

HCDrugFree

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

New!!!

HCPSS Superintendent William "Bill" Barnes

is scheduled to attend our Parenting Class!

YOU should join us!

It's easy to register and classes will be held **online** from the comfort of your home/vehicle/office.

FREE

Only registered participants will be admitted into the Zoom.
Unique links will be provided to registrants.

[Learn More](#) and [Register](#)



If you are the parent, guardian or grandparent

**of a K-12 student
(or are an influential adult in their life),
...then these classes are for YOU!**

Guiding Good Choices® program is open to:

- ✦ Howard County parents
- ✦ Out-of-state parents of HoCo students (including military families)
- ✦ Grandparents supporting from near or far (grandparents enjoy this class!)
- ✦ Stepparents, guardians, and caregivers (adults who influence Howard County K-12 youth)

This **evidence-based program** helps you:

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

Class dates: April 14, 15, 21, 22 and an optional class on April 28

Time: Noon to 1:30 p.m. (come and go as you must)

Adults are encouraged to **attend as many classes as possible**. Each class will address different topics and share different videos.

We understand your schedules are busy, so grab a sandwich and **spend your lunch break with us**.

[Learn more](#) and [register](#). Please include any questions or comments on the registration form and we'll get back to you. **Each adult must be registered** and sorry, **no sharing unique class links**. This needs to be a safe environment to ask questions and share.

**What are HoCo Parents, Guardians, and Grandparents
saying about our FREE Parenting class?**



"I have been a parent for nearly 40 years and a grandparent for eight. No one is too old to learn new and better ways of dealing with family interactions. I love the idea of introducing these skills at an early age and will definitely introduce them to my grandchildren whenever they're with me. I think teaching them refusal skills especially is critical, especially these days when they're going to be exposed to so many negative and dangerous behaviors."

HCDrugFree

Dates to Remember

April - [Alcohol Awareness Month](#)

April - [Sexual Assault Awareness Month](#)

April 9 - [National Alcohol Screening Day](#)

April 14, 15, 21, 22 and optional class on April 28 - [FREE Classes for Parents/Grandparents](#)

April 22 and 29 - [Free Life Skills Classes](#)

April 25 - [Volunteer and Attend Medication Drive-Thru Collection/Wilde Lake Parking Lot Near Swim Center](#)

May 1 - [HoCo Film Festival at Miller Library](#)

When Screen Time Feels Like Too Much: Supporting Families & Teens



Helping Kids Find Balance Beyond Screens in Howard County

As [families navigate screen time](#), one of the most effective strategies is not just limiting devices, but helping youth stay engaged in meaningful, real-world activities. In Howard County, there are more options than many families realize, including creative, service-based, and hands-on opportunities that can help kids build confidence, connection, and routine.

[Read More](#)






Prom Season Is Here!



Prom season is here! Let's make it a night to remember for all the right reasons



As you prepare, please keep safety top of mind:

-  Plan your ride in advance
 - Choose a safe, sober driver or arrange a ride home ahead of time. No distractions, no speeding, and always wear a seatbelt.
-  Avoid alcohol and other substances
 - Substance use increases the risk of accidents, poor decisions, and serious consequences. Stay in control and look out for your friends.
-  No hosting parties
 - Unsupervised gatherings can quickly become unsafe. Parents and caregivers: do not host or allow teen parties involving alcohol or substances.
-  Check out After-Prom events
 - Many schools and PTAs offer safe, fun, substance-free After-Prom activities: keep the celebration going in a positive way!
-  Look out for each other
 - Stick with your group, trust your instincts, and speak up if something doesn't feel right.

Let's work together to keep prom night safe, fun, and unforgettable.

Did You Know Some Allergy Medicines Can Affect Driving?

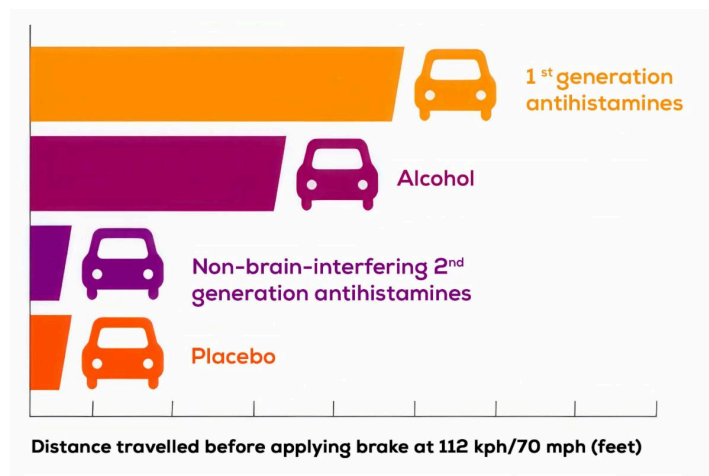


Certain allergy medicines, especially older antihistamines, can cause drowsiness, slow reaction time, and reduce focus.

Many people associate impaired driving with alcohol or drugs, but [some everyday medications can also impact safety behind the wheel](#). Certain allergy medicines, especially older antihistamines, can cause drowsiness, slow reaction time, and reduce focus.

Even medications labeled “non-drowsy” may still affect individuals differently. Side effects like fatigue, confusion, or slowed coordination can increase the risk of accidents, particularly if combined with alcohol or other medications.

Before driving, it is important to read labels, [understand how a medication affects you](#), and avoid combining substances that increase drowsiness. Safe storage also plays a role. Keeping medications secure and properly managed helps prevent misuse and ensures they are used safely.



