

**A wish that every day for you will be happy from the start and may you always have good luck and a song within your heart.’ - Irish blessing**

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## **Stay Lucky While Celebrating St. Patrick's Day**

Don't press your luck by drinking and driving. If you drink, please don't drive.

In 2020, motor vehicle deaths across the Maryland and the country were estimated to be the highest in 13 years despite the dramatic drop in miles driven. According to AAA Mid-Atlantic, more than 560 people were killed on Maryland roadways in 2020. In 2019, 535 people were killed in Maryland and **one-third of those deaths involved someone impaired by alcohol, drugs or both.**

To keep us all safe, designate a sober driver or call a friend or rideshare. If you know a loved one will be celebrating, be their designated driver.

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## **Jamie Lee Curtis in Recovery: "Struggle is Part of the Human Existence"**

Jamie Lee Curtis wants people to know they are not alone. The veteran actor, who recently celebrated 22 years of sobriety, said she has a message for people coping with addiction. [Read more.](#)

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## **The Lies I Told Myself: I Must Not Have a Problem**

Award-winning and Purpose-Driven Leader, Christopher Pridmore's LinkedIn article makes the following points: There is a high probability that if asked whether you had a drinking problem you would make the blanket statement “no.” You likely would not qualify the difference between problem drinking, binge drinking, gray area drinking, and being an alcoholic or having a substance use disorder. He certainly didn't because society rarely makes this distinction. For most, you are either a “responsible adult” or an “alcoholic.” You evidently “know better” than to drink irresponsibly. But do you really know better? Or are you just ignoring the inconvenient facts? [Read more.](#)

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## Parents: All Vaping is Risky Behavior (Especially Marijuana)

Parents should treat all vaping as risky behavior. Smoking e-cigarettes and regular cigarettes are unhealthy and bad for the lungs, but is vaping marijuana worse? [Read more.](#)

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## National Poison Prevention Week

National Poison Prevention Week is **March 21-27**. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, poisoning is the leading cause of unintentional injury death, and the 6th leading cause of nonfatal injury treated in the emergency department for all ages.



- Children Act Fast...So Do Poisons
    - Children younger than six account for about 43% of cases at poison centers nationwide.
    - Medicines and household cleaners should be stored up, away, and out of sight.
  - Be Prepared for a Poison Emergency
    - Save the nationwide phone number in your phone 1-800-222-1222 or text 'POISON' to 797979.
  - Poison Centers Save You Time and Money
    - Fast, free, and confidential expert advice is available 24/7/365.
    - Almost 70% of the Maryland Poison Center's cases are managed at home and without referral to hospital.
  - Poisonings Span a Lifetime
    - A majority of poison center cases involve children, but teens, adults, and older adults are also at risk for poisonings.
  - Regularly Dispose of Unused and Expired Medicine
    - Properly dispose of unwanted and expired medication. Attend a Drug Take Back Event like [HC DrugFree's semi-annual drive-thru medication and sharps collection](#) in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot on Saturday April 24th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.
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## Deadly Synthetic Street Drug "Benzo Dope" on the Rise

A highly dangerous synthetic street drug which increases the chance of fatal overdose is on the rise. Doctors have warned that "benzo dope", which most often contains a mixture of fentanyl and illegally-made benzodiazepines, leaves drug users even more prone to fatal overdoses than fentanyl alone – a drug which has already fueled a drug death epidemic across [the U.S.](#) and [Canada](#). Fatal overdoses are more likely to occur after using benzo dope because the life-saving opioid overdose reversal drug, naloxone, is not effective against benzos. [Read more.](#)

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## The Past Year Was Not "Lost"

As we mark the first anniversary of the coronavirus quarantine, for many, it feels like a lost year. However, maybe it wasn't lost.

While researching a book on reinvention, the author of a recent Time article interviewed dozens of experts on transformation in all its forms and spoke to neuroscientists who study creativity, psychologists who work with trauma survivors, cognitive scientists who study "aha" moments and business-school professors focused on innovation and career reinvention. The types of transformations they study vary, but the one step that every type of reinvention has in common is being preceded by an in-between time, a seemingly fallow period much like the one we find ourselves in now. [Read more.](#)

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## Self-Harm Among U.S. Teens Increased 99% During Pandemic

The coronavirus pandemic has had a devastating impact on the mental health of teenagers in the United States, according to an analysis of medical records and insurance claims conducted by nonprofit FAIR Health, which found that overdoses, intentional self-harm claims, substance use disorders and claims for depression and anxiety disorders all increased substantially in 2020 compared to the prior year. [Read more.](#)

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## 33% of HS Students Misusing Rx Opioids Attempted Suicide

According to a new study, about one-third of high school students who said they were currently intentionally misusing prescription opioids reported attempting suicide.

