

HC DrugFree

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



Dates to Remember

January - National Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Month
January 9 - National Law Enforcement Appreciation Day
January 12 - [Teen Advisory Council Meeting \(Register Now\)](#)
January 19 - [Martin Luther King, Jr. Day](#)
January 23 - [Maternal Health Awareness Day](#)
April 7, 2026 - [HoCo Student Film Festival/HC DrugFree Category Submission Deadline](#)
May 1, 2026 - [HoCo Film Festival at Miller Library](#)

A Fresh Start: Making Mindful Choices About Alcohol

Dry January provides an opportunity to reflect on what a break from alcohol may reveal. A recent VCU Health article explores how stepping away from drinking, even temporarily, can help people better understand their habits, notice changes in sleep, mood, and energy, and make more intentional choices moving forward. Whether you choose to continue abstaining, drink less, or simply be more mindful, the article offers practical, health-focused guidance for building a healthier relationship with alcohol year-round.

[Read more](#)

Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month

As the new year begins, January offers an opportunity for fresh starts and renewed hope. Join us in recognizing National Substance Use Disorder Treatment Month by raising awareness that treatment works and recovery is possible. This month, we're sharing trusted, evidence-based resources to help individuals and families take the first step toward support and care. If you or someone you know is seeking help in the year ahead, confidential treatment and recovery resources are available at [samhsa.gov/treatment](https://www.samhsa.gov/treatment).

Key Themes and Goals for January SUD Treatment Month:

- **Treatment Works:** Highlighting that recovery is possible and effective treatments exist, according to the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).
- **Fresh Starts:** Using the New Year to reflect, reset, and make healthier choices.
- **Reduce Stigma:** Challenging misconceptions and normalizing seeking help for substance use issues.
- **Demystify Treatment:** Educating on various evidence-based options, including medications, counseling, and support.
- **Supportive Communities:** Encouraging the creation of environments that welcome and sustain treatment and recovery.

Teens: Staying Drug-Free Can Help Land Cool Jobs

The healthy, drug-free choices young people make today can have a powerful impact on the opportunities available to them tomorrow. A new Virtual Field Trip, created in collaboration with the Drug Enforcement Administration, the Department of Defense, and Discovery Education, highlights exciting real-world careers in national security and innovation that require focus, responsibility, and a drug-free lifestyle.

Through this interactive experience, students learn how their skills, interests, and passions can align with meaningful, future-ready careers, while also understanding how positive decisions now can shape long-term success.

- [Watch the Virtual Field Trip and learn more](#)



Parents: Middle School Peer Pressure for Drug Use

The DEA's *Operation Prevention: Middle School* offers free, age-appropriate resources to help students ages 11–14 understand opioids, their effects, and the risks of misuse. The program encourages open conversations between parents and children and provides practical tools to help young people make safe, informed choices.

Key features include:

- Explains what opioids are and how they affect the body and brain
- Provides conversation starters for parents and educators
- Includes classroom activities and real-world examples
- Teaches refusal skills and ways to resist peer pressure
- Promotes healthy, confident decision-making at a critical age

 [Access documents](#)

Registration Open: Teen Advisory Council Meeting



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

To RSVP/register to receive the **Monday, January 12 Zoom meeting link**, [click here](#). Meetings will run from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. Each meeting has a unique link, so members must RSVP/register before each meeting. Save the date for the Monday, February 9 meeting.

Students: If you have not submitted a 2025-26 registration, please complete [this form](#). 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](#)

Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Day of Service

On Martin Luther King Jr. Day, we honor Dr. King's legacy of service, justice, and caring for our communities. Promoting drug safety and prevention is one way we can continue that work—by protecting health, supporting families, and ensuring everyone has access to information and resources that save lives. Today, we encourage learning, reflection, and action to keep our communities safe and strong.

See Howard County's service opportunities [here](#)



HoCo Student Film Festival - HC DrugFree Category

HoCo Student Film Festival – Now Open!

HC DrugFree is proud to sponsor a category in the 2025-26 HoCo Student Film Festival. Students are invited to create a PSA for this year's theme:

“In The Know: Fake Pills, Real Danger”

Inspired by the DEA's "One Pill Can Kill" campaign, this category focuses on the risks of counterfeit pills, especially those laced with fentanyl.

Key Details

- Submission Deadline: April 7, 2026
- Festival Date: May 1, 2026, 7–8:30 PM at Miller Library
- Length: 30 seconds–2 minutes (plus a 10–30 second closing screen)
- Must Include: HC DrugFree logo, website (hcdrugfree.org), Admin@hcdrugfree.org

For requirements and past winners, visit our [website](#) and the [Film Fest website](#).

Free Narcan Training and Kits

In the **KNOW...**
Naloxone
Reverse an overdose. Save a life.

A white nasal spray device with a green label that reads "NALOXONE NASAL SPRAY" and "4 mg".

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 to receive a Narcan kit. [Learn more](#)

Safe Storage of Meds

Medication boxes help families safely store prescription and over-the-counter medications, reducing the risk of accidental ingestion and misuse. If you did not receive a storage box from us, we encourage you to use your own secure location, such as a locked cabinet, drawer, or safe, to store medications safely in your home.



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 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

Gambling Addiction:

Contact 1-800-GAMBLER (1-800-426-2537) for free, confidential support 24/7 or visit helpmygamblingproblem.org.

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.](#)

[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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