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August 2025 Volume 5 Issue 4

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FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



**School is in session!  
Welcome back!**

Friend of the council, John Bringuel, Prevention / Intervention Program Manager for The Council on Alcohol and Drugs, reminded us in a recent

email, **"As the new school year commences, the likelihood of drug misuse tends to rise due to the challenges associated with transitions.** This period, while often filled with excitement, can also **bring significant stress for children, parents, and school staff alike, as they navigate both new and familiar emotions."**

**See me grow!**

**Cooper Diane Kayden is now 6 weeks old!**

**Mom and I are doing fine, although I am not letting her get much sleep!**



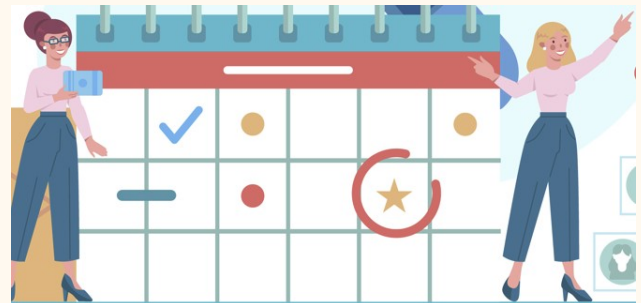
The beginning of a new school year is a great time to review strategies for handling your emotions. **Emotional intelligence (EI)** is the capacity to recognize, understand, and manage your own emotions, as well as recognize, understand, and influence the feelings of others. We can learn this skill and teach it to others.

Key concepts of EI: The ability to name emotions, emotional regulation, maintaining a positive attitude, and empathy. Students who have high EI by managing their emotions can reduce stress, improve overall mental health, and make better decisions.

Developing EI daily by accessing and paying attention to your emotions, practicing your coping strategies (taking a pause, deep breaths, stepping away), asking for feedback about how your emotions affect others, and learn from experiences: analyzing past situations to identify areas for improvement.

Welcome back to School and let's make it fun and drug-free!

**MARK YOUR CALENDAR!  
FCDAC is on the Road!**



**Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on  
Wednesday, September 3  
8 a.m.**

**Live Life Counseling  
1435 Haw Creek Circle, Suite 403,  
Cumming GA 30041**

## Council Meeting Highlights

Alycea Vega, FCDAC Project Coordinator, opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting by welcoming everyone. Attendees introduced themselves and made announcements on any upcoming events. Program Director Rachel Kayden is on maternity leave, but joined by zoom.

### Announcements:

- Kayla Bergeron, The Connection, announced that the National Recovery Month Celebration, a

free event, will be held on September 7 at Fowler Park. See the Flyer below. This is a jointly sponsored event by The Connection, GA Council for Recovery, and others. More Sponsorship opportunities are available; please take a look at the flyer below.

This month's guest speaker was **Lindsey Simpson**, Prevention Facilitator for Forsyth County Schools and in the FCDAC School Sector. Lindsey is also an FCDAC founding member and serves on our board. Lindsey attended **Rx and Illicit Drug Summit, April 6-9 in Nashville, TN**, and the **CADCA Mid-year Training Institute July 20-24 also in Nashville**.



**Lindsey Simpson**, Prevention Facilitator for Forsyth County Schools.



Good Morning, everyone! **The RX Summit** is an awesome event, and I am so grateful I attended this year! The RX Summit is a high-level conference featuring leaders from the NIH and numerous prominent speakers, including political figures who hold key positions, such as senators and state representatives, who were in attendance to present. What a great experience and time to network, find other resources, and hear the latest and greatest information. The sessions have research behind them, along with case studies to provide information. There were over **75 different sessions** offered with different tracks, a clinical track, a prevention track, a recovery track, and two others. It was a 4-day conference with over 3,000 attendees, and all 50 states were represented.

**I am happy to share my slides with you.**

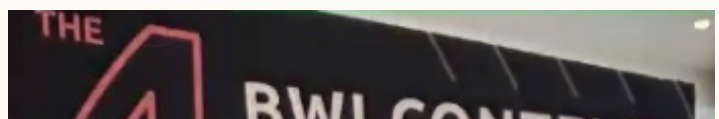
In the US, there's a very rapid shift in the drug landscape. I attended another conference in July, and they talked about emerging drug trends too. There are some shifting policies, such as legalization. So that's always a big topic at substance use conferences. **Marijuana is being legalized in more and more states**, and our young people say, "It's legal. I can use it". There's been a lot of discussion about how we can equip our young people with the knowledge they need. As Kayla said earlier, they were sponsoring a workshop about the brain science of addiction that upholds this prevention work.



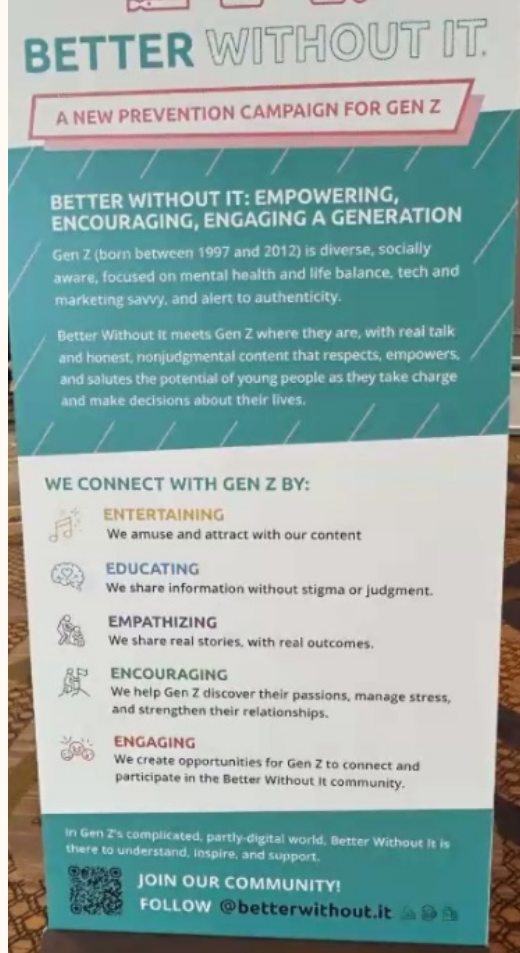
And that's what we have to share with parents. I mean, even with young parents, we have got to educate them earlier and earlier. In the past 20 years, there have been about a thousand new psychoactive substances identified.



