



EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
EMPOWER.

Strategizer

Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County



October 2025 Volume 5 Issue 6

[Donate Here](#)



SUBSTANCE ABUSE **Prevention Month**

October is Substance Use Prevention Month — and we invite you to tell your prevention story with someone this month. By sharing your recovery story, taking preventive actions to educate others, and spreading these actions, you will demonstrate how prevention improves lives in our community.

- We aim to prevent substance use in the first place, prevent the progression of use (to a disorder), and prevent consequences associated with use. And we have the prevention playbook to do so.
- Prevention science (with decades of research and community-based experience) shows that prevention works.
- Prevention strengthens protective factors and reduces risk factors — in individuals, families, schools, communities, and society.
- Prevention helps us get ahead of substance use and mental health challenges — so that youth, families, and communities can thrive.

Prevention Month raises the national conversation — to showcase the positive effects of prevention on communities across the country.

FCDAC Council Meeting, Work and Programs Round-up

Kayden's Korner



October is Substance Abuse Prevention Month nationally, but for FCDAC, it is our focus every day of the year!

It is fall, y'all, and I am looking forward to cooler weather and pumpkin everything! With the opening of the new school year, prevention efforts kick into high gear, and we welcome a new **Substance Prevention Coach, Lauren Hairston**, who will be working at East Forsyth High School. Please take a look at the article below and be sure to introduce yourself to her.

Also new to our Youth Council, we welcome **Saismaran Vummadi**. Saismaran tabled for FCDAC at last month's Recovery event sponsored by The Connection. **Thank you, Saismaran!** Please check out his story below.

We are grateful to **Lieutenant Chris**

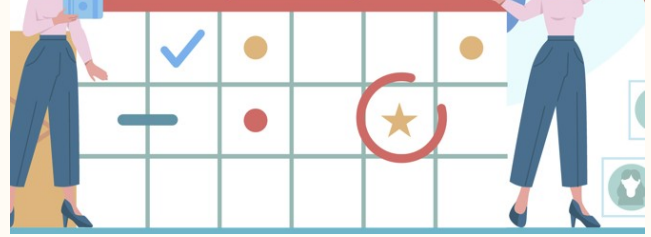


MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Glowcheski, who spoke at our Council Meeting and provided an update on the drugs of most concern in Forsyth County.

Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council's **Annual Walk for Recovery** is in the running for Forsyth County's **Best Community Event**. You can help bring recognition to the Council and our event by **voting every day until October 31** at midnight. See all the details about how to vote in the Council Meeting Highlights below!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting is on

**Wednesday, September 3
8 a.m.**

United Way Offices

Council Meeting Highlights

Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 am monthly council meeting by welcoming everyone, introducing attendees, and making announcements.

Announcements:

- It's time to vote for the Best Community Event in Forsyth County! **Please vote for FCDAC's Annual Walk for Recovery!** Please click the link below to vote! Once you click, scroll down to **vote now**, and then go to the **community tab**! Please look under Best Community Event: **Annual Walk for Recovery**. **Vote daily through October 31!**

Please CLICK HERE or **HERE** to "Quick Vote" only for the Annual Walk for Recovery.

- Twin Lakes Virtual Education Event on Xylazine - See Flyer below or **Click Here** to Register.
- Live Life Counseling FREE PARENT PROGRAM- Live Life Counseling/Live Life Sober is so excited to offer PALS (Parents of Addicted Loved Ones) support group starting **October 6, 2025, at 6:30 pm**. This group is a free support group. Wendy Cates is our leader of this program! Wendy is amazing, bringing lots of experience and kindness to this group. Please spread the word.
- Cindy Mills announced that the GA Rotary Clubs (there are 5 in Forsyth) are offering scholarships to nonprofits. You can submit for a grant and receive \$5,000. You can find the president of the Rotary Club online and send them a message. We are applying for scholarships for the ODAT Club at East Forsyth.
- NAMI Georgia and NAMI FDL (Forsyth, Dawson, Lumpkin) invite you to join us for our upcoming Mental Health Advocacy Tour Stop, hosted at United Way of Forsyth County! Date: **Tuesday, October 14, 2025, Time: 7:00 pm, Location: United Way of Forsyth County, 240 Elm Street Cumming, GA 30040**. This special event is part of our statewide tour to bring communities together, share resources, and spark conversations around mental health advocacy in Georgia. It's a chance to: Hear updates on mental health policy in Georgia, Connect with local leaders and advocates, and learn how you can take action in your community.

We are excited to welcome our speaker from the law enforcement sector, **Lieutenant Chris Glowcheski**. Lieutenant Glowcheski has 18 years in law enforcement. He spent six years with the Lanier Regional Drug Task Force as an undercover narcotics agent. Now he is serving on the Cumming Police Department.

His presentation will cover a variety of different drugs and how to identify them. current drug trends he

the presentation will cover a variety of different drugs and how to identify them, current drug trends he is observing, and what to look for when dealing with today's youth for intervention.

Lieutenant Chris Glowcheski provided an information-packed PowerPoint presentation at the Council Meeting.

