



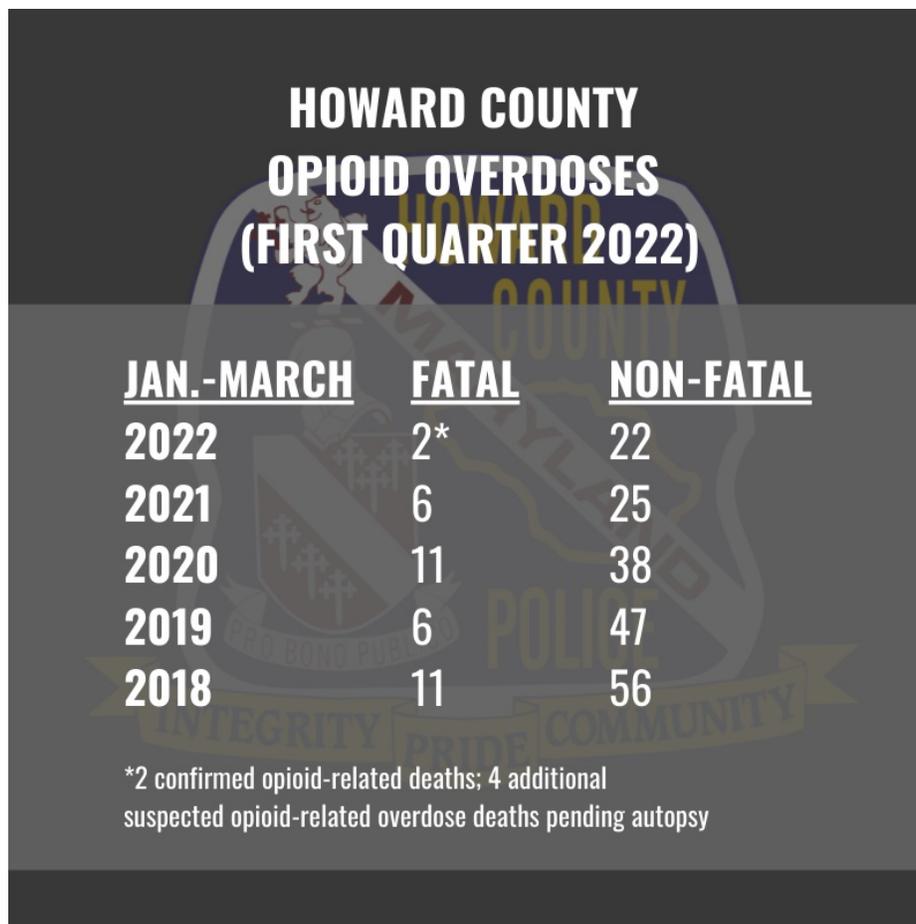
## Celebrating HC DrugFree's Drug and Alcohol Awareness Month



**Opportunity dances with those already on the floor**

H. Jackson Brown, Jr.

### Opioid Overdoses for January - March 2022



Information provided by the Howard County Police Department.

**Volunteer Now!**  
**National Drug Take Back Day: Saturday, April 30**

We hope to see you on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking for HC DrugFree's next Medication and Sharps drive-thru collection.

## In the KNOW...

About Opioid Misuse



Start cleaning out your medicine cabinets and tell your friends!

[Volunteer or read more.](#) Student, adult, and medically-trained adult volunteers are needed.

Medications will be guarded and transported by the Howard County Police and the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA). Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, Wegman's in Columbia, Friends of HC DrugFree, and others. [Please donate today.](#)

### April Is Stress Awareness Month

Stress Awareness Month has been held every April since 1992 to increase public awareness about both the causes and cures for our modern stress epidemic.

Everyone experiences stress, but long-term stress can negatively impact both physical and mental health, from headaches and stomach problems to even increasing your risk for stroke and heart disease.

To help manage stress, exercise, practice relaxation/meditation techniques, eat well, get rest, and spend time doing things you enjoy with friends and family. Unfortunately, some stressors can't be changed. In those situations, you can only control how you respond to the stress. Recognize when you don't have control, let it go, and focus on something that helps you feel calm and in control. [Read more.](#)

### National Public Health Week

Since 1955, the American Public Health Association (APHW) has celebrated the first week of April as National Public Health Week to campaign for fair and inclusive health policies for all communities.

The White House has released a [proclamation](#) in honor of National Public Health Week encouraging action to improve the health of the Nation. Unfortunately, overdose deaths related to opioid misuse increased by more than 28% from May 2020 - April 2021, with the [CDC reporting](#) 100,306 deaths from drug overdose in that time.

### April is Alcohol Awareness Month

In the KNOW...



## About Alcohol

Research shows that the language used to describe alcohol misuse and alcohol use disorder (AUD) influences outcomes of those struggling with alcohol problems. The stigma associated with alcohol problems can keep people from seeking the treatment they need. Reframing perceptions away from alcohol misuse as a "moral failing or character flaw" and focusing on treating a chronic medical disorder may help to encourage more people to get what they need. [Read more.](#)

## Using Multiple Substances



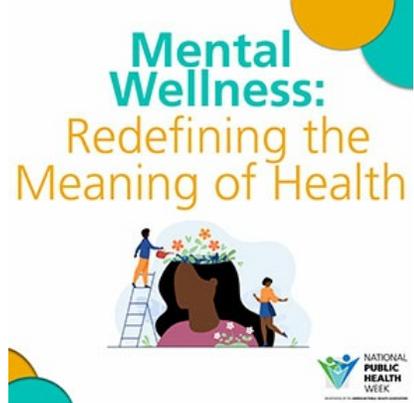
Binge drinking is associated with other substance use and concurrent prescription drug misuse while drinking. The use of multiple substances heightens the risk of overdose. [Read more.](#)

## Mental Wellness: Redefining the Meaning of Health

April 4-10 is National Public Health Week!

