

NEWSLETTER



Upcoming Coalition Meetings

March Monthly Meeting:
March 25, 2025 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm

April Monthly Meeting:
April 28, 2025 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm

May Monthly Meeting:
May 27, 2025 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm

● Coalition News & Updates

New Staff: In late February we welcomed Kelsey Ober into the Walpole Health Department. She is serving as the Program Director for the Drug Free Communities Support Program grant we received and will be a consistent presence on our coalition meetings.

Prevention & Safety Spotlight

Prom & Graduation Safety

Prom and graduation are milestones that are exciting and worth celebrating, but they can also come with risky behavior such as underage drinking and other substance use. Here are a few tips to keep our teens safe during this event-filled season:

- Encourage and have open conversations about the risks of substance use, including the risks of driving under the influence of substances.
- Set clear expectations and offer alternatives for safe celebrations.
- Discuss transportation plans and ensure safe transportation to and from events.

Underage Drinking Awareness

Underage drinking is a serious issue, with youth who drink before age 21 being more likely to develop alcohol dependence later in life. Let's help guide our teens toward safe, healthy choices this spring by fostering open conversations and providing support. Visit these links below for tips and resources.

- [CDC: About Underage Drinking](#)
- [SAMHSA: The Consequences of Underage Drinking](#)
- [NIAA: Underage Drinking in the United States \(ages 12 to 20\)](#)

Love Your Earth: The Harms of Vaping on the Environment

While the impact of vaping on human health is being recognized, fewer people are aware that vaping – and the products used for it – also causes serious harm to the environment.

- **E-waste:** E-cigarettes (vapes) often contain circuit boards and batteries, which contributes to e-waste that is difficult to recycle and can release toxic substances such as lithium, into the environment when improperly disposed of. It takes many years for these products to break down, leaving them sitting as waste for a long time.
- **Toxic Chemicals:** Leftover vape liquids, such as nicotine and other heavy metals (tin, lead, arsenic), can easily leak and leach into the soil and contaminate waterways and harm wildlife.
- **Plastic Pollution:** E-cigs are typically made up of several plastic components, all of which take hundreds of years to decompose.
- **Fire and Explosion Risk:** Many e-cigs have parts, such as lithium batteries, that can catch on fire or explode, posing a serious risk of injury or environmental hazards.
- This Earth Day, let's learn about the environmental harms of vaping and commit to reducing our impact by advocating for and practice proper disposal methods!
- Learn more here: [EPA: How to Safely Dispose E-Cigs](#).

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Upcoming Coalition Meetings

No meetings in the summer, we will see you in September!

● Coalition News & Updates

CADCA National Coalition Academy: Our DFC program director is set to complete her third and final week at CADCA's National Coalition Academy (NCA) this June. The NCA is a nationally recognized, comprehensive training program that provides participants with important knowledge and skills to build and sustain an effective drug prevention coalition and manage local substance use prevention efforts.

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey: This fall Walpole Middle and High School students will take part in the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, an anonymous health survey that is given biennially to youth in several Metrowest communities. This survey collects self-reported data on various health and risk behaviors as well as perceptions of these behaviors. The data we gather from this survey offers valuable insight into the health and well-being of the youth in our community, enabling us to take informed, targeted action to support and improve their lives. We thank you, the families, the students of Walpole Public Schools, and Walpole Public School employees for their support and participation in this important work!

Prevention & Safety Spotlight

Alcohol & Heat Intolerance – What to Know to Stay Safe

- *What is heat intolerance?*
 - Heat intolerance is a term that describes when one feels overheated/too hot in temperature or environments, including in environments that others may find comfortable or tolerable. This sensation occurs due to the body's inability to regulate its internal temperature, making the individual feel uncomfortable. It can be caused or exacerbated by certain health conditions, as well as the use of several medications or other substances (alcohol, opioids, cocaine).
- *What are the signs of heat intolerance?*
 - Feeling very hot, more so than those around you
 - Excessive sweating or no sweating
 - Exhaustion and/or fatigue in warm weather
 - Headaches, nausea, vomiting, or dizziness in response to heat
 - Changes in mood when hot
 - Muscle cramping
- *How can drinking alcohol lead to heat intolerance in the summer?*
 - Summer is a time where dehydration can occur more frequently due to the heat, prolonged time outside, and increased sweating. Alcohol use can increase the risk of dehydration by inhibiting (slowing down) the release of antidiuretic hormone (ADH), which leads to more frequent urination and fluid loss. This dehydration can worsen or accelerate heat-related effects, such as heat intolerance.
- *How can I stay safe this summer and prevent heat intolerance if I choose to drink alcohol?*
 - Limit your time outside when it's hot and humid or take frequent breaks from the heat.
 - Drink plenty of water before, during, and after drinking alcohol; alternating alcoholic beverages with water can be a helpful way to ensure hydration.
 - Eat food before alcohol consumption.
 - Be aware of the amount you are drinking.
 - Seek shade
 - Pay attention to your body's signals, and be aware of signs of heat intolerance.

