



NC DEPARTMENT OF  
**HEALTH AND  
HUMAN SERVICES**  
Division of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities and  
Substance Use Services

# Side by Side with DMH/DD/SUS

*Improving our system together.*

Kelly Crosbie, MSW, LCSW

Director

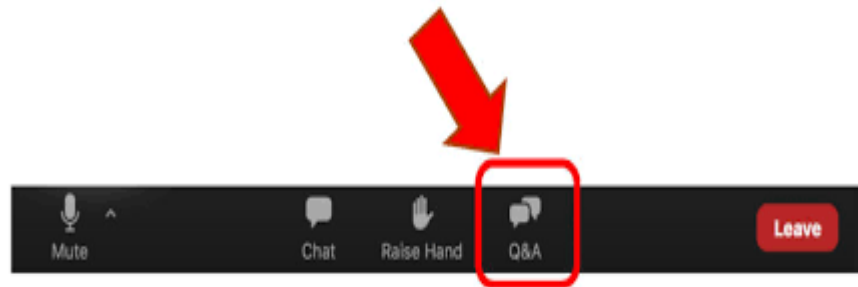
NC DHHS Division of Mental Health,  
Developmental Disabilities, and Substance Use Services

**October 6, 2025**

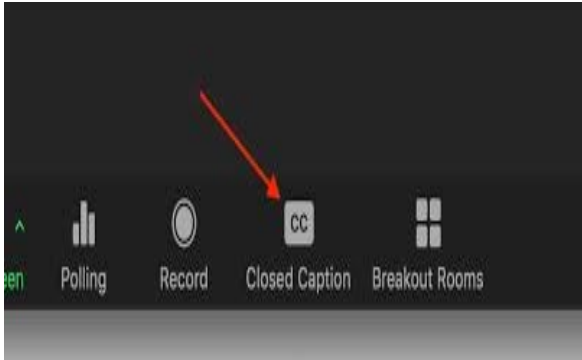


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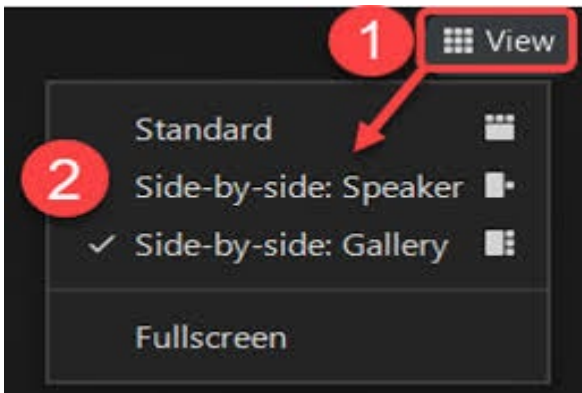
# Housekeeping



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- Adjusting Video Layout and Screen View
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# Agenda

1. Introductions
2. MH/SU/IDD/TBI System Announcements & Updates
3. Focus: Substance Use Prevention
4. Panel Discussion

# Kelly Crosbie, MSW, LCSW, DMH/DD/SUS Director



- 30 years in MH/SU/IDD Field
- 13 years in DHHS
- DMHDDDSUS since Dec 2022
- Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW)
- Person with lived experience

# MH/SU/IDD/TBI System Announcements & Updates

# In Support of Our Communities: Resources After the Southport Tragedy

In the wake of the recent tragedy in Southport, many across our communities may be experiencing pain and uncertainty. While words cannot undo what has happened, we can offer each other care, connection, and support.

## Immediate Emotional Support – 24/7

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline:** Call or text 988 | Veterans: Press 1 | Spanish: Press 2 or text AYUDA | Chat: [988lifeline.org/chat](https://988lifeline.org/chat)
- **Peer Warmline:** 1-855-PEERS-NC (855-733-7762) – Talk with someone in recovery with lived experience
- **[SAMHSA Disaster Distress Helpline](https://www.samhsa.gov/2k2018/08/01/2018-08-01-samhsa-disaster-distress-helpline):** 1-800-985-5990 (Press 2 for Spanish)

## Helpful Resources

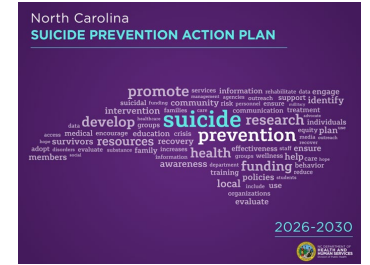
- [Mass Violence & Trauma Recovery](#) (SAMHSA)
- [Managing Stress for First Responders](#) (SAMHSA)
- [Age-Related Reactions to Trauma](#) (NCTSN)
- [Helping Children Cope After Disaster](#) (SAMHSA)
- Faith-Based Disaster Mental Health (NDIN – [English](#) / [Spanish](#))

DMH/DD/SUS stands with all those affected and remains committed to supporting healing and recovery across North Carolina.



