




FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL

EDUCATE.
ADVOCATE.
EMPOWER.




Happy Birthday Strategizer



FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL

DONATE TODAY!



SCAN ME

**Leading the way to a
healthier Forsyth County**

April 2025 Volume 4 Issue 12

[Donate Here](#)

**Why we walk... Shatter Shame, Shatter Despair, Remembrance and
Dignity to those we lost,
and because RECOVERY IS REAL!**

THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

SUNDAY
APRIL
27
3P-5P

#onestepatatime

AT THE CUMMING CITY CENTER



THE CITY OF CUMMING PRESENTS

THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

#onestepatatime

AT THE CUMMING CITY CENTER

SUNDAY
APRIL
27
3P-5P

EVENTS

MUSIC AND GAMES
FACE PAINTING
PIZZA AND PRIZES
RESOURCE TABLES
WALK FOR AWARENESS
AND MORE!
RSVP, SIGN UP FOR A TEAM,
OR DONATE BELOW:



SCAN FOR
MORE INFO!

OUR SPONSORS



FORSYTH COUNTY
DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL



REALTY4RECOVERY



FORSYTH COUNTY
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
family connection



Cumming
Comprehensive Treatment Center
Opioid Use Disorder Program

Why We Walk

By standing up and speaking out, we can defeat

THE WALK

the stigma and discrimination working against us and be the proof that Recovery is Real.

THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

#onestepatatime

APRIL 27TH @ CUMMING CITY CENTER

SPECIAL REALTOR SPONSORSHIP PACKAGE

\$150 - LOGO ON SPECIAL BANNER TO BE DISPLAYED DURING THE WALK
 \$300 - LOGO ON SPECIAL BANNER TO BE DISPLAYED DURING WALK, ON WEBSITE, AND SOCIAL MEDIA

Scan QR code to sponsor. Please put "The Walk Realtor Package" in the memo line:



Send add layout, photo and any questions by 4/15 to rachele@unitedwayforsyth.com

All proceeds will benefit the Forsyth County Drug Awareness Council, supporting drug and alcohol prevention and education initiatives to promote the overall health and well-being of Forsyth County.

THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

#onestepatatime

THE CUMMING CITY CENTER

APRIL 27, 2025 | 3:00-5:00 PM

SPONSORSHIP PACKAGES

Benefits for Sponsorship:	Gold: \$2,500	Silver: \$1,000	Bronze: \$500	Friend of FCDAC
Name/Logo in Media	~Year Round Promotions & Social Media ~Event Press Releases ~Event Promotions	~Event Press Releases ~Event Promotions	~Event Promotions	Any Level - Thanks on Social Media
Name/Logo on Event Banner	Large at Top	Medium - Middle	Small - Bottom	
Name/Logo on Event T-Shirt	Large at Top	Medium - Middle	Small - Bottom	
Honorable Mention at Event	By Guest of Honor	-	-	
Free T-shirts	8	6	4	

DONATION QR CODE
PLEASE PUT "THE WALK" IN THE MEMO LINE

SPONSORSHIP CONTACTS: EMAIL RACHEL@UNITEDWAYFORSYTH.COM WITH YOUR LOGO AND MAKE DONATION NO LATER THAN APRIL 15TH

SPONSORSHIPS AND DONATIONS SUPPORT THE SUSTAINABILITY OF THE FORSYTH COUNTY DRUG AWARENESS COUNCIL AND ITS PROGRAMS INCLUDING THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

THE WALK FOR RECOVERY

#onestepatatime

April 27th @ The Cumming City Center
arrive at 2:00 pm. Event starts at 3:00pm.

RESOURCE TABLE SIGN UP

We are pleased to invite community organizations to host a table at this event at no cost. As a nonprofit, we rely on donations to sustain our programs and events. If your organization is able to contribute a \$250 donation, you will receive the following promotional benefits:

- Your logo on event t-shirts, banners, and flyers
- Recognition on our social media platforms

BRING YOUR OWN TABLES AND CHAIRS

We appreciate your support in helping us make this event a success!

Send your rsvp and logo to:
Alycea@unitedwayforsyth.com

Use QR code for promotional benefits, put "The Walk Resource Table" in memo line:



The final push toward The Walk for Recovery is on! It is going to be incredible, inspiring, and community-building! We really need YOU to promote this event to the general public. Each year we've done this program, our recovery community has come out in large numbers, but we want this to be more accepted community-wide. This can be best accomplished through word-of-mouth invitations. So invite everyone you know, friends, family and neighbors and don't forget your Church family!

The Walk for Recovery is also a fundraising project that pays for the event and allows the Council to fund other projects. That happens through our Walk Sponsorship Program. Please consider asking business owners you know or even individuals who could donate to consider becoming sponsors. Sponsors receive recognition at the event, on our flyers, banners, T-shirts, and social media accounts.

I am excited to announce that we will We will show two short films. we are making at the Walk for Recovery. The

short films are about the council and its members who care about prevention.

We will use them to build capacity and help eliminate the stigma around drugs and alcohol at community events.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR!