Types of drugs commonly seen

- ◆ Marijuana
- ◆ Methamphetamine
- ◆ Cocaine
- ◆ Heroin
- ◆ E-Liquid/Vape additives
- ◆ Prescription Pills
- ◆ MDMA/LSD
- ◆ Cough Syrup

Marketing of vapes is obviously directed to hook young people on nicotine and THC. (See the image below.) The tricky thing about vapes is that the smell isn't apparent, and the device can be easily hidden. Because the THC is extracted, the THC concentration is higher. Under 1 ounce is a misdemeanor, and exceeding this amount is a felony. It has to be 30 grams for us to send it to the lab.

Some of the withdrawal and side effects of vaping include: heavy chest, lightheadedness, sweaty palms, overall bad feelings like an anxiety attack.



The drugs listed on the left are the most commonly abused drugs in Forsyth County. We have them listed from the most frequently used to the least frequently used. **Marijuana** is by far the most widely available due to the confusion over THC, from the THC levels of the Marijuana plant (it is the **plant buds** that are smoked in pipes) to the THC derived from the **Hemp products** allowed under the **2018 Farm Bill**. Marijuana also comes in more concentrated forms (THC up to 90%) found in dabs, wax, and shatter (see image below).



BHO

- ◆ Butane Hash Oil
- ◆ Wax, Dabs, Shatter,

VAPING DANGERS

- ◆ E-Liquid CBD products that contain **OTHER** synthetic cannabinoids have been causing overdoses on a large scale on school campuses nationwide
- ◆ Many CBD products **DO** contain THC and are not recommended for people being tested
- ◆ Those that had adverse reactions to CBD's showed:
 - Altered mental state (82.4%)
 - Nausea or vomiting (49.0%)
 - Seizures or shaking (27.5%)
 - Loss of consciousness (25.5%)
 - Hallucinations (23.5%)



The Government regulates certain ingredients, and malicious companies frequently make slight ingredient changes to avoid scrutiny. The Government cannot step in. What came in under the Farm Bill and is unregulated, is now showing up on the shelves of our gas stations: **infused THC drinks**. Our gas stations and convenience stores have become hubs for gambling and drug use. Cindy Mills said that this is one of the most alarming trends we are witnessing today—our

E- Liquids and Vaping

- ◆ Where are we right now?

- ◆ Must be 21 to purchase
- ◆ Nicotine addiction concerns
- ◆ Pre-filled cartridges vs. reservoir style
- ◆ Studies suggest 1:3 HS students vape



Methamphetamine

- ◆ **Also called** ... Ice, crystal, meth, yellow, crank, fire, glass, speed, shards, dope.
- ◆ **Methods of consumption** ... smoked in a glass pipe, injected, snorted, swallowed / eaten.



MDMA / Ecstasy Molly and LSD

- ◆ **MDMA also called** ... Ecstasy, X, skittles, beans, what ever is pictured on the pill
- ◆ MDMA is generally consumed orally
- ◆ LSD is usually a liquid that's dried out on paper and consumed orally

The MDMA/Ecstasy "Molly" pills look like candy and are very dangerous to young children who ingest them accidentally. LSD dried on thin paper is called a stamp. The users' eyes are dilated, and they hallucinate.

Cough Medicine Dextromethorphan

- ◆ Also known as DXM, and Triple C

alarming trends we are witnessing today. Our county used to have an ordinance that tied the selling of these products to its alcohol license, but is it being enforced?

(From Cindy Mills) A tragic fact discovered as a result of recent mass shootings is that the shooters who have died all tested positive for massive amounts of THC. THC alters the brain. Vapes are destroying lives.

Meth (see image on left) is a horrible drug that destroys people's bodies visibly. The Meth user often picks at their skin because they feel like bugs are crawling under their skin. Their teeth rot, and the user becomes hyperactive, causing them to be skinny. Meth is cheap and is commonly seen in our county. The face of Meth, the image on the left, shows how one woman's addiction to Meth changed her.

Cocaine seems to come and go in the county. Users call it various names, including coke, blow, crack, snow, and rock. It is crushed into a powder and snorted, smoked, and injected. The manifestations of this drug include dilated pupils, grinding of teeth, hyperactivity, and sleeplessness.

Heroin is a Schedule 1 drug with no medicinal purpose. It's known as boy, tar, brown, bird, china white, and dark. It's a powder that is heated, liquefied, and injected. Track marks at the injection sites, constricted pupils, and droopy eyelids of the users are all signs of this drug.



One Pill Can Kill! says it all. These fake pills contain varying amounts of the killer **Fentanyl**, and every day, young people take a risk when they accept a pill from a friend or buy a pill

on the street. This is what we see with 80% of the overdoses. Called **Mbox 30**, pressed fake pills look like prescription oxycodone, or Percocet. This is where **Narcan** can save a life. Users desire **Fentanyl** because it is stronger, and you get the best highs. Fentanyl is in everything. We see it in marijuana. New laws are being added that we can hold the dealers responsible for an overdose death.

Finally, we have the **synthetic marijuana**, called **spice**. Of course, **abuse of Alcohol** is something about which we are all aware. However the

◆ People call it "ROBO-TRIPPING"

Manifestations of abuse of over-the-counter cough medicine are eyes that jump around and profuse sweating.

about which we are all aware. However, the marketing aimed at entrapping our youth is very evident, as seen in these images on the left.

