

HC DrugFree

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

**"Volunteers don't necessarily have the time;
they just have the heart"**

-Elizabeth Andrew

Our Team Has Been Spreading the News!

HC DrugFree's staff, students, and adult volunteers have been busy sharing the message of substance misuse prevention at recent community events, including the Howard County Public School System's Family Academy on September 27 and the Wilde Lake Fall Festival on October 11.

Our team shared resources and prevention materials, encouraged healthy choices, and talked with parents and youth about the many ways to get involved this fall:

- ☐ Medication Take Back Day (October 25) – Safely dispose of unwanted medications and prevent misuse.
- ☐☐☐ Guiding Good Choices® Classes – Free, evidence-based sessions to help parents and guardians support youth in making healthy decisions.
- ☐ Teen Advisory Council (TAC) – A space for students to lead, learn, and advocate for substance use prevention among their peers.

We're so proud of our student and adult volunteers for helping us spread the message of prevention throughout Howard County, and grateful to everyone who stopped by, shared a smile, and joined the conversation about keeping Howard County safe and healthy!

HCDrugFree

IS IN THE COMMUNITY!!

WILDE LAKE
FALL
FESTIVAL



HCPSS
FAMILY
ACADEMY



Volunteers Wanted:
Students, Adults, and Medically-Trained Adults

What are you doing on Oct. 25th?

WE ARE LOOKING FOR STUDENT,
ADULT, AND MEDICALLY TRAINED
VOLUNTEERS AT OUR MEDICATION
COLLECTION!

HCDrugFree



When: Saturday, October 25. Volunteers arrive as early as 9:15 a.m. and event clean up ends by 2:15 p.m. (Event runs 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) Join us all day or work a convenient shift.

Where: Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot (near the CA Swim Center, Slayton House and The UPS Store)

We need many **student** and **adult volunteers**. We encourage parents, grandparents, and other adults to attend with their students, teams, clubs, etc.

In addition, we need **medically-trained adults** (pharmacists, EMTs, nurses, doctors, etc.) to handle the items collected.

We will have jobs for everyone: **young or young-at-heart**. As always, we depend on **75-100 volunteers** to make this event a success, so **we need YOU**.

You may stand or sit, but if you need to sit, **please bring a lawn chair**. Serve our community with your family/friends or come make new friends.

Let's remove unwanted and expired medications from homes across our community and work side-by-side to keep our youth and families safe.

Reminder: Student volunteers are eligible to receive **Community Service Hours** if all forms are completed and signed at the event. We encourage adults to accompany students.

[Learn more and volunteer](#)

Photographers Wanted!!!

If you want to be on our photography/videography team for our October 25 event, feel free to volunteer your photography/videography talents.

Sign up [here](#) to volunteer (add any questions/comments to the registration form and we will get back to you) or email us at Admin@hcdrugfree.org

If not you, do you know anyone who might want to take photos? Please have them contact us. Thank you!

Medication Collection on Saturday, October 25 (Sorry, No Sharps)

The next drive-thru medication collection will be held on Saturday, October 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot in Columbia (near the CA Swim Center, Slayton House and The UPS Store)

Pills may remain in bottles. No need to remove labels.

Safely dispose of:

- Prescription Medication
- Over-the-counter meds
- Vitamins
- Vape devices with batteries removed
- Inhalers
- Pet medication

- and more...

We will not collect sharps.

To dispose of sharps: *The Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services recommends that you place used (or unused) needles in an empty plastic bottle (e.g., laundry detergent bottle) to protect the trash collection crew. When the bottle is full, add the cap and put the bottle in your curbside trash.*

100 FREE medication storages boxes will be given away at this event. We will not have the boxes ahead of time and they will go fast, so if you want one, you must get it at the event.



[Learn more](#)

Medication Disposal

Convenient Drive-Thru Event

Saturday October 25 • 10 a.m.-2 p.m.



Safely dispose of:

- Prescription medication
- Over-the-counter medication
- Vitamins
- Pet medication
- Vapes without batteries
- Inhalers
- And more!

