

# HC DrugFree

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



**HC DrugFree**  
Empowering the Community

## Have a Safe and Happy 4th of July

For those that will be celebrating this 4th of July weekend with friends and family, taking a break from work, and watching fireworks, here are some tips to keep the celebration safe:

- Before guests arrive, make sure any prescription medications are locked away. Is the pill bottle that you see every day dangerously within reach of children or accessible to teens or adults looking to sneak a few pills? Take a moment to protect your loved ones.
- Plan for a safe way home for yourself or your guests. Walk, schedule an Uber, or choose someone to be your sober driver.



## Dates to Remember in July

July 4: [Independence Day](#)

July 1-31: [National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month](#)

July 1-31: [UV Safety Month](#)

July 1-31 [Make A Difference to Children Month](#)

July 21-24 and 28-31: [FREE Life Skills Classes](#)

## Hiring for July! HoCo College Student(s)

**HoCo College Students: Build your resumes and give back to other HoCo kids this summer!**

Are you **passionate about working with youth and promoting positive decision-making?**

HC DrugFree is seeking a **reliable, energetic, and team-oriented** Outreach Instructor(s) to support our summer Life Skills training program and ongoing youth education efforts. Must be available **July 21–24 & July 28–31** (Monday - Thursday for 2 weeks) from 9 AM to noon. Must have reliable internet. Must be a positive role model.

### **Key Responsibilities:**

- Assist in delivering/instructing HC DrugFree's evidence-based Life Skills classes (primarily via Zoom) to students in grades 6–9 (some slightly younger/older)
- Co-facilitate discussions, lead small group activities, and support a positive virtual learning environment
- Help manage program logistics, including attendance tracking, Zoom moderation, and communication with high school student volunteers
- Provide support during training prep and debrief sessions
- Represent HC DrugFree in a **professional**, youth-friendly, and engaging manner

[Learn more](#) about the classes.

HoCo-raised college students looking for employment opportunity, [apply here](#).  
Hurry to apply. Positions filling fast.

## Learn, Build Your Resume, and Be with Other HoCo Kids



### HoCo Kids: FREE Life Skills Classes

HC DrugFree is providing another series of FUN and interactive skills-based classes designed to promote positive health and personal development for students in grades 6 to 9 (or slightly younger or older). The curriculum is designed to strengthen student abilities in the following areas:

- Self-Image & Self-Improvement
- Social Skills
- Resolving Conflicts
- Coping with Uncomfortable Feelings
- Personal Self-Management Skills
- Evaluating Advertising & Entertainment
- Drug Resistance Skills
- And MUCH MORE!!!

**Meeting via Zoom on the following days:**

**July 21, 22, 23, 24, 28, 29, 30, 31**  
**10:00 - 11:30 a.m.**

Learn more: [HCDrugFree.org/currentevents](https://www.HCDrugFree.org/currentevents)



**HCDrugFree**  
Empowering the Community

443-325-0040  
[LifeSkills@hcdrugfree.org](mailto:LifeSkills@hcdrugfree.org)  
[www.HCDrugFree.org](https://www.HCDrugFree.org)

Funding provided by the Howard County Health Department, MDH, and SAMHSA

### FREE LIFE SKILLS REGISTRATION NOW OPEN

HC DrugFree's FREE Online Life Skills Classes return this July, and we need your help reaching two important groups:

- ☐ **Students entering grades 6–9** (some slightly younger and older) can participate in fun, interactive sessions to build confidence, manage stress, resist peer pressure, and prepare for high school and beyond.
- ☐ **High school students** can volunteer as **near-peer mentors** to **earn service hours, boost leadership skills, and gain real-world experience that looks great on college and job applications!**

**Classes run July 21–24 & July 28–31** (Monday -Thursday for 2 weeks)  
**10:00–11:30 AM on Zoom.**

- ☐ It's free, safe, and packed with real-life skills.
- ☐ [Learn more](#) about the classes and [register](#)

According to the [Howard County Executive's Office](#), between 2018 and 2024, nonfatal overdoses have fallen more than 85% from a year-end high of 188 to a year-end low of 28.

