

HC DrugFree

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



HC DrugFree Nominated for "Best of Howard"

HC DrugFree is so excited to be nominated in the Baltimore Sun's Best of Howard County 2026. To support our cause and raise awareness for what we do, [please vote for us daily](#) from June 6 to June 21 using the link below.

[VOTE HERE](#)

Go to Services
-> Volunteer Organization
-> HC DrugFree

Remember to vote every day through June 21 because our teen and adult volunteers really are THE BEST!!!

...and good luck to all the other nominees...

WHO WILL TAKE THE CROWN?
Support your local favorites

VOTE NOW

Check back for our winners on August 9

THE BALTIMORE SUN

BEST OF HOWARD 2026
THE BALTIMORE SUN

We've Been Nominated!

HC DrugFree
Empowering the Community

Services -> Volunteer Organization

HC DrugFree
Empowering the Community

June's Focus

During the month of June, our community comes together to recognize [Pride Month](#), [Men's Health Month](#), [Juneteenth](#), and Gun Violence Awareness Month, as well as [Flag Day](#) (June 14) and [National PTSD Awareness Day](#) (June 27).

The core focus this month is reducing the social stigma and silence that so often delay people from seeking support for mental health or substance use challenges. Whether navigating heavy stress or managing depression, creating environments where youth feel safe opening up to a trusted adult, parent, or counselor is one of our most effective tools for prevention and recovery.

Practical Graduation Tips for Students and Families



Congrats, HoCo Grads! This milestone marks the start of something great and our entire team is so excited to see you flourish in your professional, academic, and personal careers! 🌟



Graduation season is an incredibly exciting milestone, marking years of hard work and the beginning of a major life transition for young people. As families prepare for senior trips, parties, and open summer schedules, equipping ourselves with concrete, practical safety tools is one of the best ways to protect our grads. Utilizing community educational resources, like the prevention programs and guides provided by [HC DrugFree](#), gives parents the actionable insights needed to navigate these shifting social environments. Staying actively

involved and keeping communication lines wide open ensures that youth feel supported as they take their next big steps.

To help keep celebrations safe and focus on long-term wellness, consider these essential health and safety strategies:

- **Understand Overdose Response and Narcan:** Recognizing a medical emergency, such as unresponsiveness, slow or shallow breathing, and pale or blueish skin, is a vital life skill for young people. Familiarizing your household with how to access and administer naloxone (Narcan), a safe medication that reverses an opioid overdose, can prevent a tragedy; you can learn the essentials via [SAMHSA's Naloxone Guide](#).
- **Know True Alcohol Serving Sizes:** Many teenagers and young adults underestimate how much alcohol they are consuming when drinks are served in oversized party cups. **Because alcohol is illegal for anyone under age 21** in the U.S., prevention starts with helping young people understand the facts and make informed, healthy decisions. Families can discuss what counts as a standard U.S. drink: 12 ounces of regular beer, 5 ounces of table wine, or 1.5 ounces of distilled spirits, and how larger servings can contain multiple drinks. The [NIAAA Rethinking Drinking Site](#) provides helpful information families can review together.
- **Prioritize Mental Health and Stay Connected:** The underlying stress of transitioning to college, leaving friend groups behind, or entering the workforce can frequently trigger low mood, depression, and intense anxiety. Make a habit of checking in regularly, protecting everyday health routines like sleep and nutrition, and reminding your grad that talking to a trusted adult or counselor is a necessary tool for managing major life shifts.

Families can also help reduce risk by practicing safe storage. Medications, alcohol, cannabis, and other substances should always be stored securely and out of reach.

NEW Teen Advisory Council Registration

Are you ready to make a difference?

Join HC DrugFree's
Teen Advisory Council

Registration now open to 8th-12th Graders

Community Service Hours available

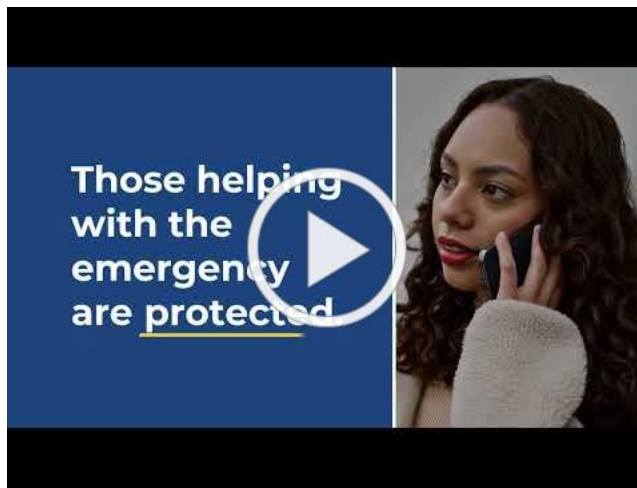
HC DrugFree's Teen Advisory Council (TAC) brings together motivated high school students from across Howard County who are passionate about leadership, prevention, advocacy, and making a positive impact in their schools and communities. Members meet monthly to help create prevention campaigns, provide youth perspectives on substance misuse prevention, assist with community events, develop social media content, and strengthen peer-to-peer education efforts throughout the county.

A new application form is now open for the 2026–27 school year. **All students interested in joining TAC, including current members who would like to remain active next year, must complete the new form.** Whether you are returning or applying for the first time, we encourage you to sign up and get involved.