The findings come from responses of more than 13,600 high school students to the 2019 Youth Risk Behavior Survey. Compared with teens who misused opioids in the past or had never misused them, teens currently misusing prescription opioids were more likely to say they had seriously considered suicide, made suicide plans or felt sad or hopeless in the last year. [Read more.](#)

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## Overdose Deaths Among Black Americans During Pandemic

Scientists at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) say fatal drug overdoses nationwide have surged roughly 20% during the pandemic, killing more than 83,000 people in 2020. While the CDC doesn't track overdose deaths by race, a growing body of research suggests Black Americans have suffered the heaviest toll. [Read more.](#)

## Howard County Family Forum - March 18

Please join HC DrugFree and our partners for another Family Forum! This virtual family forum is scheduled for Thursday, March 18 at 7:00 p.m. Hear from local organizations about prevention, treatment options, and how to get support for your loved one and yourself. [Learn more & register here.](#)

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## Virtual Overdose Response Training - March 25

Learn how to save a life after an overdose!

Free Narcan kits are available to attendees via appointment at the Howard County Health Department. Pre-registration is required.

Upcoming training date: Thursday, March 25 at 3:00 p.m.

[Register here.](#)



## Teen Advisory Council Meeting - April 12

HC DrugFree's next Teen Advisory Council (TAC) meeting is scheduled for Monday, April 12 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. [Click here to register for Zoom meeting](#)

Save the date for the May 17 meeting too. 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](mailto:admin@hcdrugfree.org) or mail a hard copy to: **HC DrugFree**, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

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## HoCo Student Film Fest Deadline - April 17

The 17th Annual HoCo Student Film Fest is coming up and, once again, [HC DrugFree has our own category - KNOW: Kids Nurturing Others Wisely](#). This category was chosen to showcase ways that teens can encourage one another through mental health challenges, dealing with peer pressure, and most of all, how to avoid substance (drugs, alcohol, nicotine) misuse. Target audiences can include (but are not limited to): Parents/guardians or grandparents of middle school students, school staff and students.

[Deadline to submit your film:](#) Saturday, April 17 at 11:59 p.m. The Film Fest will be held on Friday, May 14 at 7:00 p.m.

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**Drive-thru Medication and Sharps Collection: Saturday, April 24  
in the Wilde Lake Village Center Parking Lot**

HC DrugFree will hold our next twice-a-year [drive-thru medication and sharps collection](#) on Saturday, April 24th from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the **Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot**. We want your expired and unwanted prescription and over-the-counter medications and your sharps (needles, syringes and EpiPens). More information coming soon! Medication guarded and transported by the Howard County Police and the Drug Enforcement Administration.

## Parenting Corner

### Life Skills Class #7: Keeping Howard County Students Safe

Our Life Skills class 6 of 15 discussed advertising targeting youth and class 7 addressed violence in the media and staying safe on social media. This week, we will have fun reviewing and reinforcing what's been learned so far and answering more student questions.



HC DrugFree's series of 15 FREE weekly classes began on Wednesday, January 27 and will run thru early May. The registration is CLOSED.

The evidence-based curriculum is designed for students in grades 6 to 9. The integrated approach helps youth learn to avoid risky behaviors and develop personal, interpersonal, and drug resistance skills.

**If your student didn't register before this series of Life Skills classes CLOSED, HC DrugFree plans to offer another free series this coming summer. Registration updates will be shared in future newsletters.**

*Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, the Maryland Department of Health and SAMHSA.*

## Do You Support Prevention and Education?

### If You Like Our Work, Please Donate Today

As a nonprofit organization, HC DrugFree depends upon the generosity of individuals, organizations and businesses in the community to support the free education and prevention services that help keep our great community safe.

Please consider becoming a Friend of HC DrugFree by making a donation in any of the following amounts:

- \$10 student
- \$25 individual
- \$50 family
- \$50 nonprofit organizations
- \$100 business
- Sponsors starting as low as \$500.

Donate



## Additional Resources

### Help for Depression, Suicidal Thoughts or Other Mental Health Issues

If you need help, 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

### Emotional Support Human

Provided by [The Horizon Foundation](#): When someone you care about is hurting, it's natural to want to help them. But, that person might not always tell you something is wrong—and you might be unsure about how to reach out.

Sponsored by the Horizon Foundation. [Learn how to be an Emotional Support Human here.](#)

### Gambling with Your Future

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

### Medication Disposal and Storage

To safely store and dispose of prescription and over-the-counter medication and sharps (needles, syringes and EpiPens), [please visit our website](#) for more information. How and where you keep your medication can make a big difference when it comes to medication safety. Every year, two million people end up in the hospital due to drug-related injuries. This might include medication errors, adverse drug reactions, allergic reactions, or overdoses. Safe and secure storage of your prescription medicine can help avoid accidental injuries.

For more information, contact

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