**Pink cocaine** is an illicitly manufactured mixture of drugs dyed pink with food coloring. Also known as **2C, tusi, or tucibi**, it emerged as a popular party drug. There's no cocaine in it. It's a drug concoction mixing Ketamine (dissociative anesthetic), MDMA (ecstasy) (stimulant/hallucinogen), and Caffeine (stimulant). The other drug is **Tianeptine**, which is often called "**gas station heroin**." The use of **fake Xanax** was the third drug highlighted at the session.

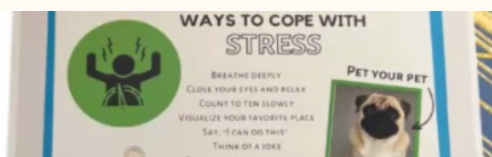


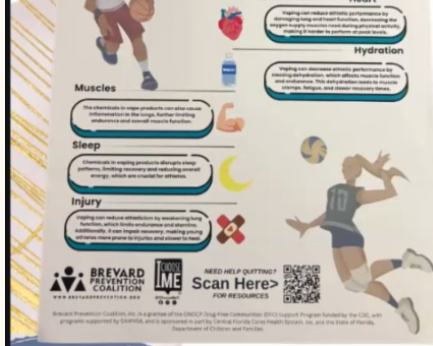




I enjoy looking at new resources. One in particular was called the **"Better Without It" campaign**. It is a campaign that is specifically focused on Gen Z because the Gen Z population needs to hear more than just saying no. The Gen Z population is very focused on their mental health and is also very diverse. They're socially aware, individualistic, and they want to have a life balance. I collected their handouts and have some for you to review. These are items that have already been created and can be utilized by our council in our community.

As you can see, their campaign is focused on four pillars -body, mind, relationships, and their future. So, instead of telling our kids to say no or not do something, it focuses on the effects on their body, the impact on their relationships, the effects on their mind, and the future implications. I think it would be awesome to use some of these ideas and tweak the handouts for our purposes.





Something I would like to see is to get this information out to our parents. I know we host the drug summits, but we are missing many parents who need our information. This campaign has handouts that target athletes and the effects of drugs on their performance. That's big here in our community. And then they had a handout about ways to cope with stress. And these are all simple things, but easy enough that we could pull together and help distribute as a coalition.



Another session I attended was about the **Brain Science of Addiction**, presented by Dr. Kristen Gilliland, Warren Center for Neuroscience Drug Discovery at Vanderbilt University. She is actually a mom who lost her son. She shared her story, which allowed her to become more passionate about this work. Dr. Gilliland developed a program that is being used in some schools. It is a community outreach and advocacy program. They teach young people about brain development, neuroplasticity, and the pruning of the brain, and then they reframe unhealthy self-narratives into healthy ones. They developed a role-playing game, which we played. Again lots of resources.

Finally, the big surprise of the conference was the final speaker, **Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., Secretary of Health and Human Services**. I had not heard Robert F. Kennedy Jr.'s story, in which he shared how his addiction began at 15, and his drug of choice was heroin. He went through the 12 steps, and he has attended a meeting every single day since he's been

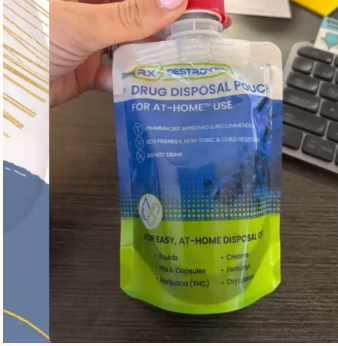
in recovery. His talk is worth hearing. One point he made was about making sure you're sitting down and having dinner with your family. And that's truly where it starts, having that conversation with your kids.

You have all seen the Detera Pouches. Well, the newest Rx Disposal system is called **Rx Destroyer**. These are non-toxic, and **what is different is that they can be used multiple times**. I obtained samples and shared some with our school nurses. The Council may want to look into these.



I do want to mention one **DEA agent, Robert Murphy**, who spoke at a session before the **HHS Secretary**. Interestingly, he said similar things about parents still having the most influence on their kids





parents still having the most influence on their kids, having short conversations frequently, and eating dinner together. These things make the greatest impact.

From Cindy Mills, In addition to alcohol drinks, have you seen the ones with THC in them? They're becoming more and more popular, being sold in convenience stores. I spoke with Sheriff Ron Freeman about the issue and suggested that we

update our ordinance to provide them with more enforcement opportunities. It would also be beneficial if Ron heard from some citizens.