Our next FCDAC Council Meeting will be conducted jointly with the Mental Health Coalition Meeting on

Wednesday, May 14
8 a.m.
United Way Offices

Council Meeting Highlights

Director Rachel Kayden opened the 8 a.m. monthly council meeting **ON THE ROAD** at the Community Connections Family Connections new Drop Center. The address is

133 Samaritan Dr. Cumming GA 30040. **A big thank you to Sarah**

Pedarre and Family Connection for stepping up at the last minute to host us and give us an opportunity to be one of the first to see their new D.R.O.P. Center! Rachel welcomed everyone, having the attendees introduce themselves and make announcements.



Announcements:

- Our May meeting will be conducted jointly with the Mental Health Coalition Meeting on **Wednesday, May 14th, at 8:00 a.m. at United Way**. The speaker is John N. Constantino, a child psychiatrist and expert on neurodevelopmental disorders, especially autism spectrum disorders

(ASD). Constantino is the inaugural System Chief of Behavioral and Mental Health at Children's Healthcare of Atlanta.

- Sarah Pedarre announced a **Child and Family Welfare Collaborative meeting will be April 21**. The meeting will deep dive into data. We will receive cool data, and learn to use tools to analyze the

meeting will deep dive into data. We will receive user data, and learn to use tools to analyze the numbers and use maps. If you like data and numbers, please come.

- Paulina Huynh is the Behavioral Health director at Georgia Highlands Medical Services. Our MAT program is accepting patients who need medication-assisted treatment along with behavioral health services.

This month, we will hear from two members of the **Youth Council**. As you know, I have been working to spotlight the youth in our prevention efforts because data shows the impact when youth become influencers with their peers. So our speakers today are **Eshawnvie Kallu** and **Sahasra Tatavarti**, both juniors at Lambert High School. I will then update you on our accomplishments in 2024, and we'll discuss plans for 2025.



We all know the dangers of Fentanyl. It's 50-100 times stronger than morphine and the leading cause of death for those 18-45 years old. Just a few grains of Fentanyl the size of salt grains is lethal.

We saw at Southside Middle School that there was an issue where a student overdosed on Fentanyl without knowing it because of the fake pill situation. We decided to take a stand against this

drug by developing a curriculum.

We use three mechanisms to present this curriculum. The **first is Presentations**. During the first week, students receive an information dump tailored to seventh through high school grades. The second week details what they could do for prevention, awareness, and ways to advocate in their communities. They receive the presentations in short bites—five slides each day of the week. There are also interactive activities, games, or videos at the end of each day's session.

Second are the Guided Notes. As the students go over the presentations, we want to make sure they aren't skipping through them, so the student is required to fill out the guided notes, in which they are asked to answer higher-level questions on what they learned and how they might apply it in their real life. Additionally, there are interactive activities to help them understand the material through a more hands-on approach and not just through presentations and lectures. We have them watch short video testimonies of what other students went through to become free of fentanyl.

We reviewed available mental health community resources, media literacy, and advocacy in the second week. We taught them where to get help or recommend others get help and how to view what they see on social media: Is this really cool, or is someone trying to take your money who doesn't care if the product causes injury or worse?

Finally, they will learn how to become advocates for themselves and others. One way is through online platforms. Our **third mechanism is Discussion Posts**. We knew personally when completing online learning that **discussion posts** and talking to your classmates on that online platform about the information learned deepened our education.

Lastly, we created some short-form content and awareness videos that our Gen Z students like and that can be accessed from more social media sites.

Our curriculum is set to debut this spring semester at the **Forsyth Virtual Academy and ACE center**. The class size is between 80 and 100 students, and we hope this will be expanded in the future.



Our second project is an **Opioid Awareness Billboard Campaign**. Students can submit creative billboard designs that increase awareness of the crisis, solutions, and prevention strategies. Rachel pitched this idea to us and **Clair Holbrook**, Opioid Public Health Analyst for Health Department



District 2. The competition for best design is open to all high school students. **Please get the word out!** Rachel and Ms. Holbrook will select the design. **The deadline for the billboard design is May 23.** We hope the billboard will be up by the Fall of 2025!

Regarding **future projects**, we are looking into **expanding our curriculum** into a more national setting through the **Students Against Destructive Disorders organization**. They have similar missions of drug awareness and prevention strategies. We've shared our fentanyl curriculum with them and opened it up more broadly toward drugs in general. We are trying to tailor it toward more state-specific content. Through that collaboration, we can have our curriculum out on a national scale in health classes.

We also wanted to create **fentanyl awareness blind boxes**. Blind boxes are boxes you can not see inside, so the contents can only be felt. They can also be surprise boxes, and you can't see what you choose. We will make five symbols of symptoms produced by fentanyl. It's a tangible reminder that they can hold on to and that creates awareness. We're hoping to distribute it more widely. Thank you for allowing us to present to you today.

- Rachel reviewed FCDAC accomplishments in 2024. This chart shows what we are doing.
- A DFC (Drug Free Coalition) like ours typically focuses on three areas. We have focused on **schools**. We have done well, and we are making traction. This year, we are working to reach **Parents**, and it isn't easy to get to this group because they are stretched so thin. Marti will add this. We are developing an active **Youth Council** with many projects (as we have just heard from two youths). We have a 4th with the **Drug Summit and the Walk for Recovery**.
- A major roadblock to expansion is the lack of volunteers to follow through on the programs we want to implement. I can coordinate and set up meetings, etc., but we need more. We are working at our capacity and are coming up with strategies, like the two short films we are making to encourage more volunteers to join us.
- We are discussing new strategies for attracting parents to encourage conversations with their students that would assist both of them and be preventative actions against entry into drugs misuse or quick response to a situation.