How to Be a Prevention Role Model

- **Be mindful of how you use and talk about substances.**
- **Practice safe storage of alcohol and other substances.**
- **Don't provide alcohol or other substances to minors.**
- **Have open and honest conversations about substance use.**
- **Engage in substance-free activities, hobbies, and events.**



NEWSLETTER



Upcoming Coalition Meetings

September Monthly Meeting:
September 23, 2025 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm

October Monthly Meeting:
October 28, 2025 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm

November Monthly Meeting:
No Meeting!

● Coalition News & Updates

MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey: This fall, many Walpole Middle and High School students will take part in the MetroWest Adolescent Health Survey, conducted every two years across the region. This survey collects self-reported data on various health and risk behaviors as well as perceptions of these behaviors. The data helps us better understand local needs and guide meaningful, targeted prevention efforts.

Summer Intern: This summer we welcomed Abhigna who explored various aspects of local public health, from inspections, to board of health meetings, and learning about local regulations. For her final project, Abhigna created and shared a parent/guardian youth survey on youth substance use and local prevention efforts. Highlights from the survey are shared below in the next section.



Parent / Guardian Survey

Launched in early July, our survey asked Walpole parents and guardians about their views, concerns, and experiences around youth substance use and prevention efforts in Walpole. There were 24 participants, and several interesting findings were revealed.

Substance Use Findings:

All parents/guardians, regardless of their child(ren)'s age/grade were most concerned about vaping compared to other substances, and 45.8% of parents/guardians felt that it is "very easy" for teens to get access to vaping products, while 62.5% believed both alcohol and marijuana were "somewhat easy" for youth to access in Walpole. Overall, 66.7% of parents/guardians believe that youth substance use is a concern in Walpole.

Walpole Prevention Coalition Findings

79.2% of participants have never heard about the Walpole Prevention Coalition, but 54.2% have indicated that they would be interested in resources, events, or tips related to youth substance use prevention (37.5% indicated maybe). Currently, most parents/guardians get their information regarding youth substance use from other parents (50%), school communications (45.8%), and health professionals (45.8%).

These findings were very informative and valuable to our Coalition and can be used to help us guide future efforts, goals and activities for WPC and our Drug Free Community Grant program. We want to thank parents and guardians for their time and efforts spent providing us with this important information and we want to thank our intern Abhigna for all of her hard work on this project!

Back to School: Tips for Success

- **Set clear expectations** - Talk with your child about your rules around substance use and why you have them.
- **Create routines** - Having set routines (sleep, homework, meals) helps reduce stress and anxiety.
- **Stay involved** - Know what your child is up to, who their friends are, and what they're doing on a day to day basis.
- **Promote engagement in positive activities** - This can include sports, art, and other extracurricular activities.
- **Keep communication open** - Have frequent discussions where both you and your child can ask questions and talk openly and honestly.
- **Watch for warning signs** - Changes in mood, behavior, appearance, grades, and friendships could be red flags.



NEWSLETTER



Upcoming Coalition Meetings

*December Monthly Meeting:
No Meeting!*

*January Monthly Meeting:
January 27, 2026 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm*

*February Monthly Meeting:
February 24, 2026 |
Zoom @ 6:30pm*

• Coalition News & Updates

Year 1 of DFC - The Numbers: September 30th marked the official start of year 2 of DFC grant funding. Year 1 was full of great work such as capacity building, education, networking, gathering data, and strengthening relationships. We accomplished a lot in year 1 and are optimistic for a great year 2!

Here is a look at year 1, by the numbers:

- 214 Visits to our website
- 3 WPC interviews with Walpole Media
- 52 Social media posts on our Facebook
- 3 Weeks attending CADCA's National Coalition Academy
- 6 Federal DFC grant deliverables submitted

Hosting Kevin Rosario for 9th Graders at WHS

Walpole Prevention Coalition, through the DFC grant, sponsored a presentation by Kevin Rosario of *Addiction Consulting and Education Services* (ACES) for the 9th grade class at Walpole High School this past October.

Kevin shared his journey with substance use, self-esteem, and mental health. He explained the science and psychology behind early substance use and dependence. Kevin broke down these topics using humor and also offered tips for building resilience and using refusal skills.

Kevin's engaging approach truly resonated with the students. We are grateful he took the time to come and talk with our 9th graders on these important topics!



Talking to Youth About Substance Use

Kelsey, the DFC program director, presented at the Walpole Council on Aging's Coffee & Conversations series with a talk titled, *"Talking to Youth About Substance Use: Why it Matters and How to Have Effective Conversations"*.

This presentation was geared towards adult family members who have children in their lives. It discussed why having conversations about substance use with the children in one's life is important and tips for how to start and have effective conversations. The presentation was well received and brought up some great questions from the audience. The presentation is available to watch on Walpole Media's YouTube channel.

Walpole Prevention Coalition in the Community

This fall, Walpole Prevention Coalition connected with residents at community events, including Back to School Nights at Walpole High School and Middle School, the Council on Aging's Annual Health Fair, as well as attending PAC meetings at four Walpole elementary schools. At these events we shared educational materials and discussed the coalition's mission and the DFC grant.