At the CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalition of America) Mid-Year Training Institute, I learned about:

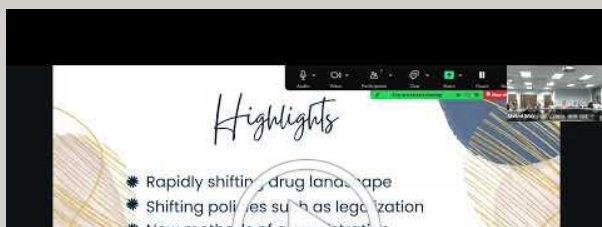
- AI and chatbots are becoming the go-to options for young people before real people. We continue to emphasize relationships.
- He spoke about a **potentiator drug**, which is a substance that **increases the effects of another drug when taken together**. It is called **P H E N I B U T**, and it's a powerful synthetic depressant. It is **not FDA-approved**. We do not know if Narcan can reverse the effects of it, and it rarely shows up on drug tests—another new trend to be aware of.
- A product called Cannabier is a CBD-infused drink. They are infused with between 5 and 10 milligrams and come in various forms, including Selzers, free drinks, sodas, sparkling waters, shots, and juices. One product was called cherry cream. This has Delta 9 in it, and it had two scoops of ice cream, so it's appealing to a young person.
- They're all over Amazon. Anyone can go on, type in their birthday, and get it shipped right to their door. It comes in powder or liquid form.
- Herbal places that are popping up, and they're seeing **shrooms** as a drug trend. You're going to see them in your schools.
- Shroom coffee shops that have opened up. They also have vapes and teas.
- Environmental scans at convenience stores. Use caution and be inconspicuous to get honest information.
- Enhance our CHAPS program, which involves choosing healthy activities and methods promoting safety. I know the sheriff's department is working on that.
- We are increasing the number of substance use coaches in our schools. We got one new addition.
- Enhance the data we're collecting to demonstrate our effectiveness, which will hopefully lead to additional funding in the future.

Next year's Rx and Illicit Drug Summit will be in Nashville, April 6-9, 2026. Email Rachel if you want to go.

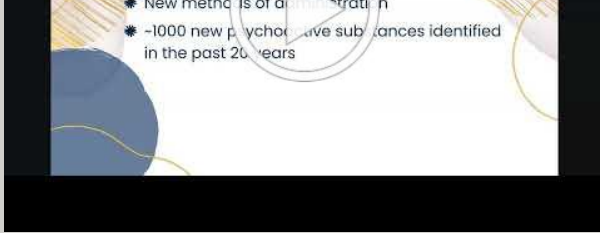
Meeting closed at 9:15.

Did you miss the meeting? You can watch it by clicking on the video, left.

Lindsey's presentation slides can be obtained by the link below.



[https://www.canva.com/design/DAGvOCE0vk4/3H3y8QTE42Bzq\\_lQG1ngIQ/view?utm\\_content=DAGvOCE0vk4&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link&utm\\_source=viewer](https://www.canva.com/design/DAGvOCE0vk4/3H3y8QTE42Bzq_lQG1ngIQ/view?utm_content=DAGvOCE0vk4&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link&utm_source=viewer)



Watch the address given by Robert F. Kennedy, Jr., US Secretary for Health and Human Services, at the 2025 RX and Illicit Drug Summit. He spoke candidly about his journey and recovery from heroin addiction and his passion to make America Healthy again.



## Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

### Parent Partners Corner

by Ashley Dickerson and Marti Roveda



#### Marti Roveda, CPS-P, and Parent Coach

Marti is a parent coach who helps parents of youth with substance use disorders find healing and strength through **Equanimity Parent Coaching**. She founded the ARCH Academy of Cumberland Heights (Nashville, TN) Parent Support Tribe, serves on the ARCH Academy Advisory Committee, and co-chairs FCDAC's Parent Partners Committee.

### Parent Night at Lambert High School

Marti reports, "The new school year is underway, and with it comes meaningful opportunities to connect with local families through school events. **Lambert High School has invited FCDAC to participate in several upcoming parent nights to distribute our "What to Expect When You Suspect" flyer and be a supportive presence for any parents with concerns about substance use.**"

#### Lambert High School Parent Night

- 8/26 (Tuesday) – Senior Information Night
- 9/9 (Tuesday) – Freshman Information Night
- 10/30 (Thursday) – Sophomore Information Night
- 11/11 (Tuesday) – Junior Information Night



#### Ashley Dickerson

Ashley currently holds the role of Revenue Accounting

Director at AT&T and is an active member of FCDAC. Her personal journey as a parent of a child who suffers from Substance Use Disorder covers a lot of pain, frustration, and isolation; but also a lot of hope and healing. Ashley openly shares her story of personal recovery with other

• 11/11 (Tuesday) - Junior Information Night

"This is a great opportunity to offer support, share resources, and bring our lived experience to parents who may be navigating early concerns. Next month, we will report how the evenings went," she said.

personal recovery with other parents to reduce the shame and stigma of the disease and help start the dialog among parents who may be struggling to find support for themselves. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*.

## Youth Outreach

### Youth Council

#### Sharmada Venkataramani CADCA Public Policy Summer Intern



"From June 16–June 27, I had the incredible opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. to Intern in Public Policy for CADCA (Community Anti-Drug Coalitions of America) — the largest substance use prevention organization in the nation," Sharmada excitedly told the *Strategizer*.

A public policy intern gains practical experience in the

development, implementation, and analysis of policies, often within a government or nonprofit

Sharmada



Venkataramani, Youth Sector Leader

Sharmada Venkataramani is FCDAC's 2024-25 Youth Sector Leader and a senior at South Forsyth High School.

Sharmada's podcast, "Elevate Awareness" debuted during the 2023-24 school year. Her interest in drug policy led her to involvement on the Youth Council.



development, implementation, and analysis of policies, often within a government or nonprofit organization. They support policy teams by conducting research, drafting documents, attending meetings, and engaging with stakeholders. This experience can be crucial for those seeking careers in government, non-profits, or related fields.

