

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

This holiday season, remember the most lasting gifts aren't always the ones we purchase.

- "It's not how much we give but how much love we put into giving." - Mother Theresa
- "Instead of buying your children all the things you never had, you should teach them all the things you were never taught. Material wears out but knowledge stays." - Bruce Lee
- "Our hearts grow tender with childhood memories and love of kindred, and we are better throughout the year for having, in spirit, become a child again at Christmas-time." - Laura Ingalls Wilder

Register for Monday's Event

Keep Young Drivers and Passengers Safe



Free Driver Safety Event for Teens and Their Parents/Guardians

Howard County Teens Talk

Monday, December 20 at 5:30 p.m.

Teens and parents must register to receive the event link:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/Teens12-20-21

Teens tell HC DrugFree that adults tell them not to drink and drive, so instead, **our Howard County teens ride with impaired friends in hopes of lessening their own consequences.**

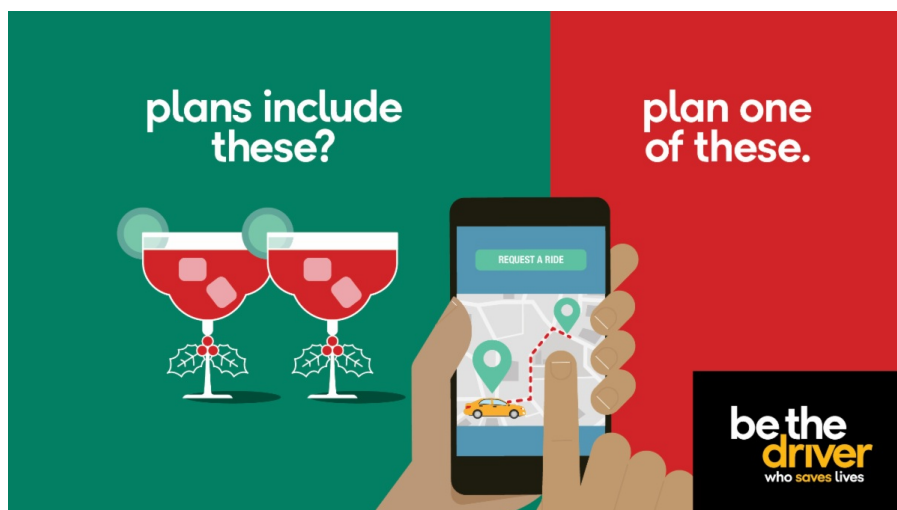
***HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council (TAC)** is pleased to invite all Howard County high school teens, their parents/guardians, and grandparents to join us for a **FREE** virtual event focusing on safe driving behaviors as we work toward our goal of reaching zero deaths.*

In addition to alcohol and drugs, we will talk about parental influence, alcohol and impaired driving, Maryland's Graduated Driver's License, the 6 rules for the road, and more.

This HC DrugFree presentation will be held in partnership with **the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration's (MDOT MVA) Highway Safety Office, the Howard County Department of Fire and Rescue Services, the Howard County Police, and others.**

HC DrugFree's **Teen Advisory Council** is open to all Howard County High School Students. Public School, Private School, and Homeschool students are encouraged to join! To access the 2021-22 school year registration form please [click here](#). Community service hours available to students, but only if a current 2021-22 TAC registration form is on file with HC DrugFree. Email your registration as well as a photo to admin@hcdrugfree.org or mail a hard copy our office.

'Tis the Season to Celebrate



December: National Impaired Driving Month

Underage Drinking: Get The Facts

Talk with your teens and pre-teens about the dangers of underage drinking. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) created a document to help guide your conversation. [Download PDF.](#)

Drinking alcohol can result in poor decision making which can make you less aware of your actions and unable to recognize potential danger. Drinking may also lead to impaired motor coordination, placing you at a greater risk of being injured from falls or vehicle crashes. While intoxicated, you are more likely to engage in unsafe behavior, including drinking and driving, unprotected sex, and aggressive or violent actions.

Questions your children may have:

- Is it really unsafe to drink until I'm 21?
- Why do my friends drink alcohol if it is unsafe?
- My parents drank when they were underage so why can't I?

How can a teen tell if a friend is using alcohol?

- Changes in mood, including anger and irritability
- Academic and/or behavioral problems in school
- Changing groups of friends
- Less interest in activities and/or care in appearance

HC DrugFree encourages Howard County parents, grandparents, and youth to attend the safe driving program advertised above in this newsletter. [Register today.](#)

In the News

8 Things to Remember about Child Development

In [From Best Practices to Breakthrough Impacts](#) report, the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University sets the record straight about some aspects of early child development.

Here are 3 of 8 items on the list:

1. Even infants and young children are affected adversely when significant stresses threaten their family and caregiving environments.
2. Development is a highly interactive process and life outcomes are not determined solely by genes.
3. While attachments to their parents are primary, young children can also benefit significantly from relationships with other responsive caregivers both within and outside the family.