Thank you for your attention today.

Alcohol

◆ The most widely abused drug



Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

Youth Outreach

Youth Council



And the Opioid
Awareness Billboard
Winner Is...

Isabella Sung!



Drum Roll please.....

From left to right, Eshawnvie Kallu, Isabella Sung, Sahasra Tatavarti

The winner of the 2025 Forsyth County-wide Opioid Awareness Billboard Design Competition is **Isabella Sung**, pictured center, a Lambert High School senior! The contest was sponsored by Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, FCDAC Youth Council's **Sahasra Tatavarti** and **Eshawnvie Kallu**, along with **Clair Holbrook**, Opioid Public Health Analyst for Health Department District 2.

The goal was to raise awareness about

the dangers of fentanyl while giving students the chance to use their creativity to make a real impact in the community. Over 100 designs were submitted by students across the county, and a panel reviewed them based on

**HIGH RISK? LOW TRUST?
CARRY NARCAN ANYWAY.**

and a panel reviewed them based on clarity, impact, and the effectiveness of the call-to-action.

Isabella Sung's design (right) took first place, highlighting local recovery resources and NARCAN access. She said her goal with the design was to "make it stand out immediately — something bold and simple enough that drivers could notice the message right away." She explained that entering the contest felt like a chance to increase potentially life-saving awareness in our community.

When asked how it felt to win, Isabella said, "Having my billboard design chosen was exciting and a little unbelievable." "Knowing my work will be up on a billboard," she added, "makes the whole experience feel both rewarding and meaningful."

The billboard location has not yet been finalized. Her winning design will soon be displayed on a major Forsyth County highway, where it will be visible to hundreds of drivers daily. **Congratulations, Isabella!**

**GET NARCAN FREE FROM
POLICE—NO QUESTIONS
ASKED.**

CALL 988

**FORSYTH COUNTY DRUG AWARENESS
COUNCIL**

SAMHSA TIPLINE

**Welcome, Youth Council Member Saismaran Vummadi,
Saismaran Represented FCDAC at our Informational Table at the
September 7 Recovery Month Event.**



Saismaran Vummadi

is a rising Junior at Alliance Academy for Innovation. I joined the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council because it provides a meaningful opportunity to actively prevent substance abuse through school

programs, community education, and youth-led initiatives. The council plays a vital role in bringing together educators, parents, healthcare professionals, and students to address the root causes of substance misuse and promote healthy choices.

I am motivated by a desire to protect and help others, especially youth who suffer in all aspects if they choose substance misuse. This will affect future social and economic sustainability.

I enjoy playing basketball, working out at the gym, and spending time with friends.





Pictured left to right: Demetra Boles
LouAnn Altshuler, FCDAC member,
Jeremy Edwards, Erin Thomas, Ken Pinion
and Kayla Bergeron, The Connection Executive
Director.

"It was a great experience to represent the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council at the Connection event," said new Youth Council member, **Saismaran Vummadi**. "I had the opportunity to set up a booth and share information with families about substance abuse prevention and the resources that FCDAC offers. Throughout the day, I was able to engage in meaningful conversations with parents and students, answer questions, and connect with other organizations in attendance. It was encouraging to see how interested families were in learning more and how open they were to discussing prevention," he continued.

The **September Recovery Month Event** (See the above Flyer) was sponsored by **The Connection** and held at Fowler Park's large pavilion. It was part of the month-long recognition and celebration of the recovery community, which promotes and supports evidence-based treatment and recovery practices.

Recovery is REAL (Restoring Every Aspect of Life)!

Parent Partners Corner

Parent Partner Leaders Step-down Thanks to Marti and Ashley for their Service!

Marti Roveda



Ashley Dickerson

FCDAC thanks **Marti Roveda** and **Ashley Dickerson** for their two and a half years of service as leaders of the **Parent Committee**. They have spoken to numerous civic and parent groups both within and outside the school setting. They shared their experiences as parents of children who suffer from Substance Use Disorder, coaching others, providing hope, healing, and resources to parents searching for help. Thank you!



You Could Be FCDAC New Parent Partners Committee Chair!

The Parent Partners is looking for new Committee Leaders! Please consider stepping into the Committee Chair roles for our Council. The position includes spreading awareness through prevention

Committee Chair roles for our Council. The position includes spreading awareness through prevention education, leading projects for parents that arise during the year, and organizing and collaborating with other FCDAC committee chairs. Please get in touch with Rachel if you are interested in assuming this vital role for our Council.

School News



Emily Ennis, Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor



Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach, North Forsyth High School.

By Ainsley Miller

On September 17th, I hosted the **sober recreational event Jeopardy**. I had four students participate. They had a blast, they were very competitive, and each team wanted to win. The winning team consisted of two girls, who received a **Nee Doh fidget toy** and a gift card.

My group sessions are off to a good start. I have five students currently dedicated to the group sessions and activities. We have discussed several topics, including the **importance of honesty and the value of positive peer relationships**. I have observed a common trend among my students who want to relapse or do so: they often become bored and seek to have some fun. I have spoken with many students about various fun activities to participate in while sober. They are open to the idea of trying something new to help alleviate their negative feelings and urges.