"Over the two weeks, I worked on advocacy efforts to ensure that funding for substance use prevention programs remains protected in the FY 2026 federal budget. I had the surreal experience of visiting Capitol Hill to meet with staff members of Senator Raphael Warnock, Senator Jon Ossoff, Representative Buddy Carter, Representative Rich McCormick, Representative John Moolenaar, Senate Majority Whip John Thune, and Senator Mike Rounds. I made talking point packets for the GA elected officials," she said.

"I'm deeply thankful to Chris Doaran and Su Thau at CADCA for their incredible mentorship throughout the internship, and to **Michael Mumper** for making this experience possible," said Sharmada.

"Most importantly, I want to express my heartfelt thanks to Rachel Kayden and everyone at the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, whose support and guidance over the past two years gave me my head start in substance use prevention advocacy and made this opportunity possible," Sharmada said.

"This experience has strengthened my passion for prevention advocacy, and I'm excited to bring what I've learned back to our community as we continue this important work together," she added.

## School News



**Emily Ennis, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor**



**Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.**



## School Started on Tuesday, August 5th, 2025-26 Begins!

**By Ainsley Miller**

The first days of school focus on placing students in the right classes, meeting the teachers, and introducing the semester's curriculum. As a result, I was not able to start meeting with students until Thursday, August 7th. However, during those days, I made sure to stand in the cafeteria and hallways to help any students who were lost, but also to show my face and potentially see some of my students from the previous year.

I printed permission slips early and was ready to hand them out. I reviewed my list of students from the previous year to identify those currently at North, and then compiled a list of students I can start meeting with. I met with 13 students and distributed permission slips to each of them. We have to wait two weeks before starting any of the group sessions due to the school schedule at the moment, but during that time, I will be meeting with students and talking with some of them about attending the group sessions for the 25-26 school year.

In these initial appointments with my previous students, I check in from summer break and discuss their experiences, focusing on whether they struggled to maintain consecutive sobriety or achieved it successfully. I also want to hear about all the fun activities they did!

For the students who struggled to maintain sobriety, we will navigate what led them to return to

For the students who struggled to maintain sobriety, we will navigate what led them to return to substance use, and identify their behavior patterns and habits to help each student gain self-awareness about their thoughts and feelings when the urge to use occurs.

We find that students' need for fun, often drives them toward experimentation with drugs, so showing them how to have fun in sober settings is critical. A key in working with my students is to give them tools and fun activities to identify what they enjoy doing, in addition to helping them identify negative patterns.

Additionally, we are setting up **health talks** for the beginning of the school year. I have also started to plan and set up **parent educational nights**. I am excited to start this year, grow the substance prevention program, and help out as much as possible!

## Members teaching Members

### A History of US Drug Epidemics

By Dana Bryan



The use of substances that alter behavior and the ability to think, suppress inhibitions, and cause the user to escape into unconsciousness has been available for centuries. Since we live in a country that declared its independence as recently as 1776, the recorded history of a drug epidemic in the U.S. begins in the 1800s with a morphine epidemic. The list of available psychoactive drugs has changed over the years, and a person's drug of choice depends on the availability, cost, and his desired reaction to the drug. Any addiction affects one's ability to think, behave, make choices, perform at school or work, and interact with others. Therefore, nicotine and alcohol products must be

included as part of the addiction epidemic, even though they are legal substances for those above a specific age.

**Morphine** was the prominent drug used in the 19th century, a time when fewer psychoactive drugs were available. In the **early 1900s, the use of cocaine was epidemic**; this led to the passage of the **Dangerous Drug Act in 1920**, which criminalized the use and sale of cocaine. In the 1930s and 1940s, heroin was the drug epidemic. **In the 1950s, amphetamines** were the drug of choice for a generation of users. In fact, amphetamines were legally prescribed by doctors as a way to curb one's appetite and lose weight. **The use of LSD was introduced in the 1960s**, and it was so widespread that President Nixon declared "War on Drugs." "America's #1 drug problem" was identified as "School kids using drugs."



**Dana Bryan**

Dana is a retired middle school teacher and member of FCDAC.

Through her personal loss of her daughter to drug experimentation, Dana devotes her time reaching out to youth through presentations about the real consequences and high risk of experimenting with addictive substances and how it affects them, their futures, and their families. She contributes her insights monthly to the *Strategizer*. Thanks, Dana!

President Nixon declared a "War on Drugs." As a result, LSD was classified as a Schedule I drug. In the 1970s, soldiers returned from the Vietnam War, and many were addicted to heroin. The drug epidemic in the 1980s was the use of crack cocaine. In the 1990s, ecstasy became the prominent drug. The opioid epidemic, which includes fentanyl, began in the early 2000s, and this category of drugs continues to affect lives and cause deaths today. In the past ten years, the use of **methamphetamines has increased** to the point of causing many deaths. In fact, deaths caused by methamphetamine have increased fivefold from 2012 to 2018, and there are presently more deaths caused by methamphetamines than from heroin and opioids, but not more than from fentanyl. This is because labs in Mexico are producing methamphetamine that is 95% pure and is also highly addictive. More recently, the legalization of marijuana in some states has resulted in the introduction of new products, such as new **drinks that contain cannabis, specifically THC**. These are easy to get because they are sold in convenience stores.

Another current concern is the increase in **vaping** among our youth. Some **vape pens are even laced with THC (known as dab pens) in a very potent strength (70% to 90% THC)** to ensure that the user will become addicted very quickly.