- **Marti Roveda from the Parent Committee** has some suggestions for attracting parents by rephrasing our talk titles. Often, parents feel threatened by drug prevention titles. She suggested talking topics that are "easier on the ears" and can build in drug prevention tips. She suggested reaching out to the parents of children in the "step-up years." Step-up years are those when a student transitions to new schools, for example, when leaving elementary and moving up to middle school, or from middle school to high school, or from high school to college. Topics for **elementary** step-up year might be: "Understanding your pre-teen's brain," "Building secure attachment," "Encouraging emotional intelligence," "Managing big feelings," "Screen time and social media readiness," "Introducing healthy boundaries," and "Peer pressure skills."

For middle schoolers entering high school topic titles might be: "The middle school brain

PROGRAMS/PREVENTION

- Health Classes
- Support Groups in Schools
- Social Events in Schools
- Tabelaing
- Drug Summits
- Data Collection
- Council Meetings
- Training Webinars and Conferences
- Sustainability
- Youth Projects
- Parent Committee Programs
- Community Outreach Programs
- Grant Reporting
- Capacity Building

PLANS FOR 2025

- Parent education nights
- Parent and other educators monthly film for schools
- DFCS support flyer
- youth billboard campaign
- youth opioid campaign
- youth capacity building
- 2 films for capacity building
- Capacity building in the religious sector- possible church summit
- collaboration with CHAMPS program

For middle schoolers entering high school topics might be: "The middle school brain," "Helping your child manage stress and anxiety," "Empowered conversation navigating peer pressure and friendship," "Substance use prevention," "Social media, gaming and screen time," "Fostering independence while staying connected," and "Parent self-care and emotional balance."

For high schoolers: "The teenage brain supporting mental health," "The truth about substance use," "Building healthy independence in college career and life readiness," "Healthy relationships and communication," and "Digital responsibility parenting with equanimity."

- It was suggested that recordings of our parent talks be made to reach more parents on communication skills and recognizing signs of drug exploration or misuse. The recordings could be linked to the school district's newsletter and other social media platforms. However, we need more people to do the recordings.
- DFCS has asked me to create a support flyer. They also asked for us to provide volunteers willing to speak with their clients who have had children removed because of drug use and how to get the children back. So far, I haven't been able to provide this. Again, this is a capacity issue.
- Currently, the Council is producing two short films about the Council and its members who care about prevention. We will use them to build capacity and help eliminate the stigma around drugs and alcohol at community events. They will debut at The Walk for Recovery.
- After discussion, the group wanted to use 2025 to grow the **Parent Committee** and the **Youth Committee** and keep the momentum going in the **schools' programs**.

Rachel thanked everyone attending our meeting, especially Sarah Pedarre and Family Connection.

Did you miss this meeting? You can [Watch by Clicking HERE](#)

Community Outreach, Youth, Members, and Partners

Celebrating our VOLUNTEERS!

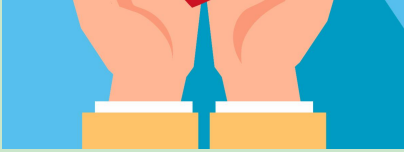
April 20-26 is National Volunteer Appreciation Week



Since 1974, **National Volunteer Week** has been an opportunity to recognize the impact of volunteer service and the power of volunteers to tackle society's most significant challenges, build stronger communities, and transform the world.



Forsyth Drug Awareness Council would not exist without YOU! Your willingness and dedication to making Forsyth County healthier and moving toward a drug-free community strengthens us when we unite and work together.



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.

Our team is growing! We've recruited almost 10 new Parent Partners—dedicated volunteers from The Insight Program and the broader recovery community—who are stepping forward to share their personal stories, parenting tools, and help break the stigma surrounding substance use disorder. These passionate parents will be spreading the message that no parent is alone through recorded videos, community and school events, and speaking opportunities like Gateway Parent Nights (Ashley and I will be presenting on April 15th!). They'll also be sharing our "What to Expect When You Suspect" flyer—an essential resource to help families recognize early warning signs of substance use disorder and feel empowered to take informed action.

As our outreach grows, so does our advocacy. I've remained actively involved with Georgians for Responsible Marijuana Policy (GRMP), using our family's story to support thoughtful, protective legislation at the Capitol. A major win this session: SR 427, sponsored by Senator Kay Kirkpatrick, passed the Senate. This resolution creates a Senate Study



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 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*.

Committee on Intoxicating Cannabinoids in high THC consumable hemp-derived products—a critically needed step in addressing the de facto recreational sale of high-THC hemp-derived products containing Delta-8 and Delta-10 THC in our state. GRMP also played strong defense, providing coordinated

testimony at key hearings. As a result, no pro-marijuana/THC/hemp legislation passed this session. We helped stop:



Mission: To eliminate the stigma and shame of Substance Use Disorder by educating parents and youth leaders on prevention, signs/symptoms, and

SR 222 | https://www.fcdac.org

[What to expect, When you suspect]

Can you identify with any of the following behaviors?

- Do you have more interest in your child's future than your child does?
- Are you driving your child's successes?
- Is your child emotionally irrational and always blaming others for their misfortunate situations?
- Is it a struggle to gain information about new friends and events?
- Does your child manipulate facts that are counter to what you know to be true?

Other signs can include:

- Losing interest in school or declining grades.
- Losing interest in their favorite activities or spending time with family.
- Getting in trouble at school or with the law. (even if not drug related)
- A change in eating or sleeping habits and personal hygiene.
- Use of digital currency. (Crypto Currency such as Bitcoin, CashApp, etc)
- Difficult to track social media exchanges. (Telegram, SnapChat, Instagram)
- Your child's self confidence and ability to ask for help is low.

Common Myths Regarding Substance Abuse:

- Addiction IS NOT a moral issue and lack of will power. (IT IS A MENTAL HEALTH ISSUE!)
- My child wouldn't know where to buy drugs (Social media has become the home delivery service for drug abuse.) Over 75% of opioid abuse begins with legally prescribed medication.
- My child is too involved with sports to have time for drugs.
- I'm a good parent, so I'm sure that I would know if substances were a problem. (Physical addiction can occur way before external signs of drug use are visible)
- My child is homeschooled or in private school where drugs are not an issue.
- Weed is not addictive and my child only smokes it once in a while. (Today's synthetic weed is extremely addictive and can lead to psychosis and hospitalization)
- My child comes from a happy home and has everything they need so they have no reason to use drugs. I would know if they had emotional issues.
- Drug abuse is something impacting "those" families; not my family. (Addiction doesn't discriminate and impacts all families of all race, religion, financial and marital status)

What Do I Do Now?

Know that YOU ARE NOT ALONE!
Do not be too afraid or ashamed to seek parent support immediately!
Contact your child's school counselor.
Reach out to us at Parents4FCDAC@gmail.com for support.
Use this QR Code to access a list of resources.



- SB 220 – increased THC limits in Georgia's medical marijuana program from 5% to 50% and allowed vaping
- HR 227 – another attempt at medical marijuana expansion
- SB 254 S – a substitute that weakened the original bill and promoted widespread sales of hemp products through alcohol retailers

In addition to testifying, my family—along with two other families impacted by high-potency THC—is participating in a powerful new video project in partnership with GRMP and Learnable. These short films tell the real stories of how high-potency THC has forever changed our lives. The first video is now live. To see it [CLICK HERE.](#)

The remaining stories will be posted as editing is completed. Please watch and share to raise awareness of the dangers these products pose to young people and their families.

As we continue to grow—both in numbers and in impact—we're reminded that real change begins with real voices. Whether it's a Parent Partner offering hope to a struggling family, or standing up at the Capitol to protect others, your courage and commitment matter. Thank you for being a vital part of this mission. Together, we are changing the narrative—and changing lives.

Youth Outreach

Youth Council

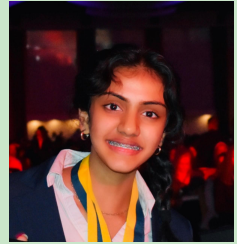
Billboard Challenge Campaign Announced and Fentanyl Awareness Curriculum Begins

Sahasra Tatavarti is a junior at



Lambert High School. The impact prevention activities have inspired Sahasra to join the Youth Council. Sahasra heard about FCDAC and the work of former Youth Council Member Vinayak Menon. "It intrigued me because of the up-close impact his involvement was having on people's lives, and I wanted to do as

Eshawnvie Kallu is a junior at



Lambert High School. My passion for helping others was sparked when I heard about the prevention work the Council was doing. I want to contribute to building a more robust solution for early drug abuse prevention. By being involved in Project SAFE at Lambert and this amazing Council, I can help start small ripples

having on people's lives, and I wanted to do as much as possible." My interests include reading, listening to my favorite music artists, and going out with my friends.



Sahasra Tatavarti announced a new project: a Drug Awareness Billboard Campaign

Challenge. The challenge invites fellow students at Lambert High School to create a winning design highlighting the opioid crisis, specifically the fentanyl crisis, for a **billboard sponsored by Forsyth County Health Department, District 2.**

"We want the students' designs to be solution-oriented to the fentanyl crisis with the message relating to Forsyth County and the Council. The billboard will be placed in a prominent spot in the county. The Drug Awareness Billboard Challenge will run from now to May 23rd," said Sahasra.

"We are informing the students about this campaign challenge through club announcements, morning announcements, and posters throughout the school," she said.

While Sahasra is pitching this campaign challenge in her school, **the competition is open to all high school students in Forsyth County.** Please help spread the word to students. Please feel free to contact Sahasra [HERE](#) for more details.

FCDAC Director Rachel Kayden connected Sahasra with **Clair Holbrook, Opioid Public Health Analyst, District 2 Public Health.** "Rachel and Ms. Holbrook will choose the winning design by the end of summer, and the billboard is expected to be seen this fall," Sahasra said.

This amazing Council, I can help start small ripples of change in drug prevention. You can usually find me trying different types of food or playing volleyball in my free time.



