

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

**A bird sitting on a tree is never afraid of the branch breaking,  
because her trust is not on the branch but on its own wings.**

author unknown

### *Howard County, YOU told us WHY!*

This is National Prevention Week (NPW). By using SAMHSA's 2022 challenge called [#MyPreventionStory](#), YOU told HC DrugFree WHY you support prevention services and education.

Click [here](#) or on the video below to view the slideshow.





This week is the perfect time to remind our Howard County community about the importance of prevention programs, the positive impact they have on mental health and substance use, and that prevention saves lives and money.

It's not too late, if you want to take the challenge, [click here](#) to download our My Prevention Story template. Add your reason why you support prevention and send us your picture. Take the challenge and be a part of the national conversation about how prevention works!

## National Prevention Week & National Prevention Day

National Prevention Week (NPW) runs May 8–14, and today (May 9) is SAMHSA's Prevention Day and

**Daily Themes:** Each year, NPW includes daily themes to focus on major substance use and mental health topics. The 2022 daily themes are:

- May 9: Strengthening Community Resilience: Substance Misuse and Overdose Prevention
- May 10: Preventing Substance Use and Promoting Mental Health in Youth
- May 11: Preventing Suicide: Everyone Plays a Role
- May 12: The Talent Pipeline: Enhancing the Prevention Workforce
- May 13: Prevention is Everywhere: Highlighting Efforts Across Settings and Communities
- May 14: Celebrating Prevention Heroes

For more information about NPW 2022, including resources to help you raise awareness and plan activities in your community, visit the [SAMHSA website](#). HC DrugFree is proud to partner with SAMHSA.

## Invest in Prevention: Dr. Nora Volkow at NIDA

Priceless!!! It's often used to describe the most important things in our lives, things that we value more than any number or dollar amount we can imagine. Health, happiness, independence, safety - all things we might consider priceless but also may take for granted until we no longer have them. Unfortunately, it may be too late at that point to go back, and yet this is often when we truly see the value of prevention efforts, when we think about what we "woulda, shoulda, coulda" done differently.

Research shows time and again that the cost savings of prevention programs makes good financial sense, yet strong programs go unimplemented.

[Click here](#) to read what Dr. Nora Volkow, the Director of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), said about prevention.

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## Thank You, BBMS!!!

A little birdie sent us this picture of a banner hanging in Bonnie Branch Middle School (BBMS).

Thank you, BBMS and BBMS PTA for standing with HC DrugFree and having your students and parents participate in our classes and events. We are proud to have our name on your banners.



## Dare to Share: Talking to Kids about Mental Health

To kick off Mental Health Month, the Child Mind Institute announced the release of [Dare to Share](#), a campaign that features celebrities and kids talking about their personal experiences and struggles and how they found support. The campaign also includes resources for parents on how to talk with your children about mental health concerns. [Watch the video.](#)

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## Early Intervention for Mental Health

Mental health disorders often start in childhood and adolescence, but many children and teens don't realize that what they are experiencing isn't normal. Talking with kids early and often about mental health and helping them get the help they need can have a significant impact on their futures. [Read more.](#)

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## My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

Everyone feels a little down sometimes or experiences anxiety about something in their lives, but how do you know when you've moved past "typical" and into something more serious?

Some things to consider include how severe your symptoms are and how long you've been experiencing them.

If your symptoms are making it hard for you to get through a typical day, do basic tasks/activities, and have lasted longer than 2 weeks, seek professional help. For those less

## My Mental Health: Do I Need Help?

First, determine how much your symptoms interfere with your daily life.



### Do I have mild symptoms that have lasted for less than 2 weeks?

- Feeling a little down
- Feeling down, but still able to do job, schoolwork, or housework
- Some trouble sleeping
- Feeling down, but still able to take care of yourself or take care of others



### If so, here are some self-care activities that can help:

- Exercising (e.g., aerobics, yoga)
- Engaging in social contact (virtual or in person)
- Getting adequate sleep on a regular schedule
- Eating healthy
- Talking to a trusted friend or family member
- Practicing meditation, relaxation, and mindfulness

If the symptoms above do not improve or seem to be worsening despite self-care efforts, talk to your health care provider.



