

# HC DrugFree

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



## Welcome May

May you be happy.  
May you be well.  
May you be safe.  
May your life be filled with joy.



## Dates to Remember

**May 1-31: Mental Health Awareness Month**  
**May 7: [Children's Mental Health Awareness Day](#)**  
**May 7: [National Fentanyl Awareness Day](#)**  
**May 12-18: [National Prevention Week](#)**  
**May 15 - 21: Mental Health Week**  
**May 31: [World No Tobacco Day](#)**

## Senior Week Video

For many years, HC DrugFree has provided an annual Senior Week: Staying Safe in Ocean City program. By popular demand, we brought back this learning experience for graduating high school seniors planning to attend Beach Week and their parents/guardians. However, we feel the water safety tips and the legal updates are appropriate for anyone visiting Ocean City, MD.

In case you missed the live event held on March 20, below is a recording.



### [Watch Video](#)

Thank you to the Ocean City Police Department's retired Cpl. Howard Caplan and Ocean City Beach Patrol's Luke Ramina and Connor Lawrence for once again participating in our annual event to educate HoCo youth and adults and for keeping all of us safe when we are visiting Ocean City.

We would also like to encourage all graduating high school seniors to contact the Howard County Health Department to attend a free Narcan training and receive free Narcan kits to be prepared in case of an opioid overdose at the beach, in our community, or anytime/anywhere. [Learn more](#)



## HoCo Students: Register Now for May 13 Meeting

HC DrugFree's invites **all Howard County students in grades 8-12** to attend our **Monday, May 13 Teen Advisory Council (TAC) Meeting** from 5:30 to 7:00 p.m. on Zoom.

[All students must register to receive the May meeting Zoom link.](#)

Our special guests will be from the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) as we recap our medication and sharps collection event held on the DEA's National Drug Take Back Day, the One Pill Can Kill campaign, and much more!



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 about Joining TAC](#)

## May 7: National Fentanyl Awareness Day

Tuesday, May 7 is the third National Fentanyl Awareness Day.

Fentanyl is involved in more deaths of Americans under 50 than any other cause, including heart disease, cancer, homicide, and suicide. Last year, more than 70,000 Americans fatally overdosed on illegally made fentanyl.

Fentanyl is found in fake pills and many street drugs, but users are often unaware that their drugs contain the potent opioid. This is an urgent public health crisis that puts all of us, and our loved ones, at risk. We all must play a role in preventing further tragedies. Please spread the word to save a life.

Do you know where your pill or powder came from? Unless you got it from a pharmacy, it could contain a lethal dose of fentanyl, America's #1 drug threat. Protect yourself and your friends by learning the facts and spreading the word on National Fentanyl Awareness Day.

[Download/print the Fentanyl Fact Sheet](#)  
[Learn more about Fentanyl Awareness Day](#)



## Mental Health Awareness Month



May is Mental Health Awareness Month. Since its inception in 1949, Mental Health Awareness Month has been a cornerstone of addressing the challenges faced by millions of Americans living with mental health conditions.

This year, the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) is celebrating Mental Health Awareness Month with the Take the Moment campaign. This campaign is designed to foster open communication, cultivating empathy and understanding, as well as share resources with individuals and families on their journey toward mental wellness. This campaign also champions the importance of destigmatizing mental health by normalizing the practice of taking moments to prioritize mental health care without guilt or shame.

NAMI offers a variety of programs where people and communities can find help, hope, and healing. We encourage you to share or sign up for these programs if you or someone you know needs mental health support. [Learn more about NAMI's signature programs](#) or [Contact NAMI Howard County](#)

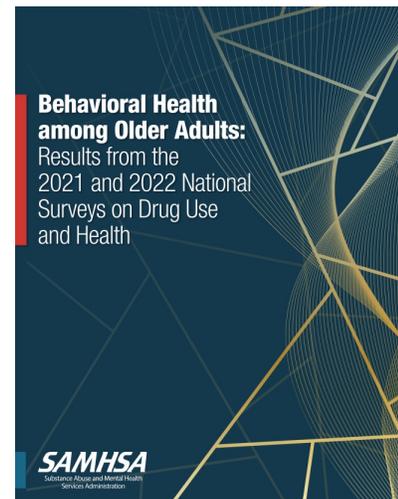
## New Data: Older Adult Behavioral Health

As the baby boom cohort continues to age, the number of older adults in the United States continues to grow, now making up over 20 percent of the general population. Substance use and mental health are major public health concerns among older adults, despite tremendous emotional resiliency in this population.

As adults age, they often experience heightened sensitivity to substances, which can result in injury, complicate existing medical conditions, or adversely interact with medications. Additionally, social isolation, bereavement, or health problems associated with aging can contribute to the development of mental disorders.

Stigma surrounding mental illness and substance use can create a barrier for older adults to seek treatment for mental or substance use disorders. Older adults also can have difficulty accessing behavioral health treatment because of cost, transportation, and challenges in navigating the healthcare system. Consequently, older adults who might benefit from such treatment often do not receive appropriate diagnosis and care.

Learn more by reading SAMHSA's newly released infographic report highlighting substance use and mental health indicators among older adults aged 60 or older in the United States: [Behavioral Health among Older Adults: Results from the 2021 and 2022 National Surveys on Drug Use and Health](#)



## Drive-Thru Medication & Sharps Collection Slideshow

In case you missed it: [the](#)

### [commemorative slideshow](#)

of our April 27 Medication & Sharps collection is available on our website for your viewing pleasure.

A huge thank you to students Daniel Cho and Conan Chung and parent Sunhee Lim for taking photos and conducting video interviews during the event.

Again, thank you to the many, many helping hands who make this wonderful community event possible!



[View Slideshow](#)

## Help Us Continue Our Important Work

Please consider becoming a [Friend of HC DrugFree](#) Thank you for your continued support of the important work our team does!

[Donate Now](#)

or mail your **donation** to HC DrugFree's office:

HC DrugFree  
5305 Village Center Drive, Suite 206  
Wilde Lake Village Center  
Columbia, Maryland 21044

## Resources

**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://www.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. Press 3 for LGBTQIA+ support.



### [Additional Resources](#)

For more information, contact

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