# NC Suicide Prevention Action Plan (2026–2030)

NCDHHS has released the state's [Suicide Prevention Action Plan](#) for 2026-2030. The five-year plan outlines a coordinated, evidence-based approach and promising practices to reduce suicide deaths and self-harm injuries statewide.



## Strengthen the Crisis System

### The Need

- Suicide is a **top 5 cause of death** for ages 10–65 in NC.
- **1,600 lives lost in 2023.**
- **Veterans:** 2.7x higher suicide rate than non-veterans.

### Plan Priorities

- Strengthen prevention systems & expand crisis response.
- Reduce access to lethal means.
- Build awareness & community training (schools, workplaces, faith communities).
- Expand services for youth, veterans, older adults, and justice-involved.
- Focus on rural & underserved communities.

### Resources

- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline** – Call, text, or chat (ASL & Spanish available).
- **Peer Warmline**: 1-855-PEERS-NC.
- **Mobile Crisis Teams & Crisis Centers** statewide.
- Visit the **NCDHHS Suicide Prevention website** & download the **Crisis Services Toolkit**.



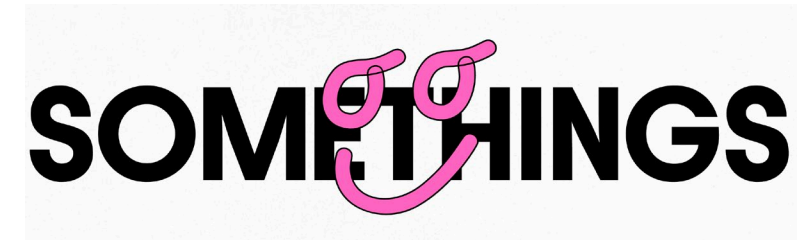
# SOMETHINGS Free Teen Mentoring App Growing Quickly

- **Rapid Growth:** Since May 2025, teen engagement increased by **68%**; now serving **619 teens** across **80 counties** (up from 54).
- **Peer Support:** Teens are paired with **Certified Peer Support Mentors** who provide relatable, lived-experience guidance through text and video calls.

## Impact:

- **77 mental health crises de-escalated**
- Average satisfaction: **4.7/5**
- **When Available:** After school and weekends — offering a low-pressure way to connect.
- **Partnership:** Initiative supported by **NCDHHS, SOMETHINGS, and Alliance Health.**

**Get Started:** Teens, parents, or referrals can sign up at [www.SOMETHINGS.com/northcarolina](http://www.SOMETHINGS.com/northcarolina).



♥ 55% of teens feel better in under 2 weeks

## Free mental health support for teens in North Carolina

Some things has partnered with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) to provide any teen across the state with free mental health services.



Increase access to care across the state

# Talkspace NC: Innovative Mental Health Therapy for Justice-Impacted Youth

## About the Webinar

Join DMHDDSUS and Talkspace to learn about a groundbreaking partnership that offers free virtual counseling to justice-impacted teens ages 13–17. This two-year program aims to serve up to **20,000 youth** across North Carolina, helping expand access to culturally responsive mental health services.

This webinar will highlight the **need, value, and impact** of this initiative, show how it expands access and consistency in youth mental health care, and feature a live demo of Talkspace's platform. Families, youth, advocates, counselors, court officials, and providers are encouraged to attend.

**Date/Time:** Tuesday, Oct. 28, 2025 | 12:00–1:00 p.m.

[Register for the webinar](#)



Expand services for people in the justice system

The graphic is a light blue rectangular box. At the top left is the 'Talkspace' logo. At the top right is the 'NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES' logo. In the center is a photograph of a young man with dark hair, wearing a brown jacket, looking off to the side. Below the photo, the text 'Free therapy for NC youth' is written in a bold, dark font. Underneath this, in a smaller font, is the text: 'Is something on your mind? A licensed therapist who specializes in youth will listen and help you navigate your feelings and experiences.' Below that, it says 'Talkspace therapy is FREE for any referred North Carolina youth ages 13–17'. At the bottom left is the URL 'talkspace.com/ncyouth'. At the bottom right is a QR code.