September 16th and 17th, **Emily, Lauren, and I** spoke in **seven health classes** at North Forsyth High School. We each shared our testimonies with the new 9th-grade class at North. I had six students sign up through the questionnaire to meet with me. Out of those six, three showed greater interest by taking permission slips. The reactions and responses to our testimonies are beneficial and positive. The teacher is happy to have us there, and the students are engaging, asking thoughtful questions, and seeking help when needed.

Lastly, I've noticed that the biggest obstacle facing students who choose a sober lifestyle is finding a new friend group and distancing themselves from old friends. Most kids I have met with have a tough time distancing themselves from peers with whom they previously used substances, or even finding a new positive friend group. The group sessions are helpful during the school day, but after school, when they are at home or on social media, they really struggle.



Our FCDAC Substance Prevention Coaches will participate in the Annual Trunk or Treat on Tuesday, October 28, at North Forsyth High School. 5 pm!



Welcome, Lauren Hairston,
New Prevention Coach at East Forsyth
High School



Lauren Hairston serves as our newest Substance Prevention Coach at East Forsyth High School! Welcome Lauren! She works at The Insight Program, too. As the High School Liaison for Forsyth County at East Forsyth High School, her role as the Substance Prevention Coach is to connect with students to provide support in their recovery.

Lauren began her own journey to sobriety in June 2017 after she struggled with drugs and alcohol. This life-changing experience is the driving inspiration behind her career to support others facing similar challenges.

A graduate of the Meehan Institute of Counselor Training, Lauren has worked with the Enthusiastic Sobriety Program since 2019. Lauren also served as a Brief Intervention Specialist at Pathways2Life, where she supported teenagers within the Fulton County school system in overcoming their struggles and making positive life changes.

Her current role consists of providing individual sessions, group sessions, and sober functions for students, guiding them toward building a happy and fulfilled life, free from chemical dependency.

Welcome, Lauren, and we look forward to your reports from East Forsyth High School!

Members teaching Members



Be a Trusted Adult For Young People in Your Life

By Dana Bryan

Research shows that having a trusted adult in one's life, in addition to a parent, can have a positive effect on the physical, mental, and social well-being of a young person. This is true not only for children but also for teens and young adults. The trusted adult can be a relative, teacher, coach, neighbor, religious leader, counselor, or friend of one's parent. I am reminded of the trusted adults in my own life and their significance to me. I hope that my students recognized their importance to me in a way that allowed me to have a positive impact on their choices.

There are significant characteristics that should be present for an adult to effectively be a trusted adult who can have a positive influence on a child, youth, or young adult. It is important for the youth to feel safe in your presence. The trusted adult should share the same values as the child's family, assuming that the child's parent or parents are role models for making positive decisions and forming healthy relationships.

Young people need to perceive trusted adults as supportive

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

Young people need to perceive trusted adults as supportive, empathetic, and compassionate. This can be achieved by asking questions and listening attentively to the answers. Make it clear to the child that you cannot promise confidentiality if you feel they need additional support or guidance from a parent or a professional. It would be appropriate to bring up subjects such as bullying, social media, mental health, or peer pressure. Then, listen to the discussion of their concerns and experiences. It may

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!

be helpful to share your own experiences with situations such as peer pressure and how you handled them, or how you observed others handling challenging situations. I have encouraged my students to ask their parents about the peer pressures they faced and how they dealt with the situations, or how they wish they had handled them. The hope is that youth will realize their parents and other adults understand peer pressure more than they realize. It does not matter what behavior peers are pressuring the child to engage in. The skills and behaviors required to stand up to peers are the same across all situations and for every generation.

There are several positive outcomes for those who have a trusted adult in their lives.

- Fewer risk-taking behaviors
- Higher self-esteem
- More motivation to succeed in school and other activities
- Positive employment outcomes as an adult
- Improved physical and mental health
- The ability to have healthy relationships

I hope that everyone reading this can think of children, teens, or young adults for whom you are an important and trusted adult, and I hope this article has helped you realize the significant role you play in their lives.

Our Partners in Prevention

More Great Community Events and Resources ...

The Office of Prevention Services (OPS) within Georgia's Department of Behavioral Health and Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) **Invites you and your community members** to join a conversation about what's working—and what's needed—to support substance use and tobacco prevention in Georgia. Your input will help shape two state-level strategic plans.

We Want to Hear From You... JOIN OUR COMMUNITY CONVERSATION!

Your voice matters! The Georgia Health Policy Center, in partnership with Georgia's Office of Prevention Services are developing two statewide strategic plans on substance use prevention and tobacco prevention in Georgia. We are inviting community members to participate in a two-hour conversation to discuss efforts on addressing substance and tobacco use in the state and local communities.

These town-hall style conversations will gather feedback on strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats to prevention efforts. We will host one in-person event and one virtual event in each of Georgia's six regions (e.g., North, Southwest, Coastal), for a total of 12 events. Participants may register



Click [HERE](#) or scan the QR code to register!

Why Participate?

- Share your experiences and insights on substance and tobacco prevention efforts.
- Contribute to shaping effective substance and tobacco prevention strategic planning strategies.
- Receive a \$50 e-gift card if you are one of the first 50 people to register and participate for at least 75 minutes in the focus group. E-gift cards will be e-mailed to participants up to 10 business days after the focus group.

Who Should Attend?

Community members aged 18+ who want to share their experiences and ideas.

Details

Community conversations will be taking place in-person and virtually in each of the six Department of Behavioral Health & Developmental Disabilities (DBHDD) identified regions in Georgia. Once you register and indicate your preference for in-person or virtual attendance, additional details will be sent out via e-mail.

Questions?

Reach out to the Georgia Health Policy Center at ghpcpsp@gsu.edu or 404-413-0343.

for either an in-person or a virtual session. Each event will last about two hours and include up to 50 attendees.

Incentive: The first 50 individuals who sign up and attend at least 75 minutes will receive a \$50 e-gift card. E-gift cards will be emailed **within 10 business days** after the session. (A valid email address is required.)

Healthy Boundaries for Forsyth Families Discovering the Power of Healthy Boundaries!



Join us for an engaging, supportive workshop on **Saturday, October 11, 2025, from 10:00 AM to 12:00 PM at The Connection Forsyth, 4950 Browns Bridge Rd, Cumming, GA 30041.**

Led by LouAnn Altshuler, LPC, retd., this interactive session will guide you in recognizing your limits, communicating your needs with confidence, and creating stronger, more respectful relationships.

You'll leave with practical tools to support emotional well-being, improve communication, and build healthier connections in everyday life.

Light refreshments provided.

We look forward to welcoming you!



Healthy Boundaries For Forsyth Families

Learn to set and maintain healthy boundaries to support personal growth and healing. This interactive workshop offers tools to protect your energy, express your needs, and build healthier relationships.

Saturday, October 11, 2025
10am - 12pm



10am - 12pm



4950 Browns Bridge Rd
Cumming, GA 30041



Guest Speaker
LouAnn Altshuler, LPC, retd.



For more information:

(470) 253-8564

jillian@theconnectionforsyth.org

Empowering Wellness for Families
in Forsyth County

THE CONNECTION
theconnectionforsyth.org

TRANQ 2025

THE DEADLY COMBINATION OF XYLAZINE, RHINO TRANQ, METHAMPHETAMINE, AND FENTANYL

November 13, 2025 | 9:00-3:00 ET | VIRTUAL
5 CE Credits

SUMMARY:

There is a rapidly expanding crisis in the United States involving a psychoactive forms of fentanyl and a street drug, Xylazine. Over the past year, thousands of overdoses have been reported. While efforts to stop the sales and import of "Tranq", the drug presents a serious public health risk of potentially wider impact than the original opioid crisis. This presentation will review the latest neurobiological research on Xylazine and a more potent form, Rhino Tranq, fentanyl, methamphetamine, and other street drugs, their legal status, and adverse effects. Drug testing requirements, management of "Tranq" overdose and other street drugs toxicities will also be a part of our discussions.

Presenter:

Dr. Merrill Norton
Pharm.D., D.Ph,
CMAC, CCS



LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

Participant will

- Develop an understanding of the pharmacology of Xylazine, Rhino Tranq, methamphetamine, and Fentanyl;
- Understand the procedures of managing a Xylazine, Rhino Tranq, methamphetamine, and Fentanyl overdose;
- Discover the concerns of the influx of the counterfeit drugs that contain Xylazine, Rhino Tranq, methamphetamine, and Fentanyl.

Early Registration: \$45
After October 23rd: \$50



Contact: Emily Dent emily.dent@tlrcenter.com

Summit BHC, provider #0057, is approved to offer social work continuing education by the Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB) Approved Continuing Education (ACE) program. Regulatory boards are the final authority on courses accepted for continuing education credits. ACE provider approval period: 03/01/2024 - 03/01/2026. Social workers completing this course receive 5 clinical continuing education credits.



To Register: Scan QR Code or Visit
<https://twinlakesrecoverycenter.com/tlr-events/>

Summit BHC has been approved by NBCS as an Approved Continuing Education Provider, ACEP No. 7363. Programs that do not qualify for NBCS credit are clearly identified. Summit BHC is solely responsible for all aspects of the programs.

Pending application for GACA CE Credit



DONATE TODAY!

Forsyth County Community Needs

Let's come together as a community! Donate the following items to help our neighbors in need:

- Shampoo
- Soap
- Toothbrush
- Toothpaste
- Towel/Washcloth
- Deodorant
- Razors
- Bottled Water
- Dish Soap
- Cleaning Supplies
- Laundry Detergent
- Peanut Butter
- Mac n Cheese
- Saltine Crackers
- Canned Corn
- Canned Peas

Join The Connection Forsyth in giving back and strengthening our community!