Not Accepting Sharps:

Needles, Syringes and EpiPens

HCDrugFree

Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot
5305 Village Center Drive, Columbia 21044



Teens: Earn Community Service Hours

Seeking student, adult, and medically-trained adults volunteers. Community service hours available for students. Spend some time making a difference in Howard County!

Medication Lockbox Giveaway!

We are giving away 100 Medication Lockboxes! First come, first served. Limit 1 per vehicle.



HCDrugFree.org

Provided by HC DrugFree, in partnership with the DEA, MD's Office of Overdose Response, Howard County Police and Health Department, HCPSS, MDH, and SAMHSA.

[Download and print flier](#)

Medication will be guarded and transported by the Howard County Police Department.

FREE Classes for Parent/Grandparents

Raising preteens and teens is tough. Wouldn't it be great if adults could attend a class to learn how to help their kids/grandkids avoid risky behaviors? There is.

HC DrugFree's FREE classes for Howard County parents, guardians, and grandparents are back!

The Fall 2025 series will run (Tuesdays and Thursdays): November 11, 13, 18, 20 and December 2 from noon to 1:30 p.m. on Zoom.

While the curriculum is for adults with 9-14 year olds, HC DrugFree strongly encourages HoCo adults with students in K-12 to try to attend all 5 classes. Some families have attended more than one series!

Remember, parents or grandparents living out of the area can join us on Zoom during their lunch break.

Guiding Good Choices® is an evidence-based, interactive prevention program that helps you build a stronger bond with your child/grandchild, while also providing skills proven to reduce the risk of youth engaging in substance use or other risky behaviors.

Learn how to:

- Strengthen Family Bonds
- Develop Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards
- Avoid Trouble and Respond to Peer Pressure
- Manage Conflict and Express Feelings Constructively
- Prevent Drug Use in Your Family
- And More!

[Learn more](#) and [register](#)

**FREE CLASS FOR PARENTS
AND GRANDPARENTS**



Guiding Good Choices®

Taking HoCo Families to the Next Level

Guiding Good Choices® is an evidence-based, interactive prevention program that helps you build a stronger bond with your child, while also providing skills proven to reduce the risk of children engaging in substance use or other risky behaviors. Learn how to:

- Prevent Drug Use in Your Family
- Develop Healthy Beliefs and Clear Standards
- Avoid Trouble and Respond to Peer Pressure
- Manage Conflict and Express Feelings Constructively
- Strengthen Family Bonds
- And More!

This series of five Zoom classes is for **parents, guardians, and grandparents** of 9-14 year olds, but will consider slightly older or younger children on a case by case basis. Adult **or** child must be a Howard County resident.

**Class Dates: Tuesdays/Thursdays:
November 11, 13, 18, 20 and December 2**

(Participants are encouraged to attend all 5 sessions.)

Time: Noon - 1:30 p.m.

Register: <https://tinyurl.com/GGC-Fall2025>

Learn more: hcdrugfree.org/currentevents

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community



[Download and print flyer.](#)

Bullying Prevention Month

October is National Bullying Prevention Month, an annual campaign to raise awareness and unite communities against bullying. During this month, people

focus on educating the public, promoting kindness and inclusion, and taking action against all forms of bullying, including cyberbullying.

October is National Bullying Prevention Month

1 out of **5**
students is bullied

5 out of **5**
can help prevent that

 **National Bullying Prevention Center.**
Create a World Without Bullying | pacer.org/bullying

Employment Opportunity: Join Our Team!

Now accepting applications.

HC DrugFree is looking for a self-motivated Howard County professional to **take the lead on many day-to-day management duties as well as lead educational projects/programs.** Success in this position may lead to career growth and advancement opportunities.

All candidates must pass a background check and possess strong organizational skills, writing skills, and computer skills. A flexible schedule is a must. Transportation required.

Do you have the experience, skills, and energy to lead HC DrugFree - or know someone who does? If so, [apply here!](#)

If you have questions, please put them on your application. No phone calls or emails.