Through April 2025, there have been 6 nonfatal overdoses, a 33% decline from the same time last year. Notably, Howard County started experiencing declines in 2019, much earlier than other states and counties in Maryland.

Between 2018 and 2024, fatal overdoses have fallen by 43% from 38 to 22. So far through April 2025, there has been one fatal overdose, an 86% decline from the same time last year.

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## Make A Difference To Children Month

National Make A Difference to Children Month is observed in July. The month raises awareness about the vulnerability any child in the world can face if they do not have the right person in their lives to guide them.

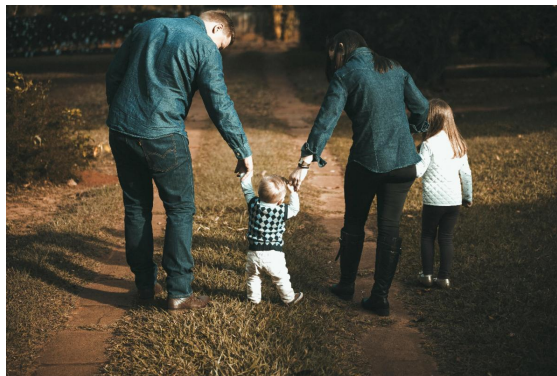
Make a difference to a child this summer!

Helpful Links:

[50 Things To Do in Howard County](#)

[Tips for Spending Quality Time With Your Children](#)

[How to Start a Conversation With Your Kids About Drugs](#)



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## Are Your Hazards Safely Stored?

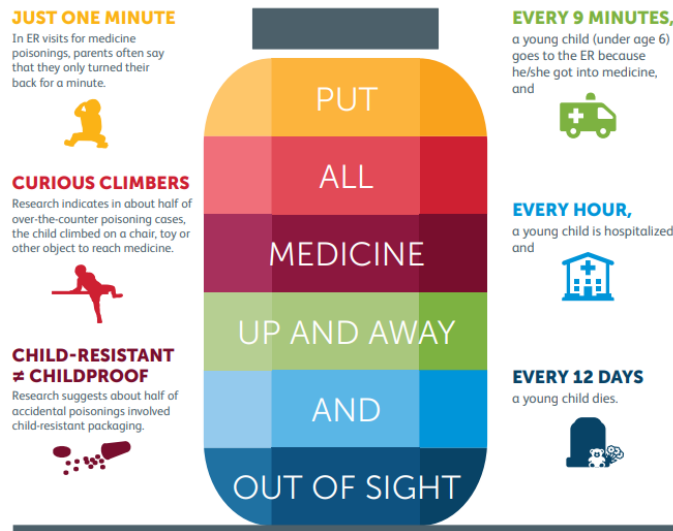
As friends and family gather for the 4th of July long weekend, now is the perfect time to double-check your home for hidden hazards, like medications, firearms, and other dangers.

Whether you're hosting guests or teens are having friends over, unsecured prescription and over-the-counter medications can be easy targets for curiosity or misuse. Please take a moment to:

- Lock up medications and firearms in a safe, cabinet, or storage box
- Safely dispose of anything expired or no longer needed
- Keep an eye out for other hazards like cleaning supplies, vape devices, or alcohol

A safe home keeps everyone, especially young visitors, protected. Let's celebrate responsibly and prevent avoidable accidents.

### WHAT TO KNOW ABOUT STORING MEDICINE



## UV Safety Month

Summer is in full swing in Howard County! While we all love the sunshine, it's important to remember that ultraviolet (UV) rays from the sun can be harmful year-round, especially during the long days of July

### Did You Know?

- 1 in 5 Americans will develop skin cancer by age 70.
- Even on cloudy days, up to 80% of UV rays can reach your skin.
- Children and teens are especially at risk because they spend more time outdoors.