What should you do with expired or unwanted allergy medications? That's easy! Bring pills and liquids to our April 25 drive-thru medication collection in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot near the CA Swim Center between 10 a.m. and 2 p.m. No need to remove labels. [Learn more and volunteer to be part of our team](#)

[In this new PSA video](#), McGruff the Crime Dog returns as the face of the “Go For Real” campaign, warning viewers about the dangers of phony prescription pills. What seems like a harmless pill could actually be counterfeit: laced with deadly substances such as fentanyl, meth, or xylazine.



What You Can Do to Stay Safe

Action	Why It Matters
Only take meds prescribed to you	No pill from a friend, social media, online, or gas-station can be trusted.
Look out for expired meds	Properly dispose of old or unused prescriptions at our bi-annual Drug Take Back events.
Educate your friends and family	Share McGruff's video—reminders can save lives.
Stick with trusted sources	Always get medication from a licensed pharmacy and check packaging carefully.

The Power of Pets & Importance of Medication Disposal

Pets do more than provide companionship. [Research from Purdue University's College of Veterinary Medicine](#) highlights how strong bonds with animals can support emotional wellbeing, reduce stress, and provide a sense of purpose and connection. For many people, especially youth, caring for a pet can encourage routine, responsibility, and positive coping skills.

At the same time, creating a safe home environment is essential for both people and pets. **Medications, alcohol, and other substances that are not safely stored can pose serious risks if accidentally accessed by children or animals.**

Even small amounts of certain medications can be harmful to pets.

One simple step families can take is to **regularly clean out unused or expired medications and [dispose of them safely](#).**

Again, our Medication Take Back event on **April 25 in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot near the CA Swim Center** provides a safe way to remove these items from the home and reduce the risk of misuse or accidental exposure.

Building strong connections and safe environments go hand in hand. Whether it is through the support of a pet or safe storage practices at home, small steps can make a meaningful difference in keeping families healthy and safe.



Take This Quick/Easy Assessment

Think about your gambling habits over the past 12 months as you take this [quick assessment](#) to help you determine if you might want to seek some support.

Did you know that youth exposed to gambling is increasing through media, advertising, and online platforms. Problem Gambling Awareness Month is a time to raise awareness and educate YOUR family and friends about the risks of youth gambling.

Talk with the youth in your life, and again, take the assessment and be honest with yourself about your behavior.

HC DrugFree urges adults to:

- Not purchase lottery tickets or scratch-offs for youth
- Not allow youth to participate in betting of any kind (*including sports betting, online games with wagering features, or informal bets*)
- Avoid normalizing gambling as “harmless” or “easy money”
- Set clear expectations and model responsible behavior
- Monitor apps, games, and online platforms that may include gambling-like features
-

Start the conversation early: what youth see, they often try.

HAVE THE CONVERSATION...

**About the risks of gambling and
How to keep Gambling Safe**

Call, Text (1-800-426-2537)
or Chat (HelpMyGamblingProblem.org)

24 1-800-GAMBLER



Saturday, April 25: Meds Collection & FREE Storage Boxes



**Don't know what to do
with your leftover
medications?**

We can help.

HC DrugFree
Empowering the Community

HC DrugFree's next drive-thru **Medication Collection in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot near the CA Swim Center** will be held on Saturday, April 25 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

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

✗ Remember, **Sharps (needles, syringes, EpiPens) will NOT be accepted.**

What to do with sharps? ♻️ Howard County Bureau of Environmental Services recommends placing used/unused needles in a sealed plastic bottle (for example, a detergent bottle) before putting them in your curbside trash to protect collection crews.

Once again, **100 FREE medication storage boxes** will be distributed. Protect your family by storing medications safely. Keeping prescriptions and over-the-counter medications locked, out of sight, and out of reach helps prevent accidental misuse and protects children, teens, and loved ones in your home.



Who Should Volunteer??

1. Youth (Community Service Hours available)
2. Medically Trained Adults (nurses, pharmacists, doctors, etc.)
3. Adults of all ages and backgrounds

...bring a chair if you can't stand
...bring a friend or make new ones
...invite your sorority/fraternity, scout troop, club, team, etc.

Volunteer now and dispose of your medications! [Learn more and volunteer](#)

Community Service Hours are available for students looking to **boost resumes and college applications!** Teens will not handle medications and will assist in guiding visitors and holding signs.

All volunteers need to properly complete a waiver found on our website.

Thank you to our Howard County Police and Drug Enforcement Administration partners for guarding and transporting all medications.

Teen Advisory Council Meeting & Volunteer Opportunity

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

There will be no April TAC meeting because we have other teen events scheduled, so [register to receive the May 4 TAC meeting Zoom link](#) and be sure to [volunteer for our Saturday, April 25 medication collection](#) in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot near the CA Swim Center. Community Service Hours awarded for both events.

Students: If you have not submitted a 2025-26 registration, please complete [this form](#). 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](#)

Free Narcan Training & Kits

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 to receive a Narcan kit: [Learn more](#)

What can you do with expired or used Naloxone? *[Again, come to our FREE medication disposal event on April 25, 2026!!!](#)*

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 Today!



HCDrugFree
needs your support!
Help us help Howard County

www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/

[www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/](#)

Your support allows us to provide our 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!

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.



[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

Joan Webb Scornaienchi
Executive Director
HC DrugFree
5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206
Wilde Lake Village Center
Columbia, MD 21044
Admin@hcdrugfree.org
www.hcdrugfree.org



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

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!