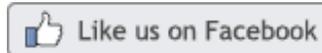


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HC DrugFree is keeping Howard County *In the KNOW!!!*

Howard County 2017 Overdoses Continue to Rise

Howard County Police report overdoses so far in calendar year 2017:

- **Fatal: 55***
- **Non-Fatal: 165**

*In fatal cases, some deaths are pending autopsy results for opioids and/or other substances. Numbers may fluctuate.

HC DrugFree in Howard County Public Schools

The Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) invited HC DrugFree to talk with approximately 300 parents and students in December.

HC DrugFree attended HCPSS's Athlete Meetings to talk with parents about the possible dangers of student athletes being prescribed legal pain medications (opioids) for sports-related injuries.

Pictured: HC DrugFree's Executive Director with Glenelg High School's Athletics and Activities Manager Dan Sageman and Atholton High School's Athletics and Activities Manager Mike Senisi and Principal JoAnn Hutchens.



HC DrugFree was invited to speak to Howard High School's Forensics Class.

Pictured: Principal Nick Novak, Chemistry and Forensic Science Teacher Cathy Bloedorn, Deputy State's Attorney and HC DrugFree Board Member Kim Oldham, HC DrugFree's Joan Webb Scornaienchi, and Owner of Congruent Counseling Mark Donovan



In November, HC DrugFree attended the Athlete Meeting at Long Reach High School and later that evening, participated in their PTSA meeting. Pictured: Joan at Long Reach High School meeting talking to parents.

HC DrugFree thanks the Howard County Public School System for allowing us to partner with them to keep all our children safe and parents informed.

We wish all young athletes a safe and wonderful season.



New Blog: Setting Realistic Expectations for Struggling to Launch Young Adults

Are you struggling because your child doesn't fit the mold of a typical young adult? Dr. Rick Silver, Founder and Director of The Thrive Center, located in Columbia submitted a blog on this topic:

The mother of a 20 year old patient had spent an hour with me in my office, explaining the details of her son's developmental challenges over the past decade.

"I'm hoping you can tell us what's wrong and what to do about it. He was always moody and has had rageful episodes since he was little. He doesn't work, doesn't go to school, has a limited number of real friends, and smokes a lot of weed. I just want him to act his age, to be responsible like his peers. That's not unreasonable, is it?"

This mom was clearly struggling to find an answer for a son that did not fit the mold of a typical young adult - and had never fit the mold of a typical kid growing up.

Whatever this young man might become - with the right support and treatment - he was not yet capable of mustering the cognitive and emotional skills needed to be successful as a young adult. As painfully apparent as this might have been to me, the mom still held on to an image of her son as capable but willful: if he only tried, he could make it, just like his peers. Like many frustrated parents, she was taking a page from the Nike play book, hoping that "Just Do It" was a workable strategy for him.

[Click here](#) to read more from Dr. Silver or go to <http://www.hcdrugfree.org/blog/>.

Is That Your Teen's USB Flash Drive or a Disguised Vaping Device?

Do you know what a JUUL is? I bet your teen does.

It's an e-cigarette that resembles a flash drive and can be hidden in a closed fist and easily be hidden in a classroom. Do you know if your teen or their friends are bold enough to use a JUUL in class? Have you asked the question?

Common JUUL flavors are mint, tobacco, mango, crème brulee, and fruit.

Do you worry that vaping will lead your teen into a nicotine addiction and eventually smoking tobacco cigarettes?

[Click here](#) to read more.

Teens: Enter HC DrugFree's Category in the HoCo Student Film Fest

While you're entering the HoCo Student Film Festival, please consider entering the HC DrugFree category too.

Winning film(s) will be shared as Public Service Announcements (PSA).

PSA Topic: How alcohol/drug use and abuse effects family and friends

Entries due by Friday, February 23. [Click here](#) for details and be sure to visit both <https://hocofilmfest.com/> and <http://www.hcdrugfree.org/hoco-filmfest/> for updates.

National Video Contest Open to Teens

While HC DrugFree's video contest category in the HoCo Student Film Fest won't be awarding **\$10,000** to the winning teen, Operation Prevention's national teen video contest will. [Click here](#) for more information. Video deadline March 20, 2018.

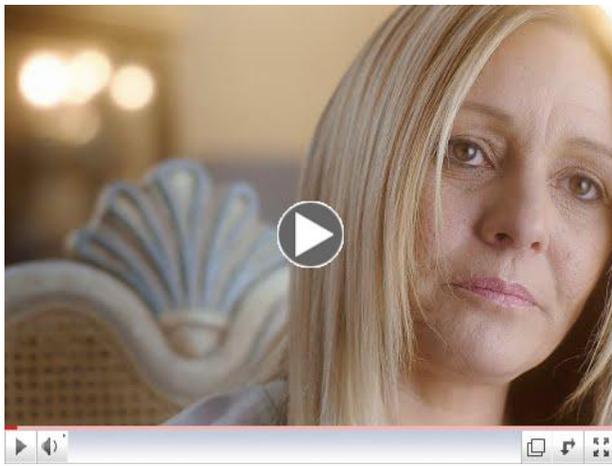
If you fear the national competition, see above and be sure to enter the HC DrugFree category in the HoCo FilmFest. You have a very good chance that we'll enjoy your video and share it throughout the County.