### Do I have severe symptoms that have lasted 2 weeks or more?

- Difficulty sleeping
- Appetite changes that result in unwanted weight changes
- Struggling to get out of bed in the morning because of mood
- Difficulty concentrating
- Loss of interest in things you usually find enjoyable
- Unable to perform usual daily functions and responsibilities
- Thoughts of death or self-harm



### Seek professional help:

- Psychotherapy (talk therapy)—virtual or in person; individual, group, or family
- Medications
- Brain stimulation therapies

For help finding treatment, visit [www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp](http://www.nimh.nih.gov/findhelp).

If you are in crisis, call the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline at 1-800-273-TALK (8255), or text the Crisis Text Line (text HELLO to 741741).



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serious situations, try some of the self-care activities listed in this [handout](#).

## National Fentanyl Awareness Day - May 10th

May 10th is recognized as the first ever National Fentanyl Awareness, a day of action to raise public awareness about an urgent problem: people dying at alarming rates due to illegally made fentanyl (FEN-ta-nyl), a dangerous synthetic opioid.

Founded by parents who have lost loved ones to this crisis, National Fentanyl Awareness Day is supported by a coalition of experts, companies and partners who are coming together today to amplify this critical issue. The safety and wellbeing of our community is always of utmost importance, which is why **HC DrugFree** has joined this coalition to help spread the word. We encourage you to take action with us today to help this important cause.

## WHAT IS FENTANYL?

Fentanyl is a potent synthetic opioid.

### Potent

Up 50x stronger than heroin and 100x stronger than morphine. A few grains of sand worth can be lethal.

### Synthetic

Not plant-based. Made in a lab.

### Opioid

Pain reliever like oxycodone, morphine and heroin.

**Know the Facts** - Below are six key facts about the national fentanyl crisis:

- Fentanyl is involved in more deaths of Americans under 50 than any other cause of death, including heart disease, cancer, and all other accidents.
- Practically all of the pills seized by law enforcement are fake, and 40% contain a potentially lethal amount of fentanyl.
- Fentanyl is involved in more American youth drug deaths than heroin, meth, cocaine, benzos and Rx drugs COMBINED.
- Fake pills have been found in all 50 states. Assume any prescription med you see online is fake, including Oxy, Percocet, and Xanax.



- Fentanyl is cheap, potent and profitable, so dealers use it to make fake pills. It can also be found in party drugs like cocaine and MDMA.
- Illegally made fentanyl is the primary driver of the recent increase in all U.S. overdose deaths. Fentanyl involved deaths are fastest growing among 14-23 year olds.

## Help Spread the Word

We encourage you to talk about this issue with your friends and family. More information and resources can be found at [fentanylawarenessday.org](https://fentanylawarenessday.org).

## National Women's Health Week (May 8-14)

In the past, boys and young men were more likely to drink than girls and young women, but recent data shows this is no longer the case. Biological differences in females and males also mean that underage drinking can have more negative health consequences for young women than young men, including increased risk of memory problems and greater risk for long-term health consequences.

Click [here](#) or on the picture for a downloadable copy to read more.



## Playbook for Preventing Opioid Misuse Among Student-Athletes

In their eagerness to get back in the game, student-athletes are more vulnerable to prescription opioid misuse. Here are some tips for parents and coaches to help prevent student-athletes from misusing prescription painkillers:

- Encourage the student-athlete to rest and heal
- Know the signs of opioid misuse
- Monitor the use of opioid medications
- Properly dispose of unused opioid medications
- Consider alternative pain therapies

For more information and additional resources, [read the playbook](#).



## Get Friends Connected to HC DrugFree

Like these newsletters? Invite a friend to [subscribe to our newsletter](#). You can also view previous newsletters in the [Newsletter Archive](#) on our website.

## Did You Do It?



Did you donate? We depend upon the generosity of individuals, organizations, and businesses to support our free services. Please make a gift of any size today.

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## Additional Resources

**Mental Health Crisis? Thoughts of Suicide? Problems with Drugs or Alcohol?** Contact MD's HELPLINE. Call 211, then press 1. Text your zip code to TXT-211 (898-211). Visit [211md.org](https://211md.org) to chat or find additional resources for housing/shelter, utility assistance, food, domestic violence, legal services, and more.



**Reverse Opioid Overdose:** [Click here](#) to contact the Howard County Health Department to receive free training and Narcan kit.

**Free Behavioral Health Resources:** The Howard County Health Department will be at the Mall in Columbia with helpful behavioral health resources and services to promote mental health, resilience and wellbeing. This initiative takes place now through June 23, 2022 from 10:00am - 6:00pm. [Learn more](#) and share!

For more information, contact

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