Sahasra Tatavarti and Eshawnvie Kallu are members of the FCDAC Youth Council and founders of Project

SAFE (Students Against the Fentanyl Epidemic) at Lambert High School. The focus of the Project SAFE club is to boost fentanyl awareness education and other drug awareness in our community. They have attracted a group of about 200 members in SAFE. Over the last year, we began working with another club called HYPE (Healthcare, Youth, Poverty, and Education), which works closely with ACE in STEM education and introduced **SAFE to Coach Lyerly, the Assistant Principal of Forsyth Virtual Academy (FVA), and Mr. Daniels, the Health/PE teacher at FVA.** The Project SAFE Club and the Hype Club began working on drug prevention ideas that birthed the curriculum. Over two weeks, we made presentations using the discussion questions, lesson guides, and quizzes we'd created.

We worked closely with **Mr. Drew Hayes, the principal of ACE, and Mrs. Ayumi Bryan, the Assistant Administrator** who reviewed the curriculum. Coach Lyerly had some prior connections at Lakeside, which is how that school was chosen.

The school board approved our curriculum after Principal Hayes and Coach Lyerly presented the idea to them.

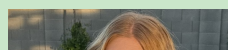
The curriculum is complete, and we are presenting it to Lakeside 8th-grade health classes on Monday, April 14.

The online curriculum is presented in modules, each split into two weeks. The students will complete the work on their own time, but to ensure it is completed to the best of their ability, they must complete lesson guides, quizzes, and discussions along the way.

School News



Emily Ennis, Gateway and Forsyth



Ainsley Miller, Prevention Coach,



Academy Drug Counselor



North Forsyth High School.Gateway and Forsyth Academy Drug Counselor

by Ainsley Miller

There is never a dull moment in the high school environment! On **March 19**, I set up a **Kickball Recreation event** on North's campus. We invited students who were not part of my small groups, so it was open to all the high school students. Interestingly, my students decided to stick together, forming a team and taking on a group of athletic boys. While not coming out on top of the game, my small group students showed a great competitive spirit and had a great fun at this sober event.



This month, Director Rachel, Emily Ennis, and I participated in a **Zoom Call with East Forsyth High School to collaborate with them** and bring our presentations to their Health Classes.

As a Prevention Coach, I was pleased to hear my students telling me **they really want to try and stay sober over the summer and come back to school sober in the fall**. It is one of those moments when a teacher thinks, "Yes, they are getting it! Recognizing future situations and planning how to cope with them and maintain sobriety is a fantastic step forward for many students. It allowed me to reinforce sobriety strategies, like staying in contact with their accountability partners."

My upcoming event is an **Iron Chef competition** planned for **April 16**. So stay tuned for that!



Police Sector Reminder!
National Prescription Take-Back Day
April 26, 2025
10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

DEA's National Prescription Drug Take Back Day reflects DEA's commitment to Americans' safety and health, encouraging the public to remove **unneeded medications** from their homes as a measure of preventing medication misuse and opioid addiction from ever starting.

Search other locations [HERE](#).

NEW PRESCRIPTION DRUG DISPOSAL LOCKER

AVAILABLE 24 HOURS, 7 DAYS A WEEK

FORSYTH COUNTY JAIL
202 Veterans Memorial Blvd.
Cumming, GA 30040

OTHER LOCATIONS AVAILABLE MON-FRI 9AM-6PM:





Our Partners in Prevention

More Great Community Events and Resources ...

Family Connection




Reach out!



SCAN TO REFER

HOUSING RESOURCES & SUPPORTIVE SERVICES AT OUR NEW DROP-IN CENTER!

WE ARE A COORDINATED POINT OF ENTRY, MEANING WE HAVE ACCESS TO 152 COUNTIES IN GEORGIA AND THEIR RESOURCES. WE USE THE HOMELESS MANAGEMENT INFORMATION SYSTEM (HMIS) TO CONNECT YOU WITH RESOURCES AS FAST AS POSSIBLE



Contact Us

+470-795-4986
theDROPE@forsythconnection.org
<https://forsyth.gafcp.org>
133 Samaritan Dr
Cumming, Georgia 30040


Hours of Operation:

- Monday: By appointment only
- Tuesday: 10 am - 6 pm
- Wednesday: 8 am - 3 pm
- Thursday: 10 am - 6 pm
- Friday: By appointment only
- 1st & 3rd Saturday: 9 am - 12 pm



THE D.R.O.P. Resource Center

Dedicated Resources Opening Possibilities



— FORSYTH COUNTY —
COMMUNITY CONNECTION
family connection

Serving Youth 18-24 Years of Age Facing Homelessness

- 1 Literal Homelessness**
Living in an emergency shelter, hotel or motel paid by the government OR an institution (jail, hospital) that the youth is exiting and where the youth was a resident for 90 days or less. (place not meant for human habitation)
- 2 Imminent Risk of Homelessness**
In own housing but being evicted within 14 days, living with family and friends and can not stay longer than 14 days, living with family and friends but asked to leave within 14 days
- 3 Fleeing Violence**
Youth fleeing or attempting to flee their housing due to domestic violence, sexual assault, stalking or other anger or life threatening conditions that have taken place in the house or has made them afraid to return to the house including: trading sex for housing, trafficking, physical abuse, emotional abuse, financial abuse, active drug use in youth's current home



Mission

Our mission is to help every individual succeed in life. We pursue that goal by addressing the root causes of problems, building on cultural and other strengths, pooling resources, engaging an extraordinary diversity of community members, and committing to a long-term process of planning, implementation, and evaluation. Using a family-centered approach, schools, health and human service agencies, business, the faith community, law enforcement, nonprofit organizations, civic clubs, and others work together with families, focusing on academics, physical and mental health, nurturing parenting, economic success, and community service. We tap existing resources, streamline systems to be more efficient and effective, and initiate new projects.