Talkspace

NC DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES

Free therapy for NC youth

Is something on your mind? A licensed therapist who specializes in youth will listen and help you navigate your feelings and experiences.

Talkspace therapy is FREE for any referred North Carolina youth ages 13–17

talkspace.com/ncyouth

# Help Shape TBI Services in North Carolina

DMH/DD/SUS is updating the **TBI State Action Plan** and invites people with lived experience, caregivers, providers, and advocates to join the **TBI Advisory Workgroup**.

## Why Participate:

- Share your story and ideas
- Help improve care and supports
- Collaborate with others who care about TBI

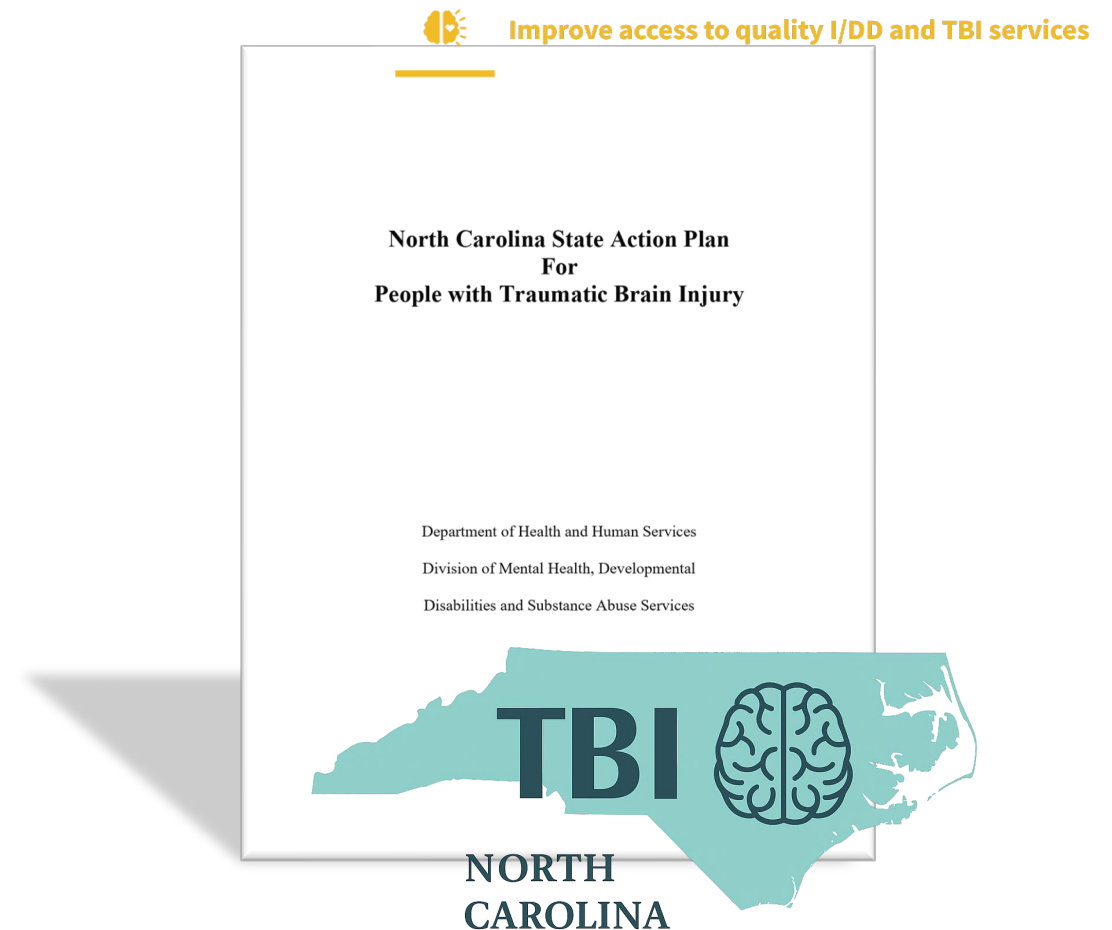
## Workgroup Dates:

**Oct. 22 • Nov. 19 • Dec. 17 (1.5 hours each)**

**Sign Up by Oct. 13, 2025**

[Join the TBI Advisory Workgroup](#)

Questions: [TBIContact@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:TBIContact@dhhs.nc.gov)



# North Carolina's Second Mobile OTP Unveiled in Greensboro

On Sept. 10, DMH/DD/SUS Director **Kelly Crosbie** and **Anna Stanley**, State Opioid Treatment Authority Administrator, celebrated the ribbon-cutting of the **second mobile Opioid Treatment Program (OTP)** in North Carolina at New Season Treatment Center in Greensboro.