DROP OFF LOCATION:

4950 Browns Bridge Rd
Cumming, GA 30041
Monday-Friday: 9am - 5pm

THE CONNECTION
Empowering Wellness for Families in Forsyth County

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



THE CONNECTION
MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Winter COAT DRIVE



THE CONNECTION

Empowering Wellness for Families in Forsyth County

HEALING FROM GRIEF AND LOSS



SEP 12 - OCT 31, 2025

**4950 Browns Bridge Rd
Cumming, GA 30041**

We are accepting donations of new or gently used coats, blankets, scarves, gloves, and other winter items. All sizes from infant to adult are welcomed.

More Information: **470-253-8564**

Join us for a heartfelt workshop with Patricia Bennie, Certified Grief Educator, in a warm and supportive space to explore and process the grief of losing a loved one, especially as we move through the holidays. Together, we'll share in healing, connection, and understanding. The workshop includes interactive exercises to help you honor and remember your loved one with care and compassion.

THE CONNECTION FORSYTH
Saturday, November 8, 2025
10:30am - 12:00pm



SCAN TO REGISTER

The Connection Forsyth
404-660-9850 / 4950 Browns Bridge Rd., Cumming
theconnectionforsyth.org



Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy

2025 Annual Policy Summit
Wednesday, November 12

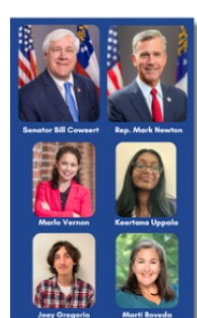
HIGHLIGHTS
Date: **Wednesday, November 12**
Time: 10am - 12:30pm
Location: Talbott Recovery | 5355 Hunter Road | Atlanta, GA 30349
Register: Click [HERE](#) to register
Cost: \$40 with lunch included (CE hours available) | \$30 early-bird by Oct 31
\$40 Zoom (CE hours available, no early-bird discount available)

PURPOSE - participant will gain the latest knowledge and resources on:

- **Georgia's Medical Marijuana Policy** - current laws and what's on the horizon
- **Dangers of Delta-8 & Intoxicating Hemp** - the unregulated market threat
- **Youth Mental Health & THC** - understanding the science and the stakes
- **Lived Experience Stories** - voices that inform policy and prevention
- **Risks to Pregnant and Breast-Feeding mothers** - and their babies

SPEAKERS

- **Senator Bill Cowsert** - keynote speaker
- **Representative Mark Newton** - keynote speaker
- **Marlo Vernon** - Associate Professor at Augusta Medical College - on marijuana, pregnancy and breastfeeding
- **Joey** - a youth in recovery, will tell us his personal story
- **Keertana Uppala** - GRMP board member - on youth marijuana normalization, risks, awareness and advocacy
- **Marti Roveda** - founder of *Equanimity Parent Coaching* - sharing her family's lived experience with High Potency THC



Healthy Georgia. Bright Future.



Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy

Thank You to our generous sponsors and thoughtful speakers!

PLATINUM	GOLD	SILVER
ADE Software Compass Revenue Solutions	Talbott Recovery PathLight Counseling Learning Ling Driving Educators of Georgia, Inc	Equanimity Parent Coaching The Hale Foundation, Inc Prime for Life - PRI WorkRight, LLC Arise Recovery & Behavioral Health Georgia Addiction Counselors Association

TARGET AUDIENCES - this event brings together a diverse network of:

- Behavioral Health Professionals
- Prevention Advocates
- Parent Leaders
- Educators
- Law Enforcement Officials
- Policymakers
- Business Leaders
- Driving Risk Reduction
- Concerned Citizens

SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES AVAILABLE: Highlight your organization's commitment directly in front of policymakers, healthcare leaders, and prevention advocates. Claim your sponsorship today - just complete this quick [registration](#).



Our Host: Talbott Recovery



Share the Mission. Spread the Impact.

[Register Here](#)

Free Screening of **'Withdrawal'** an award-winning Georgia-based film by Aaron Strand, a filmmaker in recovery.

Join us at the Tara Theatre
2345 Cheshire Bridge Rd NE, Atlanta, GA 30324
October 23, 2025

Reception at 7 PM

Screening at 8 PM

Special Q&A with the filmmakers after the film

Don't miss what critics are calling "The best film about addiction since Requiem for a Dream". It will be an incredible night of Georgia filmmaking!

[RSVP HERE](#)



Apply Now For CARES Academy 78!!!

Applications will close on Friday, October 17th, 2025 @ 4PM

Group Interviews will take place on Tuesday, November 18th, 2025.

Academy Dates Monday, December 8th- Friday, December 12th, 2025

This will be an in-person training

The requirements to apply for the CARES Academy are:

1. Two years of continuous, abstinent recovery
2. A high school diploma or GED.

[Click Here to Apply](#)

Register now for the CARES October Webinar!

Join us on Thursday,
October 16th, 2025: 11:30 AM - 01:00 PM



Using Emotional Intelligence To Navigate Your Work

Description:

Taking control over the emotions that shape our lives can have powerful effects. Emotional intelligence (EI) is the ability to recognize and manage our emotions, behaviors, and impulses, as well as apply this knowledge to the world around us. It encourages self-awareness, internal motivation, and the exploration of diverse perspectives. Through effective and authentic communication, emotional intelligence will create positive relationships within any organization.

