

# HC DrugFree

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

*"Alone we can do so little; together we can do so much."*

*-Helen Keller*

## Dates to Remember in August

August: Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month

August 25: First Day of School at HCPSS

August 31: [International Overdose Awareness Day](#)

## College Voices: HoCo Youth Reflects on Safety at UMD



### Starting College at UMD and Knowing Help Is Close By

As an incoming freshman at the University of Maryland, there's a lot to think about. Whether that be scheduling classes, making new friends, or adjusting to campus life, every aspect of my life is about to become a lot more hectic.

UMD has placed naloxone (also called Narcan) in every AED (automated external defibrillator) box in public buildings, amounting to about 150 locations total. These AED boxes aren't locked or alarmed, so anyone can grab naloxone quickly if they need to help someone experiencing an opioid overdose. This is a big deal because...

[Read More](#)

## HC DrugFree Wraps Up Summer Life Skills Session

HC DrugFree's team recently wrapped up our Summer Life Skills classes, and we are so grateful to everyone who made the program a success.

□ Thank you to the parents and students who joined us for these interactive sessions!

□ A special thanks to our amazing high school and college team whose dedication, energy, and leadership helped bring this programming to the community.

During the summer, students learned practical skills from decision-making and communication to managing stress, setting goals, and making safe, healthy choices. Through engaging activities and real-world examples, our participants gained tools they can carry into the school year and beyond.

We couldn't have done it without our supportive community, and we're already looking forward to offering more opportunities for youth to learn, lead, and thrive.

Pictured Below:

- *Top photo: HC DrugFree's Executive Director Joan Webb Scornaienchi and HCPSS Administrator Dr. Debra O'Byrne with College Instructors*
- *Bottom photo: HC DrugFree's dedicated College and High School Team*





## Adult and Student Volunteers Wanted!

If you (adults and teens) are available to volunteer with HC DrugFree for an hour on **Thursday, August 21**, please email [Admin@hcdrugfree.org](mailto:Admin@hcdrugfree.org) to receive more information.

We still need about 20 more volunteers!

Estimated time depending on assignment: 5:30-6:30 p.m. or 6:00-7:00 p.m.

Community Service Hours available for 8th-12th grade students with a Teen Advisory Council registration filed. There's still time to complete and submit a [TAC registration!](#)

### ☐ Drive Sober. Stay Safe. Keep It Stored.

As more states legalize marijuana, it's important to remember: legal doesn't mean risk-free—especially when it comes to driving.

### ☐ Weed and Driving Don't Mix.

Using marijuana can slow reaction time, affect coordination, and impair judgment, making it dangerous to get behind the wheel. Even if it's legal in your state or for adults over a certain age, driving under the influence of marijuana is illegal and unsafe.

Too many crashes and near-misses are caused by people who thought they were “okay to drive.” If you’ve used cannabis, make a plan: wait until it wears off, call a friend, or use a ride service.

### ✓ And Don’t Forget Storage!

If marijuana is legal for adult use where you live, always store it safely and securely: away from children, teens, and even pets. As with alcohol and prescription medications, safe storage helps prevent accidental ingestion, misuse, or harm.

Let’s keep our roads, homes, and families safe. Drive sober. Store safely. Protect the ones you love. [Learn more.](#)



## Hiring!

New position!! Accepting applications now.

HC DrugFree is looking for a self-motivated Howard County professional to **take the lead on many day-to-day management duties as well as lead educational projects/programs.** Success in this position may lead to career growth and advancement opportunities.

All candidates must pass a background check and possess strong organizational skills, writing skills, and computer skills. A flexible schedule is a must. Transportation required.

Do you have the experience, skills, and energy to lead HC DrugFree - or know someone who does? If so, [apply here!](#)

If you have questions, please put them on your application. No phone calls or emails.



As August shines a light on Children's Eye Health and Safety Awareness Month, we want to remind families that safety at home includes preventing accidental overdoses and poisonings.

### **Did you know?**

Even everyday items like allergy drops, vitamins, or prescription eye medications can be harmful if misused or ingested by a child. And with rising concerns around opioid use and fentanyl contamination, any unsecured medicine in the home becomes a potential danger.

□ Simple Tips to Keep Kids Safe:

**Store all medications—including eye drops and over-the-counter pain relievers**—out of sight and out of reach.

**Talk to your children** (in age-appropriate ways) about not touching unknown substances or taking anything unless it comes from a trusted adult.

**Safely dispose of unused or expired medications** through HC DrugFree's community take-back events.



## **Cannabis-Infused Drinks: A Parent's Guide**

Curious or concerned about those new cannabis-infused beverages on store shelves? The Partnership to End Addiction breaks it down clearly in their guide ["Cannabis-Infused Drinks: A Parent's Guide to Weed Beverages, Risks & Safe Conversations"](#).

### **Why it Matters:**

- These drinks, ranging from sparkling waters to cocktail-style beverages, often contain THC, and are increasingly easy to find outside traditional dispensaries.
- Because regulation is fragmented, doses and ingredients can be inconsistent or misleading, making education and caution crucial.

### **What Parents Can Do:**

- Use this guide to start informed, judgment-free conversations with your child.
- Stay informed, and help young people understand that just because something looks familiar or accessible doesn't mean it's harmless.



## Nitazenes: Stronger Than Heroin and Fentanyl



### Why It Matters:

These deadly substances are often disguised as familiar medications—or appear in vapes or powders—making prevention, awareness, and access to overdose reversal tools more vital than ever.

Secure your prescription and over-the-counter medication and educate yourself and your family about counterfeit pills.

Experts are [raising the alarm](#) over a class of synthetic opioids known as nitazenes. Some strains are up to 43 times more potent than fentanyl and 250 times stronger than heroin, and they're quietly infiltrating the U.S. drug supply

What makes nitazenes especially dangerous:

- They're often found in counterfeit pills, heroin, or powders: without users knowing it.
- Even tiny doses can be fatal, and they're difficult to detect in routine drug screenings.
- Reversing overdoses may require multiple doses of naloxone (Narcan) due to the drug's extreme potency.

## Teen Advisory Council Registration for 2025-26

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](#)

## 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](#)

## 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!](#)

## What Do You Think?

Please take our 2-second survey to let us know what you think of the content provided in this newsletter!

[Take Our Survey](#)

## Resources

### **NAMI Howard County - Mental Health Services:**

The National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) Howard County is dedicated to improving the lives of individuals affected by mental health conditions and their loved ones. [Download brochure.](#)

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



### **Free Narcan Training, Fentanyl Test Strips, Xylazine Test Strips Available in Maryland:**

Free training and test strips available across Maryland. [Access Map. Learn more.](#)

## [Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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