- **OTPs provide the gold standard of care** for opioid use disorder, offering **all FDA-approved medications for OUD** along with counseling, case management, and peer support.
- **Mobile units extend brick-and-mortar OTPs** into communities, increasing access to treatment.
- Up to **six more mobile OTPs** are expected to launch by early next year, supported by **Hurricane Helene relief funds** through Vaya Health.
- This effort is part of the DMH/DD/SUS **five-year strategic plan** to expand access to health care and reduce substance misuse and overdose.



**Increase access to care across the state**



**Prevent substance misuse and overdose**

# Cameron Ridge Residential Treatment Center Breaks Ground

Cameron Ridge celebrated the ribbon-cutting of its new facility in State Road, NC on Sept. 5, unveiling expanded treatment services for people seeking recovery support.

- **New Program:** The facility introduced a clinically intensive **Partial Hospitalization Program (SACOT)**, offering structured services similar to inpatient care while allowing participants to return home each night.
- **Community Impact:** [Cameron Ridge](#) was founded by people in recovery and is dedicated to **evidence-based treatment, individualized care, and a holistic recovery model**.
- **Division Representation:** Ashley Wurth, DMH/DD/SUS Lead for Services for Justice-Involved Individuals, attended on behalf of the Division.



Increase access to care across the state



Amplify recovery and community-based services

# Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month



# Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month

*Prevention is Possible. Prevention Works.*

- October is a time to shine a light on prevention — not just for professionals, but for every North Carolinian.
- Prevention is something we all play a role in: what happens in our homes, schools, and communities can shape a child's future.
- ***This is about all of us, not just our substance use and mental health systems***