Emotional intelligence is a skill that can be developed, in which these skills will help you to maximize your personal and professional success. The Developing Emotional Intelligence webinar will provide participants with the tools to gain control over emotions, navigate challenging situations, and communicate empathetically. With emotional intelligence, you can build a happy and prosperous life.

Facilitator: TaTa-Nisha Frazier, CARES 19, CPS-AD, CPS-MH

TaTa-Nisha Frazier has been navigating her own mental health and substance use recovery journey for

TaTa-Nisharazier has been navigating her own mental health and substance use recovery journey for 14 years, which has shaped her into a compassionate advocate and mentor for others on similar paths. As a Certified Peer Specialist in Mental Health (CPS-MH) and Addiction (CPS-AD), TaTa-Nisha has gained valuable experience working in the Behavioral Health field—a journey that has been both challenging and deeply rewarding.

Training Objectives:

- Define emotional intelligence and emotions
- Identify the components of emotional intelligence
- Identify tools to gain control over emotions
- Determine effective verbal and nonverbal communication skills
- Successfully execute conflict resolution and manage relationships with others
- Identify the benefits of being emotionally aware
- Recognize ways to apply emotional intelligence in the workplace
- Determine ways to make a great impression on others

[Register Here](#)

News For You

Local News



Saturday, October 25, 2025,
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

It's Time To Clean out your Unused Perscription Medications

- Find "Drive Up Drop-off Locations" by [Clicking Here](#).
- One of the more than 248 Drug Drop Boxes across the state. [Click Here](#) to find a Pharmacy Drop Box.

State News



Let's Be Clear Data Collection Project Needs You!

Let's Be Clear, GA is leading a statewide data collection project looking at how hemp-derived THC products are marketed as well as the potency of the products. They have partnered with Counter Tools to conduct environmental scans across the state and need volunteers to serve as data collectors. Data collectors will be entered into the system by name and email address, and this is how you will access the survey. Surveys can be completed by phone or on paper.

A training is scheduled for ****September 4, 2025**, at 4:00 p.m., that will walk you through the steps. **Data collection will begin on Sept. 5th and close on October 20th.**

****If someone cannot attend the training live, it will be recorded for later viewing.****



We are conducting retail assessments to evaluate the availability of hemp-derived THC intoxicants in Georgia communities. This assessment will show how products are packaged, priced, and marketed. We need your help completing assessments across Georgia!

September 4th | 4:00pm-5:30pm
Virtual Training

Scan to sign up!



National News



Operation Vape Trail Cracks Down on Illegal Substances in Vape Shops

WASHINGTON – On September 22, 2025, the Drug Enforcement Administration announced the results of a week-long operational enforcement action as part of a whole-of-government initiative aimed at removing dangerous and illegal vaping substances from communities across America. During the operation, the DEA seized more than 2.3 million vape devices and cartridges and more than 100 weapons since September 15, 2025.

"This operation underscores our commitment to protecting Americans from dangerous, deadly, and illegal substances that threaten public safety and national security," said Administrator Terrance Cole. "Illegal vape products pose hidden risks—especially to young people who often have no idea what these chemicals are that they are inhaling. By removing these products from our communities, we are taking decisive action to safeguard health, disrupt criminal networks, and prevent harm before it occurs."

Vaping devices were originally designed for nicotine and marketed as a cigarette alternative. However, recent data suggests a significant portion of e-cigarette sales involves illegal substances, highlighting a growing public safety and health concern. Also being sold in vape shops are illegal and addictive substances such as synthetic marijuana, synthetic cathinones, and hydroxymitragynine, also known as 7-OH or synthetic kratom. Many of these products feature bright packaging and imagery inspired by

popular cereals, candies, and snacks, which appeal to young people.

From September 15 through September 19, 2025, DEA's 23 domestic field divisions and seven foreign regions carried out coordinated enforcement actions that resulted in:

- Vape Pens/Cartridges: 2,357,755
- Currency Seizures: \$3,502,905
- Assets seized: \$5,235,000
- Firearms: 115
- Arrests: 106

Notable Seizures:

- The DEA Laredo District Office, with the assistance of the Laredo Police Department, executed a search warrant inside one shop in which investigators uncovered a 25-foot-deep tunnel leading to what appeared to be a concealed room behind the business—highlighting the extreme measures taken to hide illegal operations. Cocaine and marijuana were also seized during the search.
- The DEA Galveston Resident Office, in conjunction with the U.S. Marshals Service and Harris County Constables Office Precinct 2, seized 70,000 THC cartridges, 30,000 packages of THC edibles, 15 pounds of marijuana, and eleven firearms inside a home.
- Upon receiving multiple complaints about vape shops selling to minors, DEA's Little Rock District Office seized nearly 200 pounds of marijuana and more than 50 firearms in two separate investigations. Two people were arrested.
- The DEA Albany District Office seized hundreds of pounds of colorfully packaged products including marijuana flower, marijuana cigarettes, packaged THC gummies, flavored THC vape cartridges, and mushroom gummies, arrested two illegal criminals, and seized \$50,000.