Unfortunately, new drugs will continue to be created in laboratories and dirty kitchens to be introduced to future generations. **The critical thing to remember is that throughout history, the danger of drug misuse has been present, but the skills involved in resisting drugs have been the same and will continue to be the same.** If a person considers using a drug, I have encouraged my students to **ask an important question: "What need am I trying to satisfy by taking this drug?"** Then, I remind them to pay attention to the answer to this question because it will reveal an area in their life in which some changes need to be made. Their answers will include the following:

- (1) "I want to be accepted by a certain group." I remind them that if they must do something that could bring harm or death to themselves, do they really want to choose these people as their friends?
- (2) "I am curious and want to know what it's like to try this drug." This is a common reason for trying a drug for the first time, but never a good reason to try something that could cause addiction, damage to one's mind, or death.
- (3) "I want to escape a stress or problem in my life." There are so many healthy ways to relieve stress, and whenever I have asked students to think of some of them, they have always come up with a wonderful list. It will include activities such as exercising, listening to music, playing a musical instrument, creating art, watching a funny show, calling a friend, or journaling. This is only part of the list, but it is a healthy beginning.
- (4) "I really don't want to take a drug, but it's hard for me to say that to one of my peers." I remind them that peer pressure will always be a part of their life. They will have peer pressure in their adult life, and the younger they start practicing standing up to their peers, the easier it will become. I tell my students that their parents understand peer pressure more than they might realize. Each generation feels pressured by peers to do different things, but the courage it requires, and the accompanying feelings of fear and insecurity, are the same for each generation. I always encouraged my students to ask their parents about their experiences in dealing with peer pressure when they were in middle school, high school, or college. This can lead to a valuable conversation between parent and child from which both can benefit.

It is the goal of the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council and the Forsyth School System to guide youth in making the decisions that will lead to a successful future in which they can use their talents and abilities to reach their unique potential and be the best version of themselves. This can only be achieved by avoiding drugs and other addictions.

**Our Partners in Prevention**

**More Great Community Events and Resources ...**





Join the CARES Team as they present  
the ROSC/CARES Workshop.

There are several Workshop options to choose from: two virtual workshops that will be hosted on the Zoom Platform, and two in-person workshops that will be hosted at Divas Who Win Freedom Center and Wecovery Peer Recovery Center. Please register for the one that fits your schedule and learning style.

During the ROSC CARES Workshops, the facilitators present an overview of Georgia's Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) and its role in uplifting those new to recovery. An understanding of a ROSC is foundational for the CARES Academy and the way that peer support services are provided in Georgia.

To Register, Click on the workshop that works  
best for you.

### Virtual

Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop Thursday,  
August 7, 2025 10am-2pm

Virtual ROSC CARES Workshop Tuesday

September 9, 2025 10am-2pm

### IN-Person

IN-Person ROSC CARES Workshop Thursday,  
August 14, 2025, 10 am-2pm at Divas Who Win  
Freedom Center

IN-Person ROSC CARES Workshop Tuesday,



Georgia Council  
for Recovery  
Freedom from Addiction

If you or someone you know is in or seeking recovery from substance use disorder, we are here for you.

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- You want to talk to someone confidentially
- You want to share your triumphs as well as your challenges in recovery
- You feel lonely, depressed, or have suffered a loss or setback
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September 23, 2025 1 pm-2pm at the  
Wecovery Peer Recovery Center.

Following the introduction to a ROSC, the facilitators will provide detailed information about the ways that CARES Academy applications are evaluated. Each person will be given examples of both writing and reference samples. This workshop ends with a mock group interview to assist those attending to understand this part of the CARES Application process.

All peers including those who use Medication-assisted treatment are welcome to attend the workshop!

Connect with us  
Dwayne Ellis, Cares Outreach and Training  
Coordinator at [dwayne@gc4recovery.org](mailto:dwayne@gc4recovery.org)  
or call 678-306-7035

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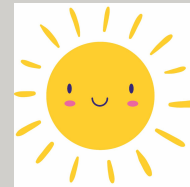


or

Contact John Bringuel, Prevention /  
Intervention Program Manager, The Council on  
Alcohol and Drugs

[Contact John Here](#)

John says," As a partner of the Georgia  
Prescription Drug Abuse Prevention Initiative  
Collaborative, you can go directly to the  
manufacturer and get discounted pricing. If you  
are interested in receiving DisposeRx In-  
Home Drug Disposal Packets, please email  
me, and I will set you up.



**LouAnn Altshuler, FCDAC**  
member, is a retired Licensed  
Professional Counselor. She  
specializes in addicted family  
systems and is a certified  
Interventionist. LouAnn has  
been facilitating the family

program at Blue Ridge Mountain Recovery Center  
for approximately 10 years.

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Communities

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**NEUROSCIENCE OF ADDICTION**  
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workshop exploring the neuroscience of addiction and  
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**SATURDAY**  
August 23, 2025  
10am – 12pm

For more information:  
jillian@theconnectionforsyth.org  
(470) 253-8564

**REGISTER NOW!**



Georgia Council  
for Recovery  
Freedom from Addiction

# National Recovery Month Celebration!

**Sponsorship Opportunities!**  
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Recovery, Hope, Healing. Recovery is For Everyone: Every Person,  
Every Family, Every Community







Recovery. Hope. Healing.



**THE CONNECTION**

Recovery is for **Everyone:**  
Every Person.  
Every Family.  
Every Community.