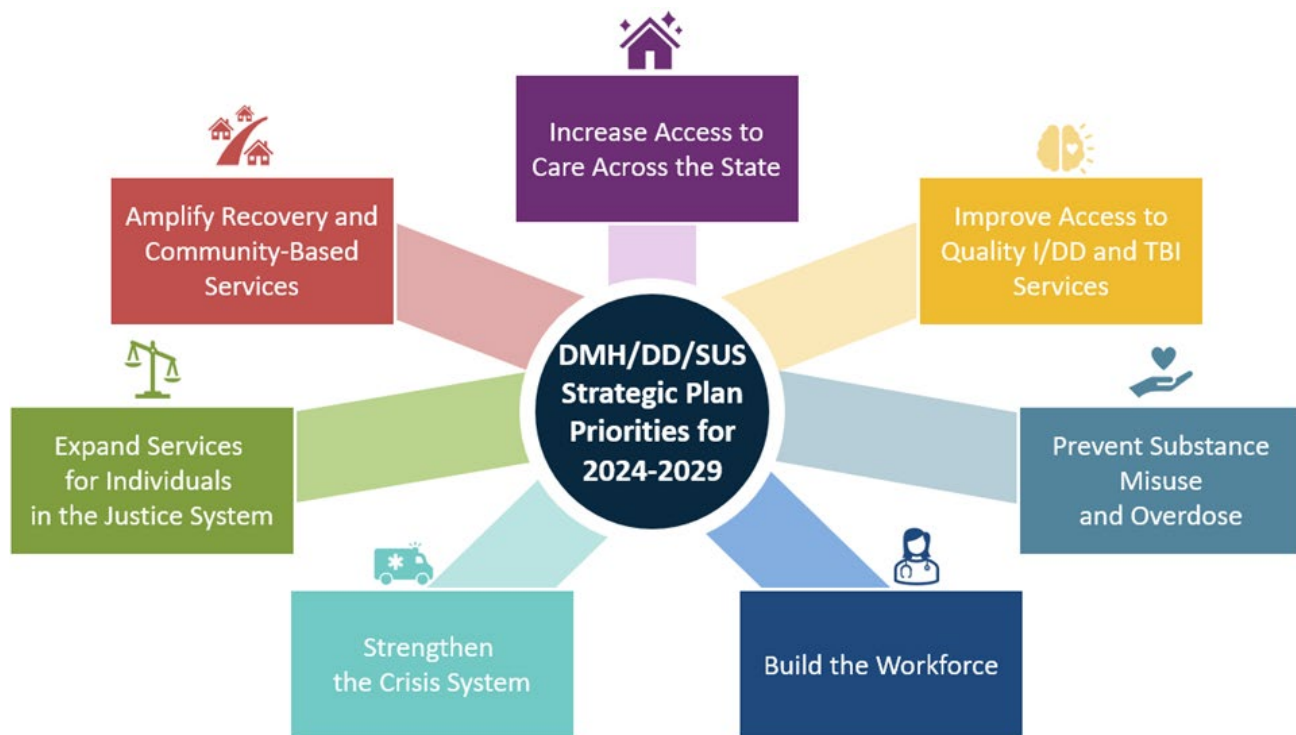


Prevent substance misuse and overdose





## Priority 3: Prevent Substance Misuse and Overdose



### Goals

- **Increase Primary Prevention Engagement.** Delay initial substance exposure or use and deter access to substances that can be misused by children and adolescents, using harm reduction strategies to prevent escalation and misuse in young adults.
- **Increase Access to Evidence Based SUD Treatment.** Increase timely access to SUD services, especially for geographies and populations with low penetration rates.



## Focused Interventions

### **Office-Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT) Expansion with North Carolina Behavioral Health Consultation Line (NC-PAL)**

Expand the NC-PAL program to include MOUD support for physicians offering Office-Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT).

### **Expand SUD Treatment Access for Adolescents**

Target services for adolescents with tailored programs that integrate substance use treatment with existing mental health services.

### **Prevention**

Establish a statewide program for evidence-based substance misuse prevention models, focusing on community-level initiatives that encourage socialization for teens.

### **Updated Naloxone Saturation Plan and Distribution**

Revise the naloxone plan to enhance availability through funding, training support, and inclusion in crisis response team service definitions.

### **Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) Saturation Plan**

Collaborate with providers to increase the availability of Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) across more counties and programs.

### **Mobile Opioid Treatment Program (OTP) Implementation**

Launch more mobile OTP units to improve access to opioid treatment for marginalized, homeless, rural, and underserved communities.

### **Post Overdose Recovery Team (PORT)**

Increase the utilization of PORTs statewide to support individuals after an overdose.

### **Recovery Communities and Workplaces**

Revamp prevention approaches to promote healthy communities and socialization for teens using evidence-based strategies.

### **Collegiate Harm Reduction**

Fund Collegiate Recovery Programs (CRPs) that support students in recovery through housing, dedicated staff, and regular recovery meetings.

# What is Prevention?

Prevention stops problems before they start. It builds strong kids, strong families, and strong communities.

## Why Prevention Matters



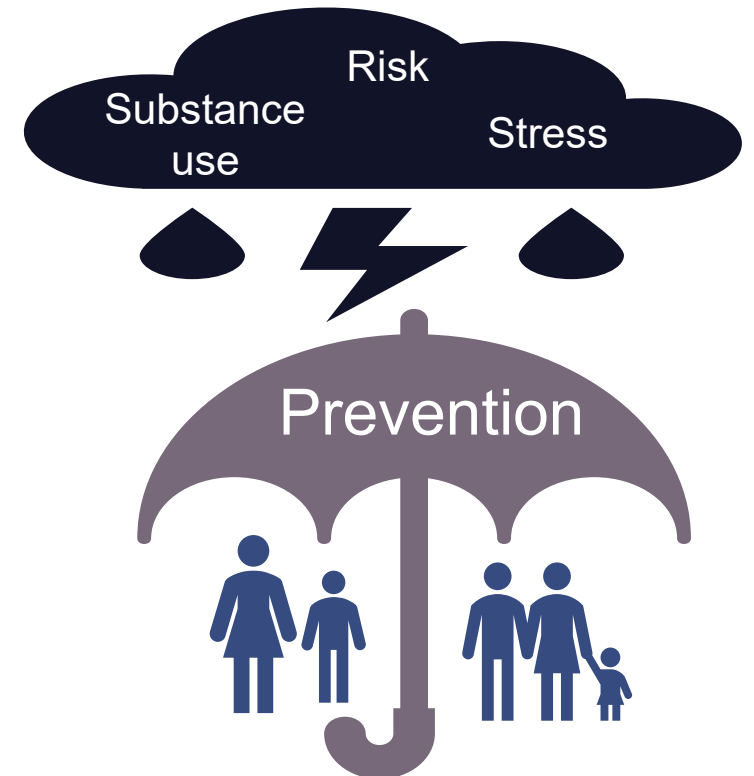
**For Youth:** Builds confidence and gives the tools to make healthy decisions and connect positively with friends.



