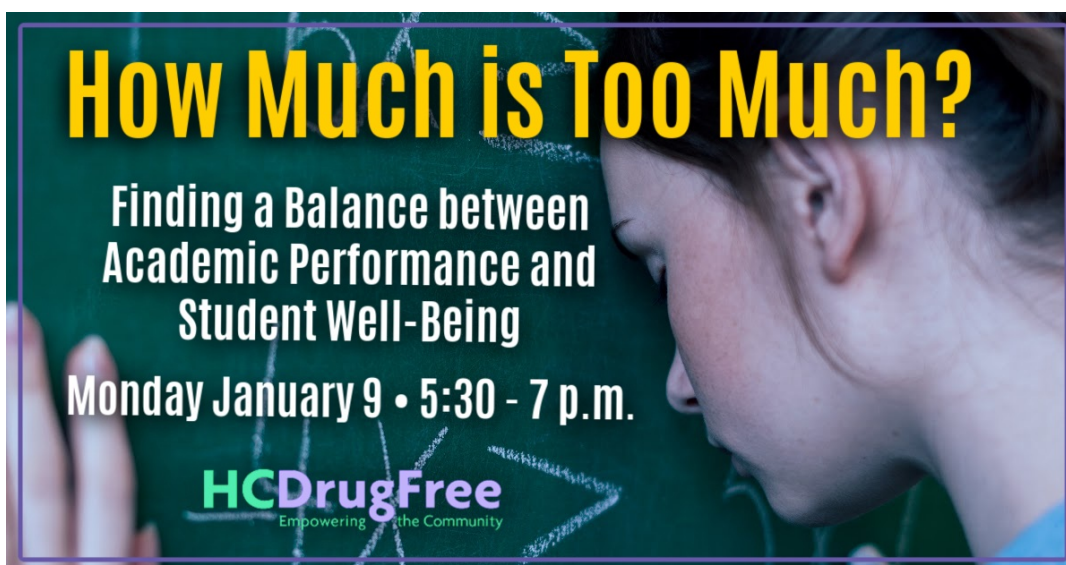


HC DrugFree: Keeping Howard County *in the KNOW!* ...knowledge is power, so just say KNOW

The highest form of knowledge is empathy,
for it requires us to suspend our egos
and live in another's world.
Bill Bullard

Virtual Town Hall - Register Today!



Some stress can be motivating, but too much can be debilitating. So how do we help students learn how to effectively cope with academic pressure so they can be successful in all areas of their lives and prevent them from resorting to unhealthy coping strategies?

Join us on Monday, January 9 from 5:30 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. as HC DrugFree and the Howard County PTSA Collaborative Parent Education Group host our next Virtual Town Hall, “How Much is Too Much? Finding the Balance between Academic Performance and Student Well-Being.” Students in grades 8-12, parents, and other significant adults in students’ lives will learn skills and strategies to help students better cope with academic pressure and stress. There will be a Q&A at the end of the presentation.

Advanced registration is required to receive the meeting link:

<https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/TownHallRegJan2023>

Community service hours are available for members of the Teen Advisory Council (TAC). [Learn more](#) about the virtual town hall or TAC.

[Download Printable Flier](#)

HC DrugFree is Hiring!



Looking for part-time work that has a positive impact on our community? Want a job you feel good about doing? As a small team, we can be creative in meeting staffing needs. As such, we have **immediate** openings for two positions.

Pay and hours for both positions will be determined based on experience and qualifications and are negotiable. Currently, positions are mostly remote but this is subject to change. Potential for advancement. HC DrugFree is grant funded.

To apply for either or both positions, please upload a resume and cover letter at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/HCDFEmploymentApp>

[Download Printable Job Description](#)
[Learn more](#)

Your Donations Make a Difference



'Tis the Season for end-of-year donations! HC DrugFree operates solely on grants and donations from people like you! Your generosity helps us continue

to offer the programs, resources, and events that help make Howard County a safer, wiser, and more connected community. Make a difference with your dollars: [Make your tax-deductible donation today!](#)

[Donate](#)



In the KNOW... about Prescription Medication Misuse



In the KNOW...

Maria Shriver and her daughter, Christina Schwarzenegger, talk about their new **Netflix documentary "Take Your Pills: Xanax."** The documentary features interviews with mental health experts and people who currently use or have used the drug while exploring the controversy surrounding the popular anxiety medication. [Learn more](#)

Drive Safely This Holiday Season



The holidays are a time to spread cheer, not tragedy. Impaired driving can lead to crashes, injuries and even death. Before you go out, make a plan to get home safely, and designate a sober driver. Driving one time under the influence is one time too many. #BeTheDriver

5 Facts about Health That Are Often Misunderstood

Produced by the Center on the Developing Child at Harvard University, this brief explains how what happens during the prenatal period and the first few years of life can have substantial effects on both short- and long-term outcomes in learning, behavior, and physical and mental health. The environments we create and the experiences we provide for young children and their families affect the developing brain and different physiological systems. Learn five other facts about health that are frequently misunderstood.