**September  
Sunday 7th**

**It's a Free Event!**

**Ice Cream  
Mini Horses  
Yard Games!**

**Come Celebrate Recovery!**  
Fowler Park (Large Pavilion)  
4110 Carolene Way  
Cumming, GA 30040  
Drop-in from 4pm-7pm

**Call (470)253-8564**  
for more info, sponsorship opportunities and to RSVP!

**Free Food, Speakers, Resource Fair, Narcan, Free Health Screenings**







#georgiarecovertogether

## News For You

### Local News

### FCDAC Members Interviewed by FCN



Principal Drew Hayes (ACE Schools), pictured left, and Insight Program Director Matt Meyer, both members of FCDAC, were interviewed recently by *Forsyth County News reporter*, Naisha Roy. Her article, "FCS Fights Vaping with a New Plan," allowed Hayes and Meyer to highlight the real danger vaping poses for students. The new program, according to Hayes, is one that "students with minor nicotine vaping infractions will work through," to stop long-term addiction instead of over-disciplining the students. "We are trying to double down on the idea of educating and giving chances early on," he said.



Matt Meyer, Insight Program Director, pictured right, said, "The potency level of marijuana in the 70s was about 3-5 %. Today's marijuana vapes are 70-90% potency," making those who smoke addicted very quickly.



"Both Hayes and Meyer confirmed the uptick in vaping had correlated with an increase in vapes, also known as dab pens, specifically. Because of their high concentration, dependency on these happens much quicker than other forms of marijuana use," the article said.

The article published August 5, 2025, is available online with a subscription to Forsyth County News.

## State News

### Summer Heat Continues and When Mixed with METH can be Deadly

In an AP report, July 31, 2025, Meth is showing up more often as a factor in the deaths of people who died from heat-related causes in the U.S., according to CDC data. "Death certificates show about one in five heat-related deaths in recent years involved methamphetamine. In Arizona, Texas, Nevada, and California, officials found the drug in nearly a third of heat deaths in 2023," the AP report said.

**Methamphetamine, a stimulant, increases body temperature, impairs the brain's ability to regulate body heat, and makes it harder for the heart to compensate for extreme heat.**

If hot weather has already raised someone's body temperature, consuming alcohol or opioids can exacerbate the physical effects, "but meth would be the one that you would be most concerned about," said Bob Anderson, chief of statistical analysis at the National Center for Health Statistics.

Georgia is currently experiencing sweltering heat with high temperatures and humidity, making it feel even hotter than the actual temperature. The heat index, which factors in humidity, is reaching or exceeding 100 degrees Fahrenheit in many parts of the state, according to reports from Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security.

## National News



### Breaking News: House Appropriations Committee Releases Fiscal Year 2026 Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Bill

**July 21, 2025**

Yesterday, the House Appropriations Committee released its Financial Services and General Government (FSGG) appropriations bill for Fiscal Year (FY 2026). This bill includes funding provisions for programs of vital importance to the substance use prevention field, including the Drug-Free Communities (DFC) Program, Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act (CARA) Section 103 enhancement grants, and the High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area (HIDTA) Program. The House FY 26 FSGG appropriations bill proposes:

- To fund the DFC Program at \$109 million, including \$2.5 million for the National Community Anti-Drug Coalition Institute. This is level funding with the FY 2025 appropriated amount and \$39 million more than the \$70 million proposed in the President's Budget Request (PBR). The PBR also proposed to move the DFC program out of the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) – where it has always been housed – into the newly-proposed Administration for a Healthy America (AHA). The House FY 26 FSGG appropriations bill rejected this proposal.
- To fund the CARA Section 103 enhancement grant program at \$5.2 million, level with the FY 2025

appropriated amount. This program allows for current and former DFC grantees to do more with more intensity around opioids and stimulants. The PBR proposed to totally defund the CARA Section 103 enhancement grant program and the House FY 26 FSGG appropriations bill rejected this proposal.

- To fund the HIDTA Program at \$299.6 million. This is just over \$1 million above the FY 2025 appropriated amount of \$298.5 million and \$103.6 million more than the PBR, which proposed to fund the program at \$196 million.

The House FY 26 FSGG appropriations bill represents a critical step in the appropriations process. However, it is important to note that these numbers are not final. The House must still vote on the bill and the Senate must release its own version of the bill. Any differences between the bills will need to be resolved in a conference committee and the President will then need to sign the bills into law.

CADCA is deeply grateful to its members, who sent nearly 4,000 messages to Congress encouraging them to protect and fully fund the DFC program. This represents an incredible effort from the field and underscores the power of the substance use prevention movement.

CADCA will keep the field informed as the bill moves through the legislative process.



## Press Release From the DEA

### Terrance C. Cole Sworn in as Administrator of the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration

WASHINGTON – Terrance C. “Terry” Cole was sworn in as DEA Administrator on July 23, 2025, following his confirmation by the U.S. Senate. Mr. Cole is a distinguished public servant who has spent more than 31 years in law enforcement, 22 of which were at DEA fighting the drug cartels and transnational criminal organizations. Since 2023, Mr. Cole has

served as Virginia’s Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security in Governor Youngkin’s cabinet overseeing 11 state public safety agencies, comprising more than 19,000 employees.

Mr. Cole’s appointment by the Trump Administration to lead the nation’s largest drug enforcement agency places him at the forefront of the fight against Foreign Terrorist Organizations, which use drugs, violence, and crime to threaten public safety and national security.

Administrator Cole’s strategic priorities reflect a renewed focus on enforcement, partnership, and public safety to meet the evolving threats of the global drug crisis. These priorities include:

- Affirming DEA’s Commitment to Enforcement – targeting traffickers, removing poison from the streets of this country, and protecting the vulnerable.
- Dismantling the Mexican Cartels, which operate as terrorist organizations, by targeting and breaking their command, control, and distribution networks that drive the fentanyl crisis.
- Disrupting the Criminal Chemical Supply Chain that supply the chemical ingredients used in the manufacture of fentanyl.
- Reducing Drug-Fueled Violence in America’s most affected cities through expanded partnerships with state and local law enforcement.
- Following the Money – targeting illicit finance and the growing use of cryptocurrency.
- Leading the Fight on the Cyber and Dark Web Frontlines by targeting the digital pipelines that fuel drug trafficking.
- Strengthening Partnerships Across the Country and with Foreign Counterparts to drive coordinated enforcement efforts against transnational criminal organizations.
- Prioritizing the Wellness of DEA’s Workforce, recognizing that the agency’s greatest strength is its people.

Drug overdoses and poisonings remain the leading cause of deaths for Americans ages 18–45. The majority of drug-related deaths involve a synthetic opioid, primarily fentanyl. Drug trafficking organizations mix fentanyl with other illicit drugs like cocaine, methamphetamine, and heroin, and

press fentanyl into pills made to look like prescription medications. This is all in an effort to deceive Americans and drive addiction in the United States.

Mr. Cole is no stranger to narcotics enforcement. Over the course of his career at DEA, he held critical operational and leadership roles – both at home and abroad – driving major enforcement efforts and advancing DEA’s mission to protect communities from the deadly impact of illegal drugs. During his 22-year career as a DEA Special Agent, he advanced quickly among the ranks, serving in a range of domestic and international posts including Oklahoma, New York, and Washington D.C., as well as Colombia, Afghanistan, and the Middle East. At the time of his retirement from federal service in 2020, Mr. Cole was serving as DEA’s Acting Regional Director of Mexico, Canada, and Central America. Before joining the DEA, Mr. Cole served as a Naval Academy Blue and Gold Officer and was a certified Police Officer in the State of New York.

Throughout his career, Mr. Cole forged strong partnerships with international, federal, state, tribal, and local partners to drive strategic operations focused on dismantling the cartels. During his time serving as Virginia’s Secretary of Public Safety and Homeland Security in Governor Youngkin’s cabinet, he spearheaded initiatives that drove a 44% reduction in overdose deaths. Between November 2023 and November 2024, Virginia led the nation in the largest year-over-year percentage decline in drug-related deaths.

Mr. Cole graduated from the Rochester Institute of Technology with a B.A. in Criminal Justice and holds certificates in Leadership from the University of Virginia and the University of Notre Dame Mendoza School of Business. Mr. Cole has also pursued continuing education at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) Sloan Executive School for Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning. As DEA Administrator, Mr. Cole is responsible for leading the enforcement, intelligence, regulatory, and public outreach efforts of the agency. Administrator Cole’s top priority is to increase the pressure on the drug cartels and combat the deadly drug crisis with urgency and resolve.

“As I once again walk through the doors of DEA, I am reminded of the passion and commitment I carried as a Special Agent, the same passion that drives the men and women in this agency. The gravity of DEA’s mission was clear as I stood witness to President Donald Trump signing the Halt Fentanyl Act surrounded by Angel Families holding onto the memories of those they lost. They are the reason we remain focused, determined, and unwavering.” said DEA Administrator Terrance C. Cole. “The cartels and Foreign Terrorist Organizations fueling this crisis are global in reach – and so is the DEA. With the support of the Trump Administration, the Department of Justice, and our international, federal, state, local, and tribal partners, we will dismantle these violent cartels and make America Safe Again.”

A proud public servant, Mr. Cole has consistently placed the safety of the public and law enforcement officers above all else. Throughout his career, he has demonstrated an unwavering commitment to working alongside law enforcement at every level, collaborating with international allies and the intelligence community, and driving the fight directly to the drug cartels.

## Call for Advocacy

### House and Senate Fiscal Year 2026 Agriculture Appropriations Bills Include Language Banning Intoxicating Hemp-Derived Cannabis Products

The Senate Appropriations Committee has advanced its Fiscal Year 2026 Agriculture appropriations



bill. Key language in this legislation, KNOWN AS the **"Miller Amendment,"** would ban the sale of hemp-derived lab-made intoxicating cannabinoids. **This language closes a loophole in the 2018 Farm Bill that allowed for unregulated products like delta-8 THC to flood the market. This is Good News, but see below for the bad news!**

The language in the Senate bill is identical to the language passed in the House Agriculture appropriations bill in June. However, the process is far from over, as appropriations bills must pass both chambers of Congress and be signed into law by the President.

CADCA will keep the field updated as the agriculture appropriations bill moves through the legislative process. We are grateful to our members who have contacted their representatives in Congress on this issue.

**BUT WAIT... LIBERTARIAN SENATOR RAND PAUL** has placed a hold on the bill to defeat this language and create a carve-out for products like THC-infused hemp beverages. In effect, this would legalize marijuana federally!

**ADVOCACY MATTERS, PLEASE ACT NOW!**

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Send the sample message below to your Senators to urge them to keep the Miller Amendment in the FY 2026 Agriculture/FDA appropriations bill. **USE YOUR HOME ADDRESS**

### **HOW TO DO IT**

CADCA's legislative alerts use your home address to send messages to government officials. **Click [HERE](#)** to send a message to your Senators asking them to keep the Miller Amendment in the FY 2026 Agriculture/FDA appropriations bill.

### **SAMPLE MESSAGE**

I am writing to encourage you to keep the Miller Amendment in the FY 2026 Agriculture/FDA appropriations bill. This important language would help keep Americans safe by banning intoxicating hemp-derived cannabis products. The Senate Appropriations Committee unanimously approved this language, but Senator Paul is now holding it up. Please protect Americans' health by keeping the Miller Amendment in the Agriculture/FDA appropriations bill.

[Contact GA Senators Here](#)

**Tell President Trump and Vice President Vance Not to Reschedule Marijuana**

President Trump announced that he will be making the final decision on whether to move marijuana from Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) to Schedule III of the CSA in the coming weeks. Marijuana belongs in Schedule I because raw marijuana has no accepted medical use and a high potential for misuse. Putting it in Schedule III would open the door to widespread normalization.