**For Parents:** Helps kids make safer choices and resist peer pressure.



**For Communities:** Lowers overdoses, makes schools safer, and lowers health costs – everyone benefits.



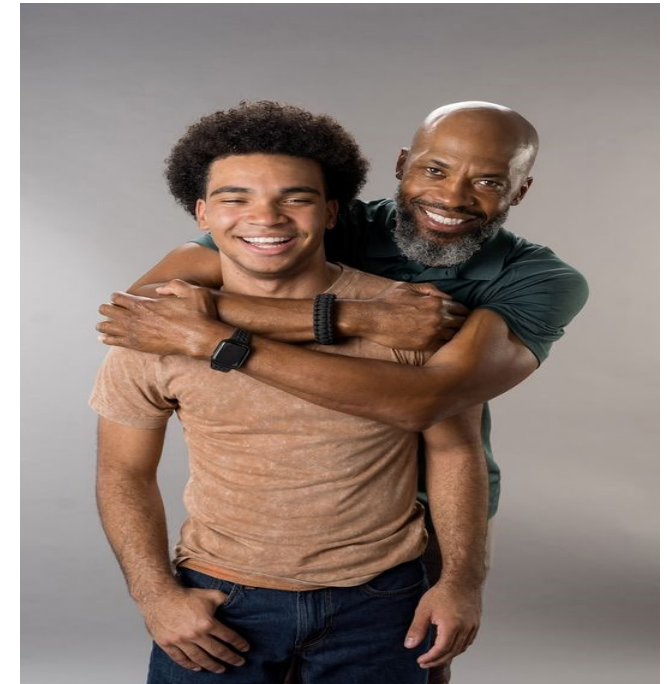
# Why Should North Carolinians Care?

## NC Data Highlights:

- Nearly **9,000 youth** are reached through youth prevention education programs in NC
- Campaigns have reached **6.5 million+ people**
- Prevention saves lives *and money* (\$1 spent = up to \$14 saved<sup>1</sup>)

## Why it Matters:

- **Parents:** Your child learns real skills to avoid vaping, drinking, or using medications without a prescription
- **Youth:** Are empowered to live and accomplish goals without substances holding you back
- **Communities:** Benefits from fewer emergency calls, safer neighborhoods, and healthier futures



<sup>1</sup> Source: Central East PTTC September 26, 2024

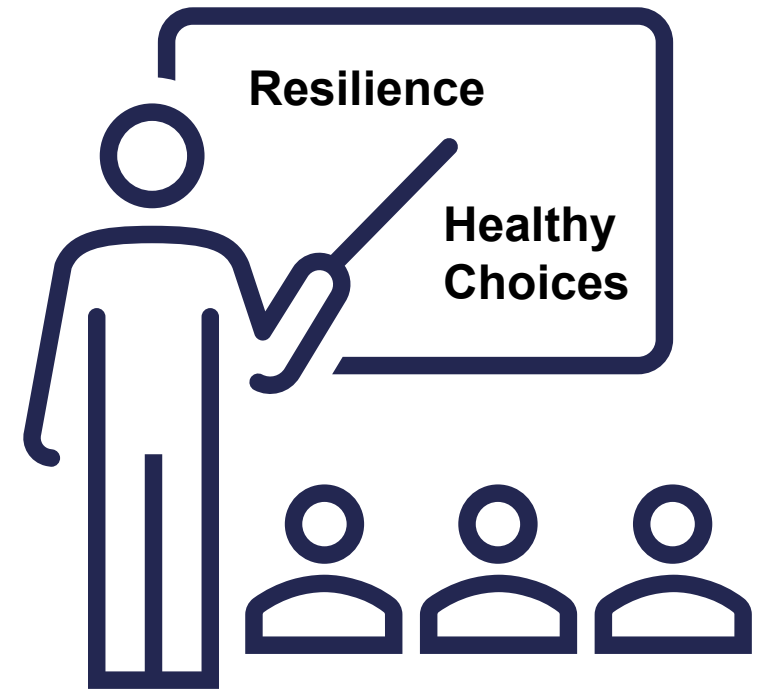
# Reaching Youth Where They Are

459 new youth groups have been launched, with over 6,700 completions of programs like *Too Good for Drugs* and *Catch My Breath* .