Mental health and wellness are essential to a healthy life. Yet mental illness is one of the most common health conditions and affects individuals across the life span.

Learn more about Mental Wellness: Redefining the Meaning of Health [here](#).



## Protect Your Brain

The adolescent brain is changing and developing at a rapid pace, but is also the last organ to fully develop around the mid-twenties. With these changes, the adolescent brain is also more susceptible to the impact of drug and alcohol use. Watch the [video](#) to learn more about what adolescents can do to best protect your brain.

## Alcohol Use in Girls and Young Women

Young women ages 12-20 are drinking more alcohol than their male counterparts, and research suggests that these young women are using alcohol as a way of coping with the anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues they are experiencing.

## How Stress Affects Your Brain

Feeling stressed? You aren't alone! Everyone experiences stress, and it can be helpful at times, but chronic stress can cause changes to your brain structure and functioning. Watch this [video](#) to learn more about the changes stress can cause and why its important to find effective ways to de-stress.

## Older Adults: Did you know?

Have you checked in on the older adults in your life? Even if they are still staying away from crowds, the warmer weather may provide an opportunity to visit outside.

Older adults make up 12% of the population, but approximately 18% of suicides.

Access to mental health care services for older adults can be fragmented and difficult to navigate. Many have never considered reaching out for help.

Many older adults are affected by grief and loss, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of an April Teen Advisory Council (TAC) meeting, teens (and their friends and families) are welcome to volunteer at our **Saturday, April 30** medication and sharps drive-thru collection to be held in the Wilde Lake Village Center from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Community service hours available to students only if all forms are properly completed. Volunteers are needed from 9:15 a.m. to 2:15 p.m.

Click on the flier to download or print.  
[Volunteer today.](#)



**Three out of four people using heroin began with the use of prescription medication**

### Drug Take Back Day

in Howard County  
**Saturday, April 30**  
10 a.m.–2 p.m.

Dispose of unwanted or expired medications & sharps (needles, syringes & EpiPens) at HC DrugFree's convenient drive-thru collection

**Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot**  
5305 Village Center Drive, Columbia, near The UPS Store

For details, go to [www.HCDrugFree.org](http://www.HCDrugFree.org)  
Adults volunteer at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Adults4-30-22](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Adults4-30-22)  
Youth volunteer at: [www.surveymonkey.com/r/Youth4-30-22](http://www.surveymonkey.com/r/Youth4-30-22)

**HCDrugFree**  
Empowering the Community



Message provided by HC DrugFree & the Howard County Police with funding from Howard County Health Department, MDH & SAMHSA

## There's Still Time! Deadline April 18

Be sure to enter HC DrugFree's Ho Co Film Fest video contest category. The deadline for students to submit films is April 18. [Click here](#) to read more about our Public Service Announcement (PSA) category submissions requirements. We hope to see you at the HoCo Film Fest on Friday, May 6 at 7 p.m. at the Miller Library. Good luck!



## Life Skills Registration Update

Due to an overwhelming response, we are temporarily closing registration for the Life Skills Classes for Spring Series 2 (May 10, 12, 17, 19, 24, 26, 31 & June 2 from 4:30-6pm via Zoom). If you would like to add your child to the waitlist, please complete this [form](#). If you would like to be informed of when the dates for the next series are announced, keeping checking this newsletter or complete [this form](#) to be added to our interest list.

## Parenting Classes Update

We are approaching the halfway point of Spring Series 2 and have had some great ideas shared among parents on how to better manage life with our teens and tweens. The next series of Parenting Classes has not been scheduled, but will likely be in the fall, so keep checking here or complete this [interest form](#) for more information on registration as it becomes available.

## Why Dispose of Unwanted Meds?



Don't know what to do with your  
leftover meds?  
We can help.

## HC DrugFree

Empowering the Community

### Medication & Sharps Disposal

Saturday, April 30 2022, 10 a.m. - 2 p.m.

Wilde Lake Village Center

[www.hcdrugfree.org](http://www.hcdrugfree.org)

#### Safely dispose of:

- Prescription medication
- Over-the-counter medication
- Sharps (syringes, needles, Epi-Pens, etc.)
- Vitamins
- Pet medication
- Vape devices (with batteries removed)
- Inhalers
- and more!

Keep your friends and family safe, and don't be their drug dealer. Most people who misuse prescription drugs get (or steal) them from family, friends, and acquaintances.

You can make a difference by keeping track of your medication, by rethinking where and how you keep your medications in your home, and by safely disposing of any unused medications.

To safely dispose of unused prescription or over-the-counter medications, vitamins, pet medications, needles, syringes, Epi-pens, or inhalers, bring them to HC DrugFree's free drive-thru [Medication & Sharps Disposal](#) on Saturday, April 30 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Wilde Lake Village Center parking lot.

## 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.

**Friends Make a Difference!**



Are you a [Friend of HC DrugFree](#)? Have you made a donation this year? We depend upon the generosity of individuals, organizations, and businesses to support our free services. Please make a gift of any size today.

Would you or your PTA/PTSA, religious group, civic group, company like to become a [Sponsor of HC DrugFree](#) by donating \$500 or more per year? Monthly payments are welcome. Thank you for your support.

[Donate](#)



## Are You Following Us to Learn More?



## Additional Resources

**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](http://211md.org) to chat or find additional resources for housing/shelter, utility assistance, food, domestic violence, legal services and more.



**Reverse Opioid Overdose:** [Click here](#) to contact the Howard County Health Department to receive free training and Narcan kit.

For more information, contact

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