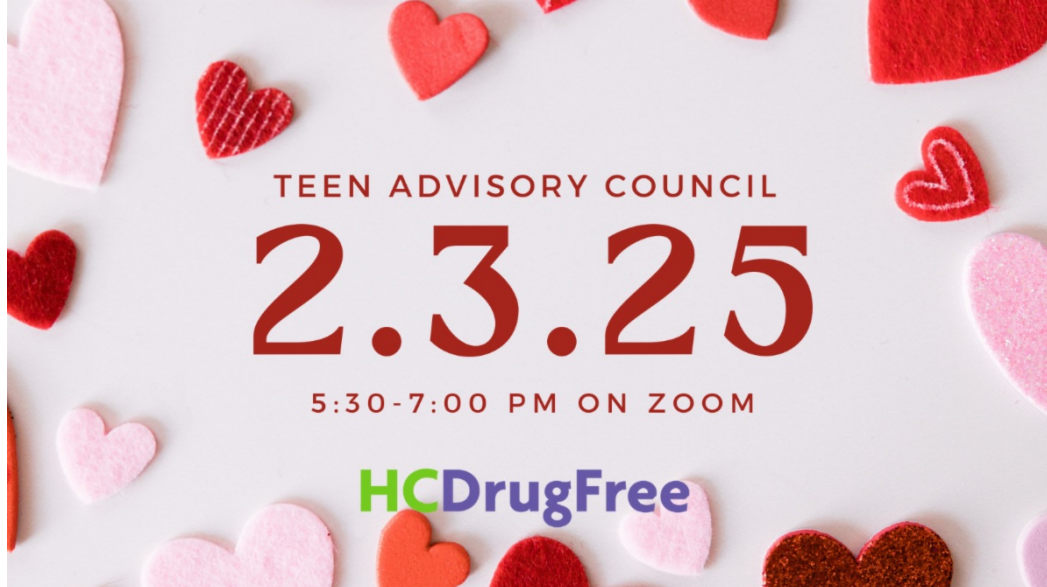
When storing medication...

- Keep it out of reach and out of sight
- Use child safety caps
- Keep an inventory to monitor usage
- Utilize a medication lockbox
- Speak to family and guests about medication safety

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



Teen Meeting: Monday, February 3



HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to attend our Monday, February 3 Teen Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

Students: [Register to receive February meeting 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 composite image for a donation campaign. On the left, there's a purple background with a grid of white and green dots. Text reads 'HCDrugFree needs your support! Help us help Howard County' and 'www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/'. A QR code and a heart icon are also present. On the right, a group of people in green shirts are posing in front of a building, holding signs.

Your support allows us to continue to provide our resources and programs free of cost to the community.

To support our mission, please visit hcdrugfree.org/donate

Donate here!

Or mail your donation to:

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

Resources

NAMI Howard County - Mental Health Services:

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Howard County is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions and their loved ones. [Download brochure](#)

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](https://www.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, 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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