**92% of students said the programs helped them.**

## Why these efforts matter:

- **Parents:** Youth in prevention programs are more likely to delay their first use of substances, boosting academic success
- **Youth:** These programs provide real-world skills like decision-making, resisting peer pressure, and how to handle stress
- **Communities:** Healthier kids now = a stronger workforce, less strain on the healthcare system, and safer communities in the future



# Community Prevention in Action

## North Carolina Impact:

- Distributed **11,730 lock boxes** and **15,539 disposal kits**
- Hosted **205 take-back events** = **1,200 lbs. of medications** safely collected
- Reached **6.5 million people** with messages about safe storage and prevention



## Steps to Reduce Prescription Opioid Misuse and Overdose

- 1. Talk with your health provider about alternatives to prescription opioids for pain management, such as physical therapy, exercise, nonopioid medications (acetaminophen (Tylenol®) or ibuprofen (Advil®)), Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT), interventional therapies like injections, weight loss, acupuncture, or massage.
- 2. If a prescription opioid is recommended, ask your healthcare provider to prescribe the lowest effective dose. Also ask if they would recommend Naloxone, an opioid overdose reversal medication.
- 3. Avoid taking opioids with alcohol and other substances, especially those that cause drowsiness, such as benzodiazepines (Xanax®, Valium®), muscle relaxants (Soma®, Flexeril®), sleep aids (Ambian®, Lunesta®), or other prescription opioids.
- 4. Keep prescription medications locked and safely secured within the home through a lockbox, safe, or by simply locking your medicine cabinet.
- 5. Don't share your medications with family members and/or friends. Take all medications as prescribed by your healthcare provider.
- 6. Drop off your expired and/or unused medication safely and anonymously at one of your local prescription drug drop box locations.

## Local Prescription Drug Drop Box locations:

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <b>Chatham Police Department</b><br>602 N Brown St<br>Chatham, NC 28411<br>Phone: 910-654-4146              | <b>Columbus Regional Hospital</b><br>800 Jefferson St<br>Whiteville, NC 28472<br>Phone: 910-642-8011 |
| <b>Columbus County Sheriff's Office</b><br>805 Washington St<br>Whiteville, NC 28472<br>Phone: 910-642-6551 | <b>Taber City Police Department</b><br>1108 E 5th St<br>Taber City, NC 28463<br>Phone: 910-653-3149  |



Contact the Robeson Health Care Corporation at 910-521-2900 to learn more about secure medication storage, safe medication disposal, and how you can get involved in preventing opioid misuse and overdose.

## Additional Resources

- Lock Your Meds North Carolina: [lockyourmeds.org/nc](http://lockyourmeds.org/nc)
- Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Opioid Prescribing Information for Patients: [cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients](http://cdc.gov/drugoverdose/patients)

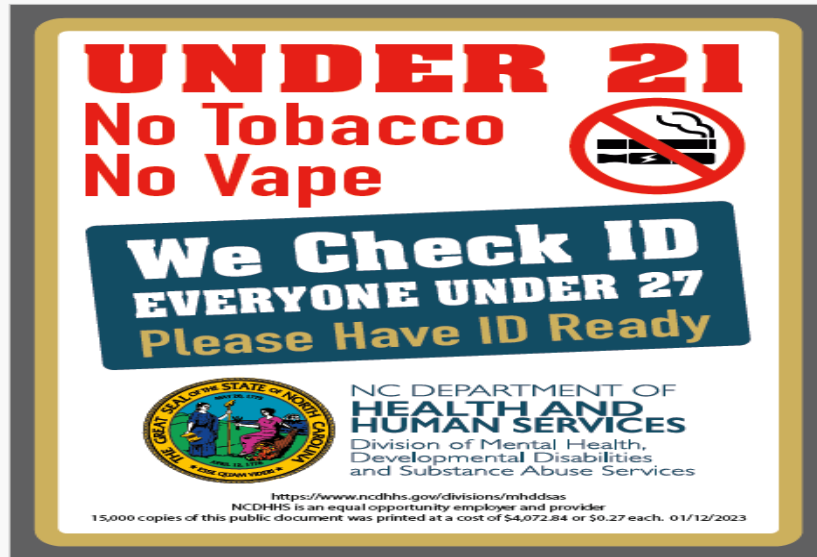
Supported by the Strategic Prevention Framework for Prescription Drugs, with funding from SAMHSA, SAMHSA's award in partnership with Robeson Health Care Corporation.

## Why These Efforts Matter:

- **Parents:** Keeps kids safe by removing easy access to prescription medications and alcohol
- **Youth:** Reduces temptation and peer pressure ("it's not just sitting there to grab")
- **Communities:** Lowers overdose risk, supports safer homes, prevents accidents



# Community Engagement & Youth Ambassadors



## North Carolina Impact:

- 7,000+ retailer visits to check tobacco/vape sales.
- Coalitions have **expanded prevention** into libraries, churches, and afterschool programs.
- Outreach has increased **community awareness** of secure medication and alcohol storage in the home

## Why These Efforts Matter:

- **Parents:** Peace of mind knowing stores are checked to prevent illegal youth sales.
- **Youth:** Fewer chances to buy tobacco/vapes = lower risk of addiction.
- **Communities:** Prevention partnerships mean schools, businesses, and faith leaders are all working together.