Rescheduling marijuana is not backed by new FDA trials or rigorous research.

### **WHAT YOU CAN DO**

Send the sample message below to President Trump and Vice President Vance to protect America's public health and encourage them not to reschedule marijuana.

### HOW TO DO IT

CADCA's legislative alerts use your home address to send messages to government officials. [Click HERE](#) to send a message to President Trump and Vice President Vance asking them not to move marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III of the Controlled Substances Act.

### SAMPLE MESSAGE

Dear President Trump/Vice President Vance,

I write to urge you not to move marijuana from Schedule I to Schedule III. Putting Americans first means putting their health and safety ahead of the marijuana industry's profits. By rescheduling marijuana to Schedule III, you would be allowing marijuana companies to benefit from billions in tax breaks while normalizing a dangerous drug.

The marijuana sold in stores today is more dangerous and addictive than ever. Often, the potency of these products is as high as 99% THC. By comparison, the average potency in the 1970s for these products was around 2%. Recent studies show that people who use these high-potency products have a 30% addiction rate, leading to serious health problems.

Some of the adverse health outcomes attributed to marijuana use include a 25% increase in the risk of having a heart attack and a 42% increase in the risk of having a stroke. Additionally, studies have shown that marijuana use doubles the risk of dying from heart disease.

Furthermore, the legalization and normalization of these products have been disastrous across the nation. In states where the drug is "legalized", marijuana addiction levels among teenagers aged 12-17 increased by 25% compared to states where marijuana remains illegal. Marijuana use among youth under 25 is highly damaging, leading to a decline in brain development and cognitive abilities. In fact, teenagers with a marijuana addiction are up to 350% more likely to experience mental health and behavioral issues.

I urge you to prioritize the safety of our children and keep marijuana on Schedule I. Moving it to Schedule III will hurt Americans and supercharge the marijuana industry.

Or

You can contact the White House directly, copy and paste the above, or write your own message!

[Click Here](#)



**International Overdose  
Awareness Day**

**International Overdose Awareness Day August  
31**

Overdose affects everyone. From grieving families to spontaneous first responders, the impacts of overdose are far-reaching and fall indiscriminately.

One big family, driven by hope, the 2025 theme, encourages everyone to recognize that losses go deeper than one person, one family, or one neighborhood. They ripple out into classrooms, workplaces, and the spaces we all share. They cross borders between cities, states, and nations.

But in a time when people are searching for connection and safety, overdose also reminds us that our

But in a time when people are searching for connection and safety, overdose also reminds us that our lives are deeply intertwined. What if we saw each other as one big family, bound not just by blood but by shared experiences, responsibility, and commitment to each other?

This International Overdose Awareness Day, let's imagine a new meaning of what family can be—a family driven by hope, love, and action. We are one big family – not just because we share in the pain of loss, but because we share in the power to change what comes next.

This August 31, we move beyond awareness. [Click Here to Download](#) the tools and templates to make an impact this August 31 – campaign ideas, social media graphics, poster designs, and more.

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## Fox News Opinion Article by Alex Berenson "Marijuana is not harmless. The opposite is true."

**"As cannabis legalization spreads, mounting research reveals alarming health impacts while promised benefits fail to materialize," says Alex Berenson, author of Tell Your Children.**

In a July 1, 2025, opinion piece for Fox News, Alex Berenson wrote, "Cannabis use raises risk of heart attack and stroke more than cocaine, and other drugs," as suggested in a major review.

Further, he writes, "Even in states, from Maine to California, that have legalized cannabis, researchers have published paper after paper showing its risks, particularly to heavy or daily users. I do not mean the munchies or falling asleep on the couch. Powerful evidence links the drug to heart attacks, strokes, severe mental illness, and even suicides.

Cannabis and its active ingredient, the chemical called THC, are toxic to the heart and brain. They are also much more addictive than many users realize. Though cannabis does not cause the

physical dependence of alcohol, it can make users psychologically dependent, leading to irritability, depression, and mood swings if they cut back. And a huge new study shows that legalization is linked to a sharp increase in diagnoses of cannabis addiction.

As more Americans see the problems firsthand, their views of cannabis are slowly turning negative, a recent Gallup poll found. Even in deep-blue New York, almost twice as many residents say cannabis legalization has hurt their quality of life as helped it."

[Click Here to Read Fox article.](#)

Tell your children, by [Alex Berenson](#)





## Cannabis-Induced Psychosis: A Silent Epidemic

A documentary providing an intimate look at cannabis-induced psychosis through the eyes of young people who lived it, revealing the silent epidemic that's tearing apart families, and the long path to recovery.

**Cannabis-Induced Psychosis: A Silent Epidemic** pulls back the curtain on a crisis that too often goes unnamed. Told through the voices of young people who've lived through psychosis and the parents who tried to hold them together, the film offers an unflinching look at how high-potency THC can fracture lives and upend futures. Families walk us through the hardest moments of their lives as they watch their kids unravel, search for help, and face a system with few answers. Doctors offer clinical insight, while the young people themselves reflect on what it felt like to lose touch with reality and how they found their way back.

[To watch the Documentary Click Here](#)

### On the Calendar



#### August

- First Day of School, August 5, 2025.
- FCDAC Meeting, Wednesday, August 6, 8 a.m. United Way.
- International Overdose Awareness Day, August 31



#### September

- Labor Day, September 1, 2025
- FCDAC Meeting, Wednesday, September 3, 2025, at Live Life Counseling.
- Celebrate Recovery, in Cumming at Fowler Park's Large Pavilion, 4-7 p.m., September 7



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