

# HC DrugFree

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

**“We have the luxury of looking after ourselves.  
We have the honor of looking after others”**

-Simon Sinek

## HC DrugFree's Executive Director: Selected to Serve on NACDA

HC DrugFree's Executive Director, Joan Webb Scornaienchi, was selected to serve a 3-year term on the [National Advisory Council on Drug Abuse \(NACDA\)](#).

This council advises the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). By extension, the role works with the Director of the National Institutes of Health (NIH) as well as the Secretary of Health and Human Services (HHS) on the highest-quality scientific research NIDA identifies and reviews.

Members of the NACDA are given a rare opportunity to directly influence the future of federally funded research on drug abuse and addiction.

Joan has collaborated with NIDA's staff on numerous occasions during her seventeen-year tenure at HC DrugFree, and she looks forward to this opportunity.



## HoCo Expands Access to Naloxone



*This update appeared in County Executive Calvin Ball's July 6 Ball Bulletin:*

Howard County continues to lead with data-informed, people-driven solutions in the fight against the opioid crisis.

Over the past five years, our community has reduced fatal overdoses by nearly 62%, from 26 overdose deaths in 2021 to 10 in 2025. While this progress is encouraging, we know there is still work to do. Every life saved represents a family, a friend, and a neighbor.

That is why we have expanded access to free, 24/7 naloxone through two new anonymous vending machines located at the Grassroots Day Resource Center at Leola Dorsey in Jessup and the Howard County Health Department in Columbia. In addition to naloxone, these machines provide contaminant test strips, other harm reduction supplies, and information connecting individuals to treatment and recovery resources. During the past year alone, first responders administered naloxone to 163 people, and more than 2,300 doses were distributed throughout our community.

This milestone reflects the dedication of so many partners working together to save lives and support recovery. Thank you to the Howard County Health Department, Department of Community Resources and Services, Grassroots Crisis Intervention Center, our first responders, healthcare professionals, community organizations, and advocates who continue to meet our residents where they are.

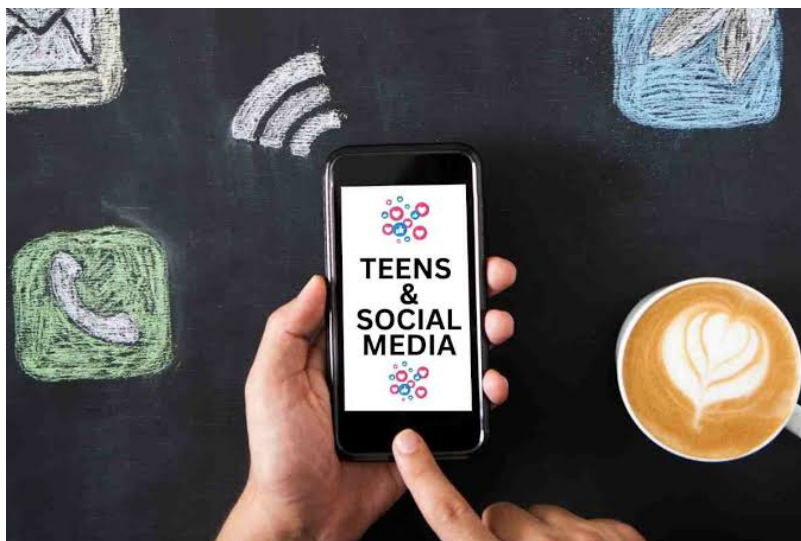
Read more about this important initiative by checking out this recent [CBS article](#).

The wide-open summer months between high school graduation and college move-in day represent a high-risk transition window. Driven by a mix of excitement and campus anxiety, [many grads use this "limbo" period to experiment with alcohol and substances to socially "prepare" for college.](#) To protect your graduate before they move out, shift your role from a strict supervisor to a trusted guide using these three family-first strategies:

- **Set "Limbo" Rules Together:** Rigid curfews trigger secrecy, but zero rules leave teens unanchored. Collaboratively establish summer expectations that respect their growing independence while keeping communication non-negotiable.
- **Demystify Campus Pressures Now:** Don't wait for move-in day. Have open, honest talks about binge drinking culture, the hidden reality of counterfeit prescription pills, and the vital importance of looking out for roommates.
- **Establish a Safe Exit Plan:** Give your teen a foolproof way out of risky situations. Create a specific text code word that guarantees an immediate, judgment-free ride home from a party with no questions asked in the moment.

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.

## The Push Algorithm: NBC News Reveals Snapchat's Shocking Recommendations to Minors



Many parents think of Snapchat as a private messaging app, but its Discovery and Spotlight feeds can expose teens to graphic, inappropriate, or harmful content—even if they never search for it. Because recommendation algorithms are designed to maximize engagement, risky content may appear automatically.

To help keep youth safer online:

- Know where content appears. Discovery and Spotlight feeds recommend public content beyond friends' messages.
- Don't rely solely on app settings. Built-in safety features and parental controls may not filter everything.

- Check in together. Periodically review your teen's Discovery and Spotlight feeds to understand what they're seeing.
- Keep conversations open. Encourage your child to discuss upsetting or confusing content without fear of judgment.

Staying engaged with your child's digital life can help them recognize harmful content, think critically about what they see online, and feel comfortable coming to you when something doesn't seem right.

[Click here to watch the news segment aired on TODAY.](#)

## Simple Ways Families Can Support Mental Health & Prevent Burnout



Behind the sunny, relaxing exterior of the season, the sudden shift away from school can introduce hidden challenges to youth mental health. Experts warn of a "summer slide" in social-emotional skills and mental wellness when the built-in peer interactions, structured routines, and daily support networks of the school year disappear, leaving kids vulnerable to isolation and emotional dysregulation.

Families can transform their homes into an emotional safety net by focusing on a few core, supportive strategies:

- **Create a Flexible Routine:** A lack of structure can leave children feeling unanchored, while rigid rules breed tension. Collaboratively setting consistent family baselines for healthy meals, physical activities, and regular bedtimes provides everyone with a comforting sense of stability and emotional security.
- **Digital Detox:** Stepping away from devices as a family to enjoy low-pressure, real-world activities—like swimming, going for walks, or playing games—lowers cortisol levels and opens up natural spaces for meaningful connection.
- **Value Rest Over Constant Productivity:** Normalizing downtime at home and embracing occasional boredom gives children the mental space they need to recharge their batteries and spark natural creativity.
- **Learn Calming Skills Together:** Exploring mindfulness techniques, deep breathing exercises, or journaling alongside your children ensures the

entire household is equipped to handle heavy challenges when the high-pressure fall routine returns.

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## Register Today! Teen Advisory Council 2026-27

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. [Learn more.](#)

[Register today!](#)

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## Stay In the Loop: Follow Us Online!

Want real-time updates and powerful stories from our community?

Follow HC DrugFree on Facebook, Instagram, X, 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 to be informed, inspired, and part of the movement.

### One-Click Links!

Facebook: [HC DrugFree](#)

Instagram: [@hc\\_drugfree](#)

LinkedIn: [HC DrugFree](#)

X: [@HCdrugfree](#)

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## 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](#)

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**Donate Today!**



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

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

## 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](#)

**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.



## [Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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