# Family Engagement & Youth Ambassadors

## North Carolina Impact:

- Youth ambassadors and peer models are changing school culture.
- *Strengthening Families* builds resistance and improves communication between parents and youth.
- Families find these programs successful—during Hurricane Helene, families and schools stayed engaged in prevention efforts.



## Why These Efforts Matter:

- **Parents:** Stronger family communication lowers risk of early substance use.
- **Youth:** Hearing from peers — not just adults — makes prevention messages “stick.”
- **Communities:** Builds trust, social bonds, and resilience that carry forward for generations.



# Saarah Waleed, MS, NCC, LCMHC, Chief Clinical Officer – SU/ Justice Involved Services



## **Clinical Policy and Programs**

- Substance Use
- Gambling
- Justice
- Primary Prevention
- MH/SU Workforce



**Jane McDonald**

Certified Substance Abuse Prevention Specialist

- Prevention Coordinator with Coastal Horizons Center, Inc.
- Coordinator of the Cape Fear Coalition and the Pender Co. Substance Use Prevention Partnership
- NC Prevention Providers Association



**Luke Jarvis**

First Certified Prevention Specialist in Wilkes County

- Executive Director of Wilkes Youth Life Development (WYLD)
- Teen Action Council, Lead Appalachia, and The Change Wagon



**Virginia L. Johnson**

Certified Prevention Specialist

- More than 20 years of experience
- Substance Use Prevention Senior Director at the Alice Aycock Poe Center for Health Education
- Nationally recognized trainer with expertise in strategic planning, facilitation, and sustainability

## Panel Discussion: What Does Prevention Look Like in Real Life?



**Saanika Agarwal**

UNC-CH School of Public Health Student

- Studying Nutrition and Chemistry
- Youth Empowerment at Poe
- Commitment to improving community health



**Alicia Roberts**

Youth Ambassador

- Engineering Student at NC State University
- President of Teen Action Council of WYLD last year
- CADCA Annual National Leadership Forum Attendee (2024)
- North Carolina Prevention Conference Panelist (2024)



# How YOU Can Be Part of Prevention in NC

## At Home

- ✓ Lock up medication and alcohol.
- ✓ Have one honest talk with your kids about substances this week.

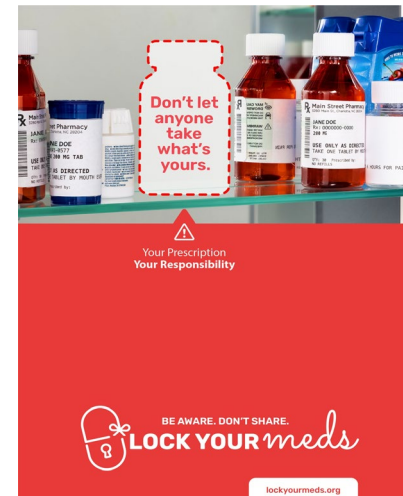
## In Your Communities

- ✓ Share prevention posts on social media (#Prevention Works #PreventionHappensHere).
- ✓ Join a local coalition or attend a community event.

## Statewide Initiatives

- ✓ Help normalize conversations about substance use and mental health.
- ✓ Celebrate and share prevention success stories.

- **FindSupport.gov**
- **FindTreatment.gov**
- **988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline**  
Call or text 988  
Chat 988Lifeline.org
- **SAMHSA's National Helpline**  
1-800-662-HELP (4357)
- **Substance Use**  
samhsa.gov/substance-use



# Thank You

**Prevention works.  
Together, we can help North Carolina's youth,  
families, and communities thrive.**



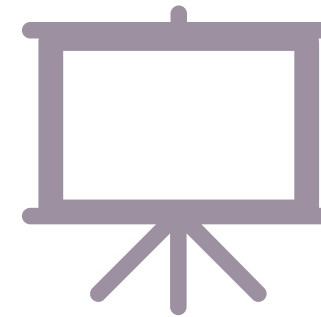
*Together for Prevention*



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Questions and feedback are welcome at  
[BHIDD.HelpCenter@dhhs.nc.gov](mailto:BHIDD.HelpCenter@dhhs.nc.gov).



The recording and presentation slides for this  
webinar will be posted to the [Community  
Engagement & Training](#) webpage.



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