

Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition
Healthy Minds and Suicide Prevention Coalition (HMSPC)
September 8, 2025
11:00 AM – 12:00 PM
Howard County Health Department
Heroes A Conference Room
Virtual via Zoom
Minutes

Co-Chair Present:

Jessica Fisher, Howard County Health Department

Members Present:


Ken Abrams, Tactical 52, LLC
Sarah Aleem, Grassroots Crisis Intervention
Trudy Conley, MD Dept of Health Maryland's Commitment to Veterans
Alyssa Cuyun, Intern, Family Options Program
Ashley Deare, MDH BHA Office of Integrated Wellness and Prevention Suicide Prevention Office
Enjolie Gomez, MDH BHA Office of Integrated Wellness and Prevention Suicide Prevention Office
Natalie Hall, Howard County Health Department
Kala Jenkins, BBH Family Support Services Unit – BHN
Genny LaPorte, Howard County Police Department and Grassroots
Sonya Lloyd, BBH Grassroots Grant Monitor
Chris Miller, John Hopkins Howard County Medical Center (JHHCMC)
Donna Phillips, Everstand Behavioral Health
Antonio Rivera, On Our Own of Howard County (OOOHC)
Rosemarie Jimenez-Rosales, Howard County Health Department
Lauren Soummers, Family Options Program
Pastor Hyiwot Teshome, St. John United Methodist Church
Kristen Wheeler, Medpsych Health Services
Eileen Zeller, Moms Demand Action Howard County

Staff Present:


Stephanie Foster, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition
Ashton Jordan, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition
Maribet Rivera-Brute, HC Local Health Improvement Coalition

Topic/Agenda	Discussion	Action/Follow-up
<p>Welcome &, July 10th Meeting Re-Cap, and Announcements</p>	<p>Ms. Stephanie Foster, Community Engagement Coordinator, Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition (HCLHIC), called the meeting to order at 11:01 am and asked attendance to introduce themselves.</p> <p>Ms. Foster summarized the July 10, 2025 HMSPC meeting:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Announcing that Barbara Allen had been appointed as the second co-chair for the Healthy Minds and Suicide Prevention Coalition (HMSPC). • Ms. Jessica Fisher (co-chair), BBH Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Fisher informed coalition members about the upcoming removal of Option 3 from the 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline, which previously served the LGBTQ+ community. She emphasized the importance of identifying and promoting alternative resources to support LGBTQ+ individuals in crisis. • Ms. Emily Paterson, Public Education and Communications Manager at the Maryland Poison Center, delivered a presentation highlighting the Center's services. She highlighted the availability of their 24/7 phone line, which serves both the public and healthcare professionals. 	<p>Members are urged to review the past minutes available here.</p> <p>October Full LHIC Meeting: Click here to register for the October 16th Full LHIC Meeting. 9:00 AM – 11:00 AM.</p> <p>Please take a moment to update your contact information in our HMSPC Workgroup member spreadsheet. You can do so by clicking here.</p> <p>If you wish to be removed from the HMSPC Workgroup listserv, please contact Stephanie Foster at kfoster@howardcountymd.gov.</p>
<p>Announcements</p>	<p>Let's Walk, Roll, Ride, MOVE! – Howard County Walktober 2025</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mr. Ashton Jordan (AJ) gave an overview about 2025 County Walktober Initiative which aims to promote physical activity through the month of October. • Over 75 organizations have registered for the event and Mr. Jordan encouraged attendees to share related events for the calendar. <p>Sustaining Self in Uncertain Times — <i>Living with Uncertainty: A Community Conversation</i></p>	<p>To register your group for the 2025 Howard County Walktober initiative:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Complete the HoCo Walktober 2025 Interest Form. • Add the Howard County Walktober 2025 logo to your event's promotional materials. • Share the attached Walktober flyers with your communities, offices, and networks. https://www.howardcountymd.gov/walktober • Let's walk, roll, ride, MOVE! Get active in Howard County during Walktober 2025: https://www.howardcountymd.gov/walktober. • Email your promotional materials to Ashton Jordan at ajordan@howardcountymd.gov.

- Our community is experiencing rapid change. Join a webinar exploring uncertainty through a grief-and-trauma lens with practical skills for self- and community-care.