In addition to last week's nationwide surge, DEA has been investigating vape shops near military bases. The majority of these shops investigated by DEA are owned and operated by foreign nationals believed to be specifically targeting active military personnel. As a result of one joint operation, DEA and its partners seized 8,000 pounds of THC products, 70,000 marijuana plants, and nearly 21,500 pounds of processed marijuana, and arrested 20 people, including three Chinese nationals.

DEA has vaping-related resources available at www.getsmartaboutdrugs.gov.

Operation Vape Trail is part of a larger collaborative enforcement effort between the U.S. Department of Justice, U.S. Department of Homeland Security, U.S. Department of Health & Human Services, and the U.S. Food and Drug Administration.

DEA Dismantles MS-13 Cell in Nashville

WASHINGTON – September 19, 2025, the U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration and our partners successfully dismantled an MS-13 cell operating within Nashville, Tennessee.

After a 9-month investigation, a series of court-authorized search warrants was conducted this morning throughout the metropolitan Nashville area, resulting in the arrests of at least 17 members and associates of MS-13 across three states, including Tennessee, California, and Oklahoma. In addition, investigators also seized bulk quantities of marijuana, counterfeit pills, cocaine, THC vapes, liquid psilocybin, and multiple firearms, including assault rifles.

"These arrests represent a critical milestone in DEA's mission to dismantle drug trafficking organizations operating in the United States and around the globe – prioritizing those designated by President Trump as Foreign Terrorist Organizations," said DEA Administrator Terrance Cole. "MS-13 has left a trail of violence and devastation across communities nationwide. The residents of Nashville are safer today now that these dangerous individuals will be held accountable for their destructive actions. Today's enforcement actions are not the last. More will follow, and we will not stop until MS-13 is no longer able to inflict harm on our communities."

"The actions taken today against MS-13 are the first of what will be many strikes against those who prey on the weak in our society," said Louisville Field Division Special Agent in Charge Jim Scott. "The

DEA and our law enforcement partners will not allow foreign terrorist organizations to operate in our communities. We will hunt you down and bring you to justice.”

MS-13 is a violent international criminal gang that emerged in Los Angeles during the 1980s. Over the years, it has expanded its influence, establishing strongholds in El Salvador, Guatemala, and Honduras, while infiltrating communities across all fifty U.S. states. Fueled by its deep involvement in the illegal drug trade, MS-13 is notorious for its ruthless tactics, including extortion, human trafficking, assault, and murder, to maintain control over its territory. With thousands of members operating within the United States, MS-13 remains a public safety and national security threat.

We encourage anyone with information about MS-13 or other criminal organizations to report tips anonymously through the DEA Tip Line at [Submit a Tip | DEA.gov](https://www.dea.gov/tips).

Today’s operation was made possible through the collaboration of DEA’s Louisville Field Division with Army Criminal Investigation Division; the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms, and Explosives; the Federal Bureau of Investigation; U.S. Marshals Service; U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement; Metropolitan Nashville Police Department; Tennessee Highway Patrol; local Tennessee drug task forces 23rd Judicial Drug Task Force and 19th Judicial Drug Task Force; and the Tennessee Bureau of Investigation.

Moving forward as part of a larger whole-of-government approach to dismantling drug trafficking organizations and protecting U.S. communities, DEA is committed to working with the Homeland Security Task Force (HSTF) and other federal partners to ensure current and future operations advance broader U.S. efforts to combat designated terrorist organizations and transnational organized crime.

FYI

Parenting in the Digital Age: Spotting Online Red Flags

In this episode of **Awkward Conversations**, hosts Jodie Sweetin and Amy McCarthy team up with Dr. Michael Rich, “the Mediatrixian,” and Kevin Collins from the Drug Enforcement Administration to **unpack the realities of raising**

kids in today’s digital world. From the hidden risks of online drug sales to the secret language of emojis, they reveal what **parents need to know**—and how to turn fear into curiosity, monitoring into mentorship, and tough topics into open conversations. Packed with practical tools and resources, this episode gives parents the confidence to guide their children safely and thoughtfully through a screen-saturated world.



On the Calendar



October

National



November

Healing





- National Substance Abuse Prevention Month

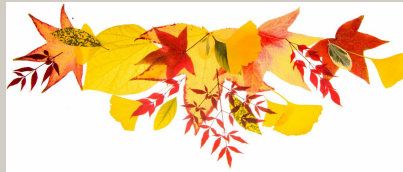
- National Medicine Abuse Awareness Month
- Mental Illness Awareness Week, October 5-11
- Red Ribbon Week October 23-31
- National Take-Back Day October 25, 2025 10:00 am to 2:00 pm
- O
- Connection Coat Drive through October 31
- Halloween, October 31



**DONATE
TODAY!**



SCAN ME



- Healing from Grief and Loss, November 8, 2025
- Tranq 2025, November 13, 2025 9-3 Virtual Conference
- GRMP 2025 Annual Policy Summit, November 12 10:30-12
- National Smoke-Out, November 17, 2025
- Thanksgiving Day, November 27, 2025



Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council | 240 Elm Street | Cumming, GA 30040 US

[Unsubscribe](#) | [Update Profile](#) | [Constant Contact Data Notice](#)