[Learn more](#) and [join today to be on the 2026-27 member list](#).

The Good Samaritan Law

Understanding the Good Samaritan Law is a vital tool for youth and families, ensuring that saving a life always comes before the fear of legal consequences during a medical emergency. This law is designed to protect individuals who call 911 or seek medical help for someone experiencing an alcohol or substance overdose, shielding both the caller and the person in distress from certain legal charges or arrest. Check out the [video below](#) on a brief overview of the Good Samaritan Law.



In high-stress situations, a fear of getting into trouble can cause teenagers to hesitate, which can turn a manageable health crisis into a tragedy. By normalizing conversations around this law, parents can replace anxiety with actionable knowledge, ensuring youth know how to spot signs of severe distress—like unresponsiveness or slow breathing—and act immediately. Empowering young people to prioritize safety above all else helps them look out for their friends and make responsible decisions when every second counts.

Families can also help reduce risk by practicing safe storage. Medications, alcohol, cannabis, and other substances should always be stored securely and out of reach.

[Learn more about the Good Samaritan Law](#)

Stealth Tech: How Digital Tools Help Teens Hide Vaping



A rapidly growing trend among teenagers involves the use of "stealth vapes"—vaping devices engineered to look exactly like everyday personal care items or school supplies. Products sold on discreet online marketplaces are designed to perfectly mimic a standard tube of chapstick while secretly housing a functional cartridge vape battery. Because these disguised devices blend seamlessly into a student's everyday belongings, they allow underage vaping and cannabis use to hide completely in plain sight from parents, teachers, and coaches.

The viral nature of these items makes them incredibly accessible, with [stealth vaping demonstrations and unboxing clips circulating constantly on social media feeds](#). Beyond viral videos, the modern digital landscape has evolved to the point where shortcuts are everywhere; if given a basic prompt,

even online search tools and AI platforms can instantly map out workarounds, reveal hidden keywords, or provide direct buying links for restricted items. This hyper-accessible environment makes it simple for youth to discover, purchase, and conceal substances without ever triggering traditional red flags at home.

To prevent and protect your teens from the harms and risks of vaping, it's important to have a conversation with them about safe decision-making, communication, and standing up to peer pressure.

[Learn more](#)

One Pill, Fatal Risk: Stay in The Know About Fentanyl



[The DEA's "Face Fentanyl, Face Death" educational campaign highlights the urgent threat of illicit fentanyl](#), warning communities about how rapidly this synthetic opioid has contaminated the illicit drug market. Unlike pharmaceutical fentanyl used under strict medical supervision, illegally manufactured fentanyl is incredibly cheap to produce and potent in microscopic amounts, making it a primary driver of accidental overdoses among young people. Because it is completely odorless, tasteless, and invisible to the naked eye, youth frequently encounter it entirely without their knowledge.

A major point of vulnerability for students is the widespread distribution of counterfeit prescription pills. These look-alike pills are manufactured to mimic legitimate medications for anxiety, ADHD, or pain relief—such as Xanax, Adderall, or oxycodone—but are secretly laced with lethal doses of fentanyl. Often marketed directly to teenagers through social media platforms and messaging apps, these fake pills capitalize on a student's desire to manage academic stress, treat pain, or fit into a peer group, turning a single experimental choice into a life-threatening crisis.

Protecting young people starts with clear, supportive discussions at home about the reality of counterfeit substances, reinforcing the fact that any pill obtained outside of a licensed pharmacy or a direct doctor's prescription is fundamentally unsafe. Families can also help reduce risk by practicing safe storage. Medications, alcohol, cannabis, and other substances should always be stored securely and out of reach.

What Families Need to Know About Cychlorphine

[Health officials are issuing urgent warnings about cychlorphine](#), an emerging synthetic opioid that has been increasingly linked to fatal drug overdoses across North America. This novel substance belongs to a class of designer drugs known as "orphine analogs," which have flooded the illicit

market as legal crackdowns tighten on other synthetic chemicals. Alarming, laboratory data reveals that cychlorphine is estimated to be roughly 10 times more potent than fentanyl, meaning even a microscopic, invisible dose can completely shut down a person's respiratory system within minutes.

For teenagers and young adults, the danger is magnified because cychlorphine is almost never sold under its real name. Instead, illicit manufacturers use it as a cheap, highly addictive filler to press counterfeit prescription medications. When students turn to unverified online sources, social media dealers, or peer circles to find look-alike pills for pain relief, focus, or anxiety management, they run a massive risk of unknowingly consuming this lethal compound. To make matters worse, because it is chemically distinct from fentanyl, cychlorphine is completely undetectable by standard over-the-counter fentanyl test strips, giving users a false and dangerous sense of security.

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](#)

What Do You Think?

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

[Feedback Survey](#)

Donate Today - Before Our Fiscal Year Ends!



HCDrugFree
needs your support!
 Help us help Howard County

www.hcdrugfree.org/donate/





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!

Resources

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

Free Narcan: The Howard County Health Department offers free Narcan training and kits: [Learn more](#)

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.



[Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

Joan Webb Scornaienchi
 Executive Director
 HC DrugFree
 5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206
 Wilde Lake Village Center
 Columbia, MD 21044
 Admin@hcdrugfree.org
www.hcdrugfree.org



[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)



Try email marketing for free today!