-  Tuesday, September 10 | 9:00 AM —

 Register [here](#)




-  Thursday, September 12 | 1:00 PM —

 Register [here](#)

ASIST (Applied Suicide Intervention Skills Training)


-  Thursday–Friday, September 18–19 | 9:00 AM–5:00 PM
-  Grassroots Administrative Offices, 6700 Freetown Rd, Columbia, MD 21044
-  \$25 (Howard County residents/workers) | \$100 others — includes materials & lunch
-  Register by September 10:  <https://bit.ly/ASISTSept25>

Howard County Moms Demand Action Meeting – Join for a discussion with members from the Howard County Police Department on gun violence and public safety in our community.

-  Thursday, Sept 18, 2025
-  Start 6:30 PM
-  Howard County Library - Miller Branch, 9421 Frederick Rd, Ellicott City, MD

 Register [here](#)

Walk With Us to Prevent Suicide — The American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Out of the Darkness (Howard County Walk)

-  Saturday, September 27, 2025

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ⌚ Check-in 9:00 AM ⌚ Start 10:00 AM • 📍 Azlon Plaza, 6100 Merriweather Dr, Columbia, MD • 🔗 Register here <p>Howard County Medical Center Mental Health First Aid Course</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learn to assist an adult who may be experiencing a mental health or substance use challenge. Includes a self-paced online course to be completed before the instructor-led class. The online course will be the foundation for the skills practiced in class. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 📅 November 7, 2025 ○ ⌚ Start 8:30 AM - 3:30 PM ○ 📍 Virtual via Zoom, FREE ○ 🔗 Register here 	
FY25 Cannabis Grant Presentation – Natalie Hall	<p>Ms. Hall discussed the public health impacts of cannabis use, emphasizing:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cannabis Use Disorder (CUD): Affects roughly 3 in 10 users, with heightened risk for individuals under 18. • Product Risks: Increased cannabis potency and availability of non-regulated products pose significant health risks to youth. • State Initiatives: Introduction of the <i>Maryland Cannabis Public Health Fund</i> to address statewide public health concerns. • Survey Findings: Emotional and physical consequences are the most commonly reported negative effects. Clear survey terminology is needed to accurately measure public understanding. • Evidence-Based Programs: Resources such as the Stanford Research and Education to Empower Adolescents and Young Adults to Choose Health (REACH) toolkit and Life Skills Training were highlighted for community education. 	

- Outreach & Intervention:
 - Use of non-stigmatizing language.
 - Encouragement of parental involvement and youth-led campaigns.
- Trends & Data:
 - 15.7% of high school students reported using vapor products containing cannabis.
 - Emergency room visits related to cannabis nearly doubled from 2022 to 2023 among individuals aged 10–29, with the highest rates among ages 10–19.
- Howard County Plan: Partner with community organizations and promote state campaigns such as Be Cannabis Smart to educate youth, parents, and community partners. Youth engagement is a priority to ensure messages resonate.
- Vaping Concerns: Explained “Nixic,” a term describing nicotine overdose symptoms, and noted parents’ limited awareness of emerging substance-use trends.

Mr. Antonio Rivera, Peer Support Specialist, On Our Own of Howard County, expressed frustration over the removal of Bureau of Behavioral Health (BBH) Peer Support Specialists from Howard County Public School System (HCPSS) locations. Highlighted the difficulty students face rebuilding trust when services shift to alternative sites such as Howard County Library branches. Jessica Fisher (Suicide Prevention Coordinator, Bureau of Behavioral Health) explained that HCPSS’s new peer-program funding contributed to the decision.

	Additionally, there was discussion about the presence of peer support in HCPSS middle schools, indicating that while some support was available, it was not as structured as in HCPSS high schools.	
American Foundation for Suicide Prevention (AFSP) Out of the Darkness Howard County Walk and 9-8-8 Day Discussion – Jessica Fisher	<p>Jessica provided details about the Out of the Darkness Walk With Us (Howard County) event scheduled on September 27th and highlighted the significance of 9-8-8 Day on September 8th.</p> <p>She urged participants to promote 988 Services, which offers support for mental health challenges. Additionally, she invited attendees to join the walking event as a coalition and mentioned that no fundraising is required to participate.</p>	
Next Steps & Wrap-up	Ms. Foster announced the next HMSPC Workgroup meeting will be held on November 13, 11 am to 12 pm via Zoom and concluded by thanking everyone for their attendance and wishing them well. The meeting was adjourned at 11:58 am.	

Respectfully submitted by
Ms. Stephanie Foster
Community Engagement Coordinator
Howard County Local Health Improvement Coalition



To access a list of community events posted on the LHIC Calendar, scan the QR Code above!