Holiday Party Planning: If You Serve Alcohol or Drink, Have a Plan

Whether planning a company party, hosting others in your home, or out on the town celebrating with friends, HC DrugFree recommends these safe alternatives to drinking and driving during the holiday season:

- Plan a safe way home before the fun begins (Designate a sober driver or plan for a ride.)
 - If you see a drunk driver on the road, contact local law enforcement by dialing 911.
 - If you know people who are about to drive after drinking, take their keys, drive them home, or make other arrangements to get them where they are going.
-

CDC Video #1: It Only Takes a Little to Lose a Lot



In this U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) produced video, Ann Marie talks about her son, Christopher. When only 20 years old, Christopher was prescribed legal pain medication and **became addicted within 5 days**. At 22, Christopher died.

Can this be you or your family/friends?

Click on video or [click here](#) to play video.

HC DrugFree Has a Holiday Gift for You

Want to help give someone the gift of peace of mind this holiday season and throughout the year? If Santa can't afford it, HC DrugFree has a free medication storage box waiting for you or your family.

Before your grandchildren visit for the holidays, lifelong friends stop by to welcome in the new year, or the cleaning service or caterer arrive to get your home ready for an office party, be sure to remove medications from your bathroom or kitchen cabinets and **lock up your meds!** Help keep friends and family from having easy access to your medications and *don't be their drug dealer.*

Contact us at Admin@hcdrugfree.org or 443-325-0040 for more information or to schedule a time to come to our office for pickup.

Holiday Lights Remind Us That It's the Season of Hope

Think your holiday lights are just a reminder of the season? Maybe they can be a reminder that there is hope for families dealing with substance use disorders.

[Click here](#) to enjoy how one family is choosing to spread cheer as they heal during this holiday season.

The Role of Opioid Medications and Transforming How We Treat Pain

According to the update *Advancing the Practice of Pain Management Under the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) Opioid Strategy*, in 2016, 11 million Americans misused prescription opioids, nearly 1 million used heroin, and 2.1 million had an opioid use disorder due to prescription opioids or heroin.

Of the approximately 25 million Americans experiencing pain daily, their pain interferes

with their physical and mental health, work productivity, and ability to engage in social activities.

[Click here](#) to read more about pain management strategies.

We Need YOUR HELP to Save Lives! **Invest TODAY in Howard County Youth and Our Community's Future!**

HC DrugFree is a 501(c)(3) so your donations are tax deductible.

Donate online or mail checks to HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044.

For more information, contact HC DrugFree's Executive Director, Joan Webb Scornaienchi at Joan@hcdrugfree.org or 443-325-0040.

Teen Advisory Council Meeting - Your Teen May Still Join

Next Meeting - Monday, January 22: HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council (TAC) meeting will be held at The Barn (Teen Center) in the Oakland Mills Village Center from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

TAC meets once a month and is **open to all Howard County high school teens**. Forms can be found on the TAC page at <http://www.hcdrugfree.org/teen-advisory-council-1/>

Free of charge. Pizza provided, so please rsvp to Admin@hcdrugfree.org before each meeting.

Want to Dispose of Sharps and Medication?

Throughout the year, HC DrugFree is here to answer your many questions about sharps and medication disposal and storage. If you need a FREE storage box, please let us know...or store your medications in your safe, locked filing cabinet, locked closet, or locked fire box. Many of you have some "secret" place in your homes for personal papers, money, jewelry, etc., so consider securing your medications there too!

Feel free to contact our office throughout the year or visit www.hcdrugfree.org.

Educational Opportunities, Save a Life after an Overdose, and Treatment

Want more education? Please let us know what information you want/need or forward your questions.

Need to know how to save life after an overdose? More and more of our Howard County neighbors, family and friends across the country, and celebrities across the world are being saved from heroin overdoses by a drug known as Narcan or Naloxone. If you need more information about Narcan/Naloxone, please contact us.

Seeking treatment? If you need assistance finding treatment, please contact our office.

Come to an HC DrugFree program or contact us to learn more!



For more information, contact
Joan Webb Scornaienchi, Executive Director
HC DrugFree
Wilde Lake Village Center
5305 Village Center
Drive, Suite 206
Columbia, MD 21044
443-325-0040
Info@hcdrugfree.org
www.hcdrugfree.org