Supportive Services Provided:

- ✓ Referral for transitional housing and emergency shelter, and food
- ✓ Case Management including referrals for counseling, coordinating services, developing an individualized service plan
- ✓ Child Care Assistance for children under the age of 13
- ✓ GED and Consumer Education training
- ✓ Employment Assistance, Costs of Job Training Programs, Life Skills training
- ✓ Payment assistance for Mental Health Care



24TH ANNUAL
MID-YEAR TRAINING INSTITUTE
JULY 20-24, 2025
Gaylord Opryland | Nashville, TN



Held for 4 days during the summer, the Mid-Year Training Institute (MYTI) offers in-depth, interactive training sessions geared specifically for community coalition leaders and staff. MYTI also includes two levels of training for the National Youth Leadership Initiative activities (i.e., Key Essentials and Advanced). From fundamentals of coalition building and strategic planning to evaluation and research, you will walk away motivated and inspired. The MYTI is held in a different city each year in either late July or early August. The 24th Mid-Year event will take place at the Gaylord Opryland, located in Nashville, TN from July 20–24, 2025.

[Register HERE](#)



COMMUNITY LISTENING SESSION

S D
2 4



family fun event

Sunday, April 13, 2025

Alec's

Pizza



SESSION

A STRONG COMMUNITY HELPS SUPPORT RECOVERY.

Who should attend?

- School personnel
- HealthCare providers
- Law enforcement officers
- Treatment programs
- Community members
- Peers in recovery
- Family members
- Faith leaders
- Employers
- Allies/advocates
- MAT providers
- Local non-profit partners

Monday April 14th

6:00-7:30 PM

Clegg Auditorium

**1500 Highway 197 North,
Clarkesville, GA 30523**

Creating support networks for individuals dealing with addiction and those in recovery from substance use.



For more details contact: **Johnna Anderson, 706-362-5922**
Or leave a message at **(762) 348-9970**



Students!
East Forsyth High School ODAT Club (One Day at a Time) Invites You to a Bowling Event*

*** [Click Here for Required Field Trip Permission Form](#)**

April 29, 2025 is




Pick up a permission form from the Counseling Office.

FREE HOUR OF GAMES | HOUR OF BOWLING | DRINKS & PIZZA
Friday May 2nd 4:30 pm - 7 pm
@ Stars and Strikes Cumming, GA
RSVP



From the Connection!

Y12 Yoga is a 12-Step Meeting utilizing the physical, mind, and body for recovery. It is open to parents in recovery or those with a family member struggling with substance abuse.



**YOGA OF 12-STEP RECOVERY:
RELAPSE PREVENTION & REINTEGRATION**

WHERE & WHEN:

2nd & 4th Wednesdays @ 7pm

The Connection, 4950 Browns Bridge Road, Cumming GA 30041

Bring your own yoga mat, if possible.

About us...

We connect the dots between the somatic approach of yoga, the cognitive approach of recovery models including the 12 Steps, harm reduction, and CBT, and the latest research in neuroscience and trauma healing. Donation-based Y12SR meetings are held at yoga studios and other community spaces across the globe. Each meeting consists of a group sharing circle, and an intentional yoga class taught by a certified Y12SR guide.

www.y12sr.com

News For You

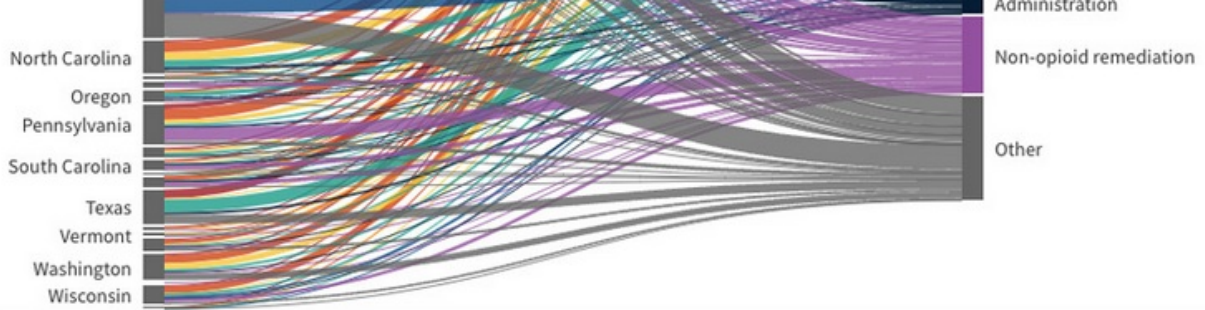
National News



Over \$50 billion in opioid settlement funds has the power to change lives — if it's used where it's needed most. That's why Shatterproof has been working hard to ensure these funds go toward preventing and treating addiction, not unrelated expenses.

We partnered with Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health to promote guidelines, called the [Principles for the Use of Funds from Opioid Litigation](#), which have been shared nationwide to help decision-makers spend these funds effectively.





Data collection by KFF Health News, Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, Shatterproof

Over the past year, Shatterproof, alongside Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health and KFF Health News, has tracked how states are using opioid settlement money, ensuring transparency so the public can see how funds are being spent.



The Cannabis Deception

From **Students Empowered to End Dependency (SEED)**, this documentary in a compelling way highlights the deception that the weed of today is the same as the weed of 10 and 20 years ago. **THAT IS A LIE.** Today's high potency THC is leaving a trail of addicted, wounded, and many psychotic victims with life-long severe mental illness. Here from experts in the field and first hand from those adversely affected by this deception. Watch this important documentary.

Call for Advocacy and Legislative Updates

Follow SB 220 and IF it Goes to a House Vote

NOT GOOD NEWS:

SB 220, which would greatly expand eligibility for Georgia's medical marijuana program and increase the THC limit from 5% to 50% without the backing of major medical associations or FDA approval, was "favorably reported" (approved) by the House Regulated Industries Committee yesterday, despite four advocates for GRMP testifying in opposition. The vote was NOT unanimous, however, and one amendment was even offered to lower the THC limit (but was ultimately rejected). The bill is headed to House Rules, where it will be a candidate for a chamber-wide House vote. Please contact your Representatives, especially if they serve on the House Rules Committee.

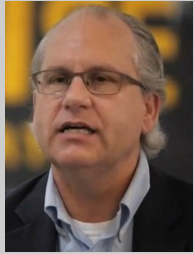
Below are this week's Legislative updates. Note that when a bill is "engrossed," it means the bill has been amended and updated to reflect all changes made in the house where it originated, and it's prepared in its final, official form before being sent to the other chamber.

LegiScan Monitoring Report

Weekly Summary

March 31, 2025

State	Bill #	Summary	Status
GA	SB79	"Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act"; enact <i>Changes: Committee Activity, History Steps, New Vote, New Text, Sponsor Changes</i>	2025-03-28 / Engross Senate Agreed House Amend or Sub
GA	SB132	Insanity and Mental Incapacity; hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial; require <i>Changes: Calendar Add, Committee Activity, History Steps, New Text, Sponsor Changes</i>	2025-03-28 / Engross House Committee Favorably Reported By Substitute
GA	SB233	Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission; revise the subcommittees <i>Changes: History Steps, New Vote, New Text</i>	2025-03-27 / Engross House Passed/Adopted



Jeff Breedlove serves as Chief of Communications and Policy for the Georgia Council on Substance

Abuse. Jeff is an Assistant Scout Master for the Boy Scouts of America, and serves on the Board of Directors of MARR Addiction Treatment Center and the Georgia School of Addiction Studies.

Bipartisan Support Under the Gold Dome

A Report by Jeff Breedlove

Most political and policy issues divide America and Georgia at about 50 / 50 - these are challenging times for most policy issues trying to build a bipartisan consensus. In Georgia, we are blessed to have a proven pro-recovery Governor and First Lady. Governor Kemp has both signed and supported historic legislation and appropriated unprecedented funding for peer-led recovery programs and projects such as the Georgia Recovers Bus Tour and Recovery Ambassadors.

Governor Kemp is supported by the bipartisan General Assembly Working Group on Addiction and Recovery. Georgia is one of a few states to have an official General Assembly Working Group dedicated to addiction recovery. The four Co-Chairs: Senator

Randy Robertson, Senator Sonya Halpern, Representative Matthew Gambill, and Representative Michelle Au lead a coalition of several dozen legislators who work on our behalf in their caucus meetings, in committee meetings, and in their Chamber to advance peer positive legislation, policies, and funding.

The Addiction Epidemic is killing more Georgians 18 - 45 than anything else, Georgia is experiencing historic deaths and for those fortunate to survive they face astronomical financial burdens and, all too often, dangerous stigma. The disease of addiction is not a red or blue issue - it is a red, white, and blue issue - it unites families across Georgia with a hard reality - no family nor community is immune or exempt from the deadly realities of the Addiction Epidemic.

Let us work together with any and all government, business, faith, education, medical, law enforcement, and community members, regardless of political affiliation, to save lives, restore families, and strengthen communities across Georgia because Recovery is Real for everyone.

Bills We Support

[HB 419](#) by Representative Lee Hawkins to facilitate Opioid Reversal Boxes on University System of Georgia and Technical College System of Georgia properties. This legislation will save lives and enhance the quality of life on our higher education

[SB 262](#) by Senator Sonya Halpern mandating insurance companies provide health benefit services for certain preventative medical conditions including certain conditions relating to Substance Use Disorder.

campuses.

SB 6 by Senator Kay Kirkpatrick authorizes the use of testing equipment to determine whether a controlled substance has been adulterated.

SB 33 by Senator Kay Kirkpatrick closes the Delta THC loophole that currently enables hemp-derived high THC products to have de facto recreational legalization status in Georgia.

SB 233 by Senator Matt Brass relating to the Behavioral Health Reform and Innovation Commission to revise the subcommittees and to extend the repeal date. **(See update above)**

HB 612 by Representative Katie Dempsey creating a Parity Compliance Review Panel to ensure compliance of the Georgia Parity Act.

SB 79 by Senator Russ Goodman - the Fentanyl Eradication and Removal Act or the FEAR Act. This bill would strengthen the penalties of those who are in possession of fentanyl. GC4R is working with the Lt. Governor's office to introduce companion legislation for this bill. **(See update above)**

HB 253 "Ethan's Law" by Representative David Clark which protects Georgia's children from being forced to participate in a medically discredited practice that can force

the child to reunite with an estranged parent who may have engaged in abuse, neglect, or other harmful behavior.

SB 113 by Senator Clint Dixon establish a professional health program for the Georgia Composite Board of Professional Counselors, Social Workers, and Marriage and Family Therapists

SB 142 by Senator Kim Jackson allows expansion for certain licensure for qualifying international medical graduates

HB 34 by Representative Dale Washburn establishes professional licensing boards

HB 81 by Representative Bethany Ballard-Georgia would enter into an interstate compact for school psychologists.

HB 89 by Representative Sharon Cooper requires healthcare providers, facilities, and pharmacies to provide the Maternal Mortality Review Committee with psychiatric or other clinical records.

HB 219 by Representative Ron Stephens establishes a professional health program to provide for monitoring and rehabilitation of impaired healthcare professionals.

HB 657 by **Representative Leesa Hagan**
to legally define an ARSC / RCO to
protect the integrity of this lifesaving
program

Bills We Are Monitoring

HB 265 by Representative Stephen Sainz seeks to close loophole by capping total THC and other intoxicating cannabinoids content on hemp consumables to 0.3%. Limits gummy weight to 5 mg. Limits gummy package to 150 mg.

HB 227 by Representative Robert Dickey removes minimum age of 18 years old for medical marijuana ("low" THC oil) for mild and moderate autism and the OCGA definition of PTSD (only 1 of 8 DSM-V criteria). Medical Cannabis Commission and dispensary licensees may engage in "public

education activities" about the benefits of medical cannabis. Changes name of low THC oil to medical cannabis.

HB 36 by Representative Rob Leverett revises list of providers who are authorized to participate in the processes for appointment of a guardian for an adult.

HB 268 by Representative Holt Persinger works on well-being of students and school communities in elementary and secondary education. Creates the Office of Safe Schools within the Georgia Emergency Management and Homeland Security Agency.

and continuing education tracking to monitor compliance of licenses with applicable continuing education requirements.

SB 132 by Senator Brian Strickland mandates a hearing before a court orders an evaluation of the mental competency of an accused person to stand trial

FYI



Delaney Ruston, MD, is a filmmaker, author, and Stanford-trained physician with 25 years of experience creating award-winning documentaries on social change, especially mental health. Her award-winning films include *Screenagers*, which explores solutions for healthy screen time, *Screenagers NEXT CHAPTER*, which addresses teen mental health, and *Screenagers Under the Influence*, covering vaping, drugs, and alcohol in the digital age.

Read Dr. Ruston's latest Tech Talk Tuesday, a weekly newsletter. This week's title is *Drugs on Social Media – What Are Youth Being Shown?* Suggestions on conversation starters too!

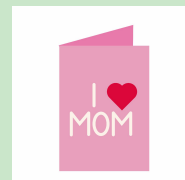
[Click Here.](#)

On the Calendar



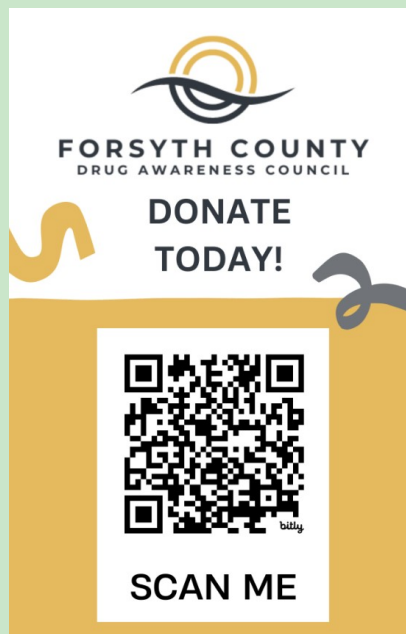
April

- FCDAC Meeting, April 2, 8 a.m. Community Connections
- Family Connections new Drop Center
- World Health Day, April 7
- National Alcohol Awareness Month
- Volunteer Appreciation Week, April 20–26, 2025
- Stress Awareness Month, April 1-30
- Easter, Sunday April 20
- Walk For Recovery, Sunday April 27 3-5 p.m. Cumming City Center.
- National Fentanyl Awareness Day — April 29, 2025



May

- FCDAC Meeting and Mental Health Coalition Joint Meeting, Wednesday, May 14, 8 a.m. United Way.
- Mother's Day, May 11
- National Prevention Week, May 11-17
- Mental Health Awareness Month
- Memorial Day, May 26





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

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