In the *KNOW* about Xylazine & Medetomidine



The DEA's newly released [2025 National Drug Threat Assessment](#) highlights a troubling trend: veterinary medications are increasingly being

misused in the illicit drug supply.

Xylazine, a powerful animal tranquilizer, continues to be the most common adulterant found in fentanyl powder. Even more concerning, a newer veterinary sedative—medetomidine—is now appearing in street fentanyl as well.

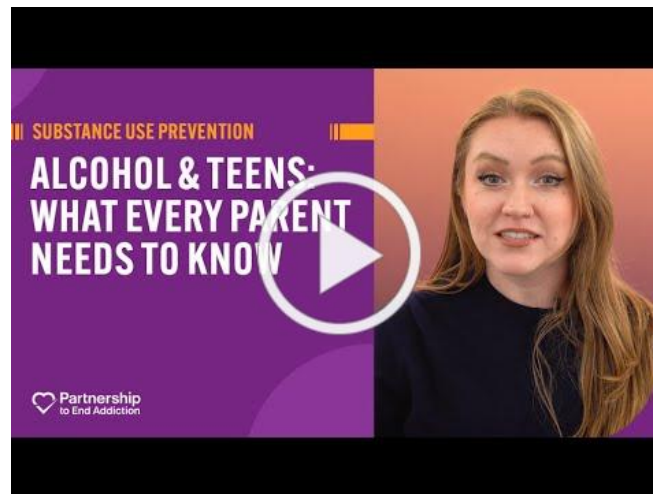
These substances are not approved for human use and can dangerously worsen the already deadly effects of opioids. Xylazine, for example, does not respond to naloxone (Narcan), making overdoses even harder to reverse. With medetomidine being even stronger, health officials fear a rise in unintentional overdoses and drug-related deaths.

This development is a critical reminder of how unpredictable and dangerous illicit drug use has become. Parents and communities should stay informed and continue emphasizing prevention.

Alcohol and Teens: What Every Parent Needs to Know

A helpful video from Partnership to End Addiction breaks down practical ways parents can approach conversations about alcohol with their teens, like what to say, how to listen, and when to engage.

According to the [Centers for Disease Control and Prevention](#), excessive drinking kills more than 4,000 youths each year in the US, which equals ten youths per day.



Teen Advisory Council Meeting



HC DrugFree invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to join our Teen Advisory Council (TAC).

There will be no October TAC meeting, instead, members will attend the Saturday, October 25 Take Back event. [Register to attend October 25 Take Back](#)

To RSVP/register to receive the **Monday, November 3 TAC meeting Zoom link**, [click here](#). Meetings will run from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Each meeting has a unique link, so members must RSVP/register before each meeting.

Students: If you have not submitted a new 2025-26 registration, please complete [this form](#) to register for the coming school year. **Even if you have been a member for several years, we need a new registration each school year.**

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](#)

Stay In the Loop: Follow Us Online!

Want real-time updates and powerful stories from our community?

Follow HC DrugFree on Facebook, Instagram, Twitter and LinkedIn to stay informed about important events, helpful resources, and prevention news as it happens.

From last-minute event info to tips that keep your family safe, our social media is your fastest way to stay connected. Join the conversation: be informed, inspired, and part of the movement!

One-Click Links!

Facebook: [HC DrugFree](#)

Instagram: [@hc_drugfree](#)

LinkedIn: [HC DrugFree](#)

Twitter: [@HCdrugfree](#)

Donate to Support Our Teens and Families!



Your support allows us to provide FREE resources and programs to the community. Please donate today by visiting hcdrugfree.org/donate or mailing a check to: HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

[Donate here!](#)

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

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. Maryland veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and press 1 to transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line. Press 2 for Spanish.



Free Narcan Training:

The Howard County Health Department offers a free training so you can be prepared in case of an opioid overdose. Sign up for your free training and Narcan kit today: [Learn more](#)



[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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