### Stay Safe in the Sun:

- Use broad-spectrum sunscreen with SPF 30 or higher and reapply every 2 hours.
- Wear sunglasses that block 100% of UVA and UVB rays.
- Avoid peak sun hours (10 AM to 4 PM) when UV radiation is strongest.
- Seek shade and wear protective clothing like wide-brimmed hats and long sleeves.

Teaching your children about sun safety today can prevent skin damage and serious health issues later. Don't let a sunburn now lead to regrets later.



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## July Is UV Safety Awareness Month



While sunshine is essential for your body to process vitamin D, ultraviolet (UV) radiation can quickly damage your skin, no matter your skin tone.

**1 in 5**

1 in 5 Americans  
get skin cancer.



Skin cancer is the **most common type of cancer** in the United States.



**UV light exposure** causes most skin cancers.



Just **five sunburns** doubles your risk of developing melanoma, the deadliest form of skin cancer.



**Sun safety is easy:**

- Stay in the shade** when possible.
- Stay inside** when the sun is at its brightest.
- Use broad-spectrum sunscreen** with an SPF of at least 30 and reapply frequently.
- Wear a hat, long sleeves and sunglasses.**

 **Indoor tanning beds** have been designated by the International Agency for Research on Cancer as **"carcinogenic to humans"** since 2009.

The risk of developing melanoma **increases by 75%** if you start using tanning beds before age 35.

**Most skin cancers are treatable when caught early.**  
People with naturally darker skin are less likely to get early treatment for possible skin cancers.

Need a dermatologist and more skin care safety tips?  
Find a provider at [weillcornell.org](https://www.weillcornell.org)



Weill Cornell Medicine

## National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month

Each July, National Minority Mental Health Awareness Month brings attention to the unique mental health challenges faced by racial and ethnic minority communities. There are significant disparities in access to resources for people of various backgrounds. Other factors like stigma, cultural barriers, and lack of representation in care continue to prevent many individuals from receiving the support they need.

In Howard County and beyond, people of color are often **less likely** to receive timely, appropriate mental health treatment, even though the stressors they



experience, including racism, discrimination, and systemic inequality, can increase the risk of anxiety, depression, and substance use.

This month, let's commit to fostering mental wellness for all by:

- Listening to and uplifting diverse voices
- Reducing stigma around seeking help
- Advocating for more inclusive, culturally competent care
- Sharing local resources and support networks

You're not alone, and neither is your teen. Together, we can help build a more equitable and supportive mental health system for everyone.

→ [Learn more and get involved](#)



## Registration OPEN for 2025-26

### It's time to get your 2025-26 registration submitted!!!

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

**Students:** If you have not submitted a new 2025-26 registration, please complete [this form](#) to register for the coming school year. **Even if you have been a member for several years, we need a new registration each school year.**

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 about TAC](#)

Share Your Story

We invite you to share your story and help others in our community by raising awareness about youth substance use, behavioral health challenges, and the dangers of rising drug trends. All information shared will be anonymous.

[Submit your story](#)

## Share your story.



By sharing your experiences, you can help break stigma, encourage prevention, and provide hope and guidance to other families in our community.

**HCDrugFree**

## 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](#)

### Are you following us on social media?



 [@hc\\_drugfree](#)

 [HC DrugFree](#)

 [HC DrugFree](#)

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**HCDrugFree**

**Donate Today!**





Your support allows us to provide our FREE resources and programs to the community. Please donate today by visiting [hcdrugfree.org/donate](http://hcdrugfree.org/donate) or mailing a check to: HC DrugFree, 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206, Columbia, MD 21044

[Donate here!](http://hcdrugfree.org/donate)

## Resources

### 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](http://988.maryland.gov). Maryland veterans and their loved ones can call 988 and press 1 to transfer to the Veterans Crisis Line and press 2 for Spanish.



### Free Narcan Training:

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 Narcan kit today: [Learn more](#)



## Additional Resources

For more information, contact

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