[Click here](#) to read other 5 items on the list. [Download PDF.](#)

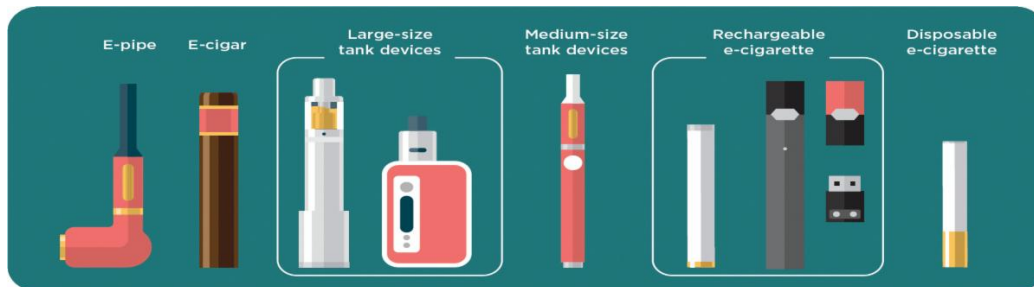
Remember:
Your Mental Health and Physical Health are Equally Important to Your Overall Health.

Coping Resources for Young People

Social distancing, quarantine, and isolation can be overwhelming and cause strong emotions. Youth.Gov wants you to have share these coping resources with young people:

- If you are struggling to cope, there are many ways to get help. Call your healthcare provider if stress gets in the way of your daily activities for several days in a row.
- During times of extreme stress, people may have thoughts of suicide. Suicide is preventable and help is available. More about the risk of suicide, signs to watch for, and how to respond if you notice these signs in yourself or a friend or a loved one, can be found [here](#).
- Free and confidential crisis [resources](#) can also help you or a loved one connect with a skilled, trained counselor in your area.
- If you are in crisis, get immediate help. See local support resources listed below.

Vaping Resources for Parents



According to the Youth Risk Behavior Survey (YRBS) in 2018, 35.7% of Howard County high school students reported having used vaping devices, and 12.9% reported having used vaping devices to smoke marijuana. Vaping and e-cigarette use have become more common among youth than cigarette smoking. There are many misconceptions about vaping and e-cigarettes, making it even harder for parents to educate themselves and their children about vaping. If you're feeling in over your head when it comes to vaping, here are a few resources that can help you better understand what vaping is, what vaping devices look like (they can be sneaky and disguise themselves as USB keys), the health effects of vaping on youth, and how to talk to your kids to prevent them from vaping.

[What you need to know and how to talk to your kids about vaping](#) from the Partnership to End Addiction

[Facts for Parents about E-Cigarettes & Vaping](#) from the American Academy of Pediatrics

[Talking with Your Teen About Vaping](#) and [Tips for Teens: E-Cigarettes](#) from SAMHSA

[Electronic Cigarette Resources](#) from the CDC

We Thank You

To make your year-end donation, please click on donate or mail checks HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD



Medication Misuse

SAMHSA Advisory for Prescription Stimulant Medication Misuse

SAMHSA recently published an advisory regarding prescription stimulant medication misuse among youth and young adults. Over 4% of youth (12-17) and 11% of young adults (18-25) report having misused prescription drugs in the past year, and the rates of prescription stimulant misuse are much higher in these age groups than other prescription drugs. Many young adults falsely believe that prescription stimulant medications will help them perform better academically, while putting themselves at risk for seizures, heart issues, and dangerously high increases in body temperature.

The [advisory](#) provides useful information about stimulant medications, including health effects of using stimulant medications, prevention strategies, tips for practitioners, parents and educators, and resources. Parents may also want to check out [Tips for Teens: Prescription Stimulants](#) for teen-friendly information about prescription stimulants and misuse.

Free Posters Available

If you would like to request free posters, please email Admin@hcdrugfree.org to arrange pick up. For more information about this campaign, please [visit our website](#).



Mental Health Crisis? Thoughts of Suicide? Problems with Drugs or Alcohol?

Call 211, then press 1.

Text your zip code to TXT-211 (898-211)

Visit 211md.org to chat or find additional resources for housing/shelter, utility assistance, food, domestic violence, legal services, and more.

Get Friends Connected to HC DrugFree

Friends keep friends informed! This newsletter and social media remain the best ways for us to share vital information with you! Please Like & Share our content on social media or forward this newsletter to a friend to help us with our mission of keeping Howard County safe and informed. Invite a friend to [subscribe to our newsletter](#). You can also view previous newsletters in the [Newsletter Archive](#) on our website.

Emotional Support Human

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. The Horizon Foundation wants you to [be an Emotional Support Human](#).

Save A Life from An Opioid Overdose

Free Narcan kits are available to attendees. Must pre-registration with the Howard County Health Department. To see dates and register, [click here](#).



For more information, contact

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