

Press Release

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dr. Sharon Harris

516- 676-2008

safeglencove@yahoo.com

SAFE Glen Cove Coalition: October is Youth Substance Use Prevention Month

In October, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is observing Youth Substance Use Prevention Month. The need for prevention has never been greater. Studies show that the earlier in life a young person starts using alcohol or other drugs, the greater their lifetime risk of misuse or addiction. However, prevention efforts have been successful. For the first time since 2018, there is a 3% decrease in overdose deaths. While this decline is a positive step forward, it is tempered by the sobering reality that over 107,000 Americans lost their lives to overdose in 2023 alone.

The substance use landscape continues to evolve with the ongoing spread of highly potent synthetic opioids (like illicit fentanyl) in counterfeit pills and the re-emergence of stimulants like methamphetamine. At the same time, there are changing state policies related to alcohol, marijuana, and hallucinogens. Vaping and tobacco products remain readily accessible to young people in many communities and the public continues to learn about the perils and potentials of alcohol, tobacco and other drug use through social media. All of this is transpiring against the backdrop of rising mental health challenges, especially among young people, that are inextricably linked to substance use.

SAMHSA maintains substance use has never been riskier, whether it is someone's first time using, or a long-standing substance use disorder. The risk of overdose is now elevated with any use of an illicit drug, given the potency, lethality, and unpredictability of fentanyl and other additives (such as xylazine) in the illicit drug supply. What remains constant is prevention science is essential as evidenced by the results of the 2023 National Survey on Drug Use and Health:

- In 2023, 3.1% of people (8.9 million) misused opioids in the past year, which is similar to 2022 and 2021 (3.2% and 8.9 million, 3.4% and 9.4 million respectively).
- Among the 134.7 million people aged 12 or older who currently used alcohol in 2023, 61.4 million people (or 45.6%) had engaged in [binge drinking](#) in the past month.

- Marijuana was the most commonly used illicit drug, with 21.8% of people aged 12 or older (or 61.8 million people) using it in the past year.
- American Indian or Alaska Native and Multiracial people were more likely than most other racial or ethnic groups to have used substances or to have had an SUD in the past year.
- In 2023, 9.4% of people aged 12 or older vaped nicotine in the past month, up from 8.3% in 2022.

Research shows that the earlier substance use begins, the more likely it will develop into a substance use disorder that is why it is so critical to provide youth with evidence-based prevention education to prevent initial use as well as delay the onset of use.

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) is a branch of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It is charged with improving the quality and availability of treatment and rehabilitative services in order to reduce illness, death, disability, and the cost to society resulting from substance abuse and mental illnesses. For more information about SAMHSA please visit www.samhsa.gov.

SAFE, Inc. is the only alcohol and substance abuse prevention, intervention, and education agency in the City of Glen Cove and provides evidence-based Life Skills Training, a prevention education program to Elementary and Middle School students and their parents. Its Coalition is concerned about youth substance use and their developing brain. The Coalition is conducting several prevention awareness campaigns entitled. "Keeping Glen Cove SAFE," to educate and update the community regarding alcohol, tobacco marijuana and opioid use and its negative consequences to one's health and wellness. To learn more about SAFE please visit www.safeglencove.org or to learn more about the SAFE Glen Cove Coalition please follow us on www.facebook.com/safeglencovecoalition.