

OCTOBER 2025

THE CHARLES TOWN INITIATIVE

Monthly Newsletter



DEAR CHARLES TOWN,

Welcome to this month's update from The Charles Town Initiative! In this issue, we highlight the incredible community impact of Save a Life Day, the JBA Friendship Meal, and Shepherd's Painting on the Lawn, as well as share insights from the HIDTA Prevention Summit on Empowering Youth Through Core Beliefs. Additionally, we are sharing an important Community Health Alert about dangerous metals found in popular disposable e-cigarettes. Together, these stories reflect our shared mission to strengthen health, safety, and resilience across our community.



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Success by Numbers

September 2025 Charles Town Police Support Specialist

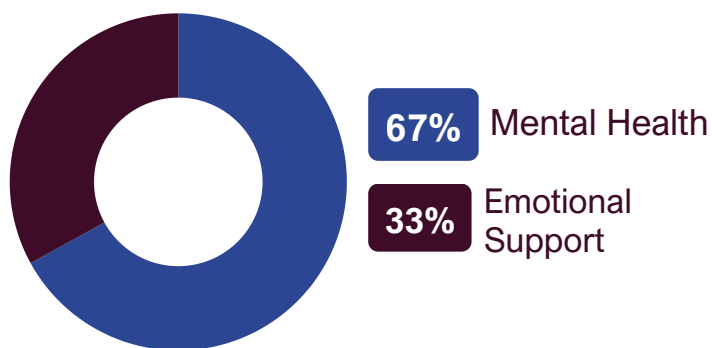
Number of Referrals to the PSW

3

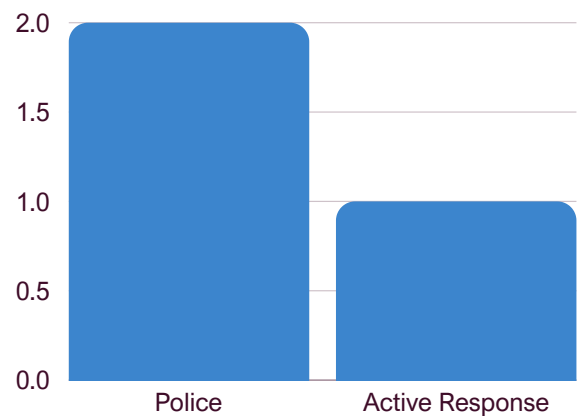
Number of Mental Health Screenings

2

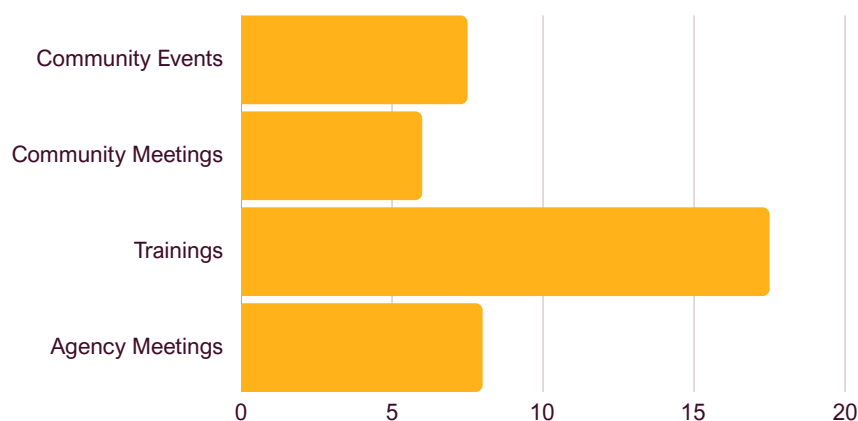
Reasons for New Referrals



Source of Referrals



Hours Spent at Community Events, Meetings, and Trainings



Charles Town Initiative

SAVE A LIFE DAY

A powerful reminder of what we can achieve together

On October 2nd, volunteers across the Eastern Panhandle joined forces for Save a Life Day, a regional effort to prevent overdose deaths and promote recovery resources. Thanks to the dedication of community partners, an incredible 2,312 naloxone kits—totaling 4,624 doses—were distributed to residents across Berkeley, Jefferson, and Morgan counties.



The Charles Town Initiative staff members covered multiple distribution sites, leading outreach at three key locations across Berkeley and Jefferson counties. Their efforts focused on raising awareness about substance use prevention, connecting individuals and families to recovery supports, and challenging the stigma that too often surrounds addiction.

Save a Life Day is a powerful reminder that prevention and compassion begin with connection. Every kit distributed represents hope, recovery, and another opportunity to save a life. Together, we are building a safer, healthier Eastern Panhandle—one dose, one conversation, and one act of care at a time.



HIDTA PREVENTION SUMMIT: EMPOWERING YOUTH THROUGH CORE BELIEFS

In September, Charles Town Initiative Social Worker Danielle Baker attended the HIDTA Prevention Summit, a dynamic and engaging event focused on strengthening youth protective factors through the power of core beliefs.

One of the summit's highlights was the introduction of a Prevention Toolkit, which outlined five fundamental beliefs essential to youth development: I am seