



**Chronic Disease Prevention & Wellness Workgroup**  
**HCC Chesapeake Center**  
**January 10, 2023 | 8:00-9:30 a.m.**

**Recap**

- Ronya Nassar, chair of the Chronic Disease Prevention and Wellness workgroup, welcomed the group and thanked everyone for joining the LHIC for 2023.
- The last meeting in November educated members about the Maryland Quitline. The information again can be found at [smokingstopshere.com](http://smokingstopshere.com)

**Presentation from the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission**

- Van Howeth, from the Maryland Alcohol and Tobacco Commission, provided a brief presentation.
- In January 2021, the Alcohol and Tobacco Commission was authorized by the General Assembly.
  - Comprised of five-member citizens appointed by the Governor along with representatives from MDH and State Police.
  - There are two divisions: Field enforcement and legal and legislative
  - The legal and legislative division advises and guides the Executive Director, the Field Enforcement Division Director, other agency personnel, State agencies, the general public, licensees, industry representatives, elected officials, and local licensing boards to assure proper administration and compliance with the State's alcohol and tobacco laws and regulations.
  - The enforcement portion is responsible for the enforcement of Maryland's laws related to the sale, manufacture, transportation, storage, and importation of alcohol, tobacco, and electronic smoking device products within the State. It also is responsible for regulatory duties associated with the alcohol, tobacco, and electronic smoking device industries, including the issuance of licenses and permits, and ensuring that appropriate trade practices are followed.
- The commission does not say if the use of these products is good or bad, they enforce the law.
- They also focus on tobacco and other addiction efforts and help with raising tobacco rates which can ultimately prevent the use of these products. For example, higher taxes on the products can help with contraband of cigarettes.
- The commission will also assist with routine inspections and ensure businesses have proper signage and they will help educate store managers and clerks.
  - The legal and legislative division can revoke or suspend tobacco or liquor licenses. The minimum suspension is five days.
- The local police in conjunction with the local health departments work on enforcement.
  - Wendy Kanely from the Harford County Health Department (HCHD) provided an overview of the tobacco enforcement program at the health department. The program works with the local law enforcement to help with enforcement checks, there have been a few locations that are identified as some problem businesses. More information about this program can be found here: <https://harfordcountyhealth.com/tobacco-retailer-guidelines/>

- The commission receives many complaints about flavor pods, but there are no state laws or anything in statute that gives the commission authority to do anything about it. The FDA gets referrals from them, but they are not sure if they have been able to do anything.

### **Harford County Health Department Health Equity Report Draft Presentation**

- Zill Raval, Epidemiologist, and Zach Macas, Health Policy Analyst, both with the Harford County Health Department Population Health Unit presented the draft findings for the Harford County Health Equity Report.
- The Health Equity report provides the county with an idea of where disparities and inequities exist. The report serves as an educational document for the health department and community partners to help create, promote, and strengthen programs.
- The draft presentation will be shared with the group to review further and provide comments before the report is published. High priority areas include:
  - Aberdeen (21001) - Mental Health Services, Chronic Disease Prevention
  - Edgewood (21040) - Behavioral Health, Substance Abuse Treatment
  - Havre de Grace (21078) - Mental Health, Substance Exposed Newborns
  - Other locations have been noted throughout the presentation, but the 21001, 21078, and 21040 zip codes provide data with higher concentrations of health issues.
- Any comments questions or remarks about the report can be directed to [ronya.nassar@maryland.gov](mailto:ronya.nassar@maryland.gov), [zill.raval@maryland.gov](mailto:zill.raval@maryland.gov), and [zachary.macas@maryland.gov](mailto:zachary.macas@maryland.gov),

### **Discussion**

- Robin Stokes asked about the decline in substance use. Zill Raval mentioned that we are seeing a slight decline in substance use, but within substances we are seeing an increase in fentanyl and a decline in heroin.
- Dr. Frank Sparandaro brought up access to care/primary care in the county. He brought up the concern of not having enough access in certain areas and if this can be included in the report.
  - HCHD will look into incorporating this into the data findings.
- Felicia Hopkins discussed the self-pay data and the connection to employment. Many individuals in the areas discussed may only be part-time employees and therefore use self-pay since their position is not able to provide them with benefits or proper insurance. She mentioned how many people will then not practice their preventive health care and then will go to the ER or urgent care if something is wrong.

**Next Meeting: Tuesday, March 7<sup>th</sup> 8:00-9:30 a.m. Harford Community College Chesapeake Center**

Attendees: Ronya Nassar, Zachary Macas, Zill Raval, Michelle Peterson, Alejandra Huevo, Dr. Russell Moy, Allison Frey, Grace Diveley, Robin Stokes, Kristen Perry, Wendy Kaneley, Dr. Frank Sparandero, Susan Twigg, Kim Theis, Felicia Hopkins, Carolyn Chanoski, Marcy Austin, Dr. Jamie Sibel