[Download Printable PDF](#)

5
Facts About Health That Are Often Misunderstood

Did you know that interactions among **genes, experiences, age, and environments** influence every biological system in the body, with especially powerful effects in the earliest years? When we think about the foundation of early childhood development, we often focus on brain architecture. However, the environments we create and the experiences we provide for young children and their families affect not just the developing brain, but also many other physiological systems. Systems relating to brain development, heart and lung function, digestion, energy production, fighting infection, and physical growth are all interconnected and influence each other's development and function. Below, learn five other facts about health that are frequently misunderstood.

- 1** The experiences we have early in life are at least as important for the biological foundations of physical and mental health as the lifestyle choices we make as adults.

Without dismissing the influence of adult lifestyle (including nutrition, exercise, and sleep) on physical health, early adversity can increase the risk for many of the most common chronic diseases that appear later in life. Critical or sensitive periods provide unmatched opportunities for both positive and negative influences on developing biological systems. Increasing evidence is pointing to the importance of the prenatal period and first few years after birth for the development of core immune functions, metabolic regulation, and other physiological systems that can affect long-term well-being.
- 2** Poor health outcomes are not inevitable after experiencing adversity early in life, but they are more likely if we do not adequately support children and families experiencing persistent hardships or challenges.

What happens early—prenatally and in the first couple of years—makes us more likely or less likely to develop future physical and mental health problems. While it's always better to have health-promoting experiences as early as possible, it is never too late to make things better. There are many opportunities to build resilience—beginning in early childhood and continuing throughout life—by providing supportive relationships in predictable environments, reducing sources of significant stress, and building a toolkit of adaptive skills. The more we build up protection and support for the environment in which children grow up, the smaller the likelihood of future health problems.

Center on the Developing Child HARVARD UNIVERSITY

Maryland Department of Health: Stigma Realized Video



People with substance use-related disorders face prejudice and discrimination due to a lack of understanding about the disease. Unfortunately, stigma – like prejudice and discrimination – can perpetuate the problem. Watch this video to learn more about **Hillu's journey in recovery**, his experiences, and his success despite the stigma he faced. [Watch now](#)

10 Questions Teens Ask about Drugs and Health

NIDA's goal is to help people get accurate, science-based information about drugs and health. To help start a conversation about drugs and health, they have compiled teens' 10 most frequently asked questions from more than 118,000 queries received from young people. [Read more](#)

How to Stay Sober and Sane During the Holidays When You Have a Perfectly Imperfect Family



The holiday season can be an opportunity for joy, connection, and a season of peace. But, for people in recovery, the holidays often come with some extra challenges—stress, expectations, alcohol everywhere, and pose serious challenges to sobriety and sanity. Here are 10 tips and strategies that will prepare you for the holidays, help you avoid relapse, and protect you from any uncomfortable situations. [Read more](#)

Student Athletes At-Risk for Stimulant Misuse

Research at the University of Michigan found that high school seniors who played contact and noncontact sports in high school were more likely to misuse prescription stimulants over the next ten years. [Read more.](#)

DON'T GET BENCHED FOR LIFE.



Visit [HCDrugFree.org](https://www.HCDrugFree.org) for more information.

HCDrugFree
Empowering the Community



Safe Medication Storage While Traveling



Traveling for the holidays? When you arrive at your destination, take stock of all your medications and make sure they are stored in a safe place and not easily accessible by others.

Teen Advisory Council

Stand out from the crowd.



All Howard County students in **grades 8 through 12** are invited to join the HC DrugFree Teen Advisory Council (TAC.) Community service hours are available and TAC members receive information about additional volunteer opportunities throughout the year.

The next TAC meeting is Monday, January 9, 2023 from 5:30 p.m. - 7 p.m. during our virtual town hall. [Register here](#)

To become a member of TAC or to learn more about it, please visit the [TAC page of our website](#).

If you have additional questions please e-mail admin@hcdrugfree.org

Follow and Like Us on Social Media

Join our social media community for more content and easy ways to share important and potentially life-saving information with your friends and network.

Remember: **Knowledge is Power** and together we can help keep our community informed, safe, and **IN THE KNOW!**



Additional Resources



Thoughts of Suicide?

Mental Health Crisis?

Substance Use Crisis?

**Call or Text
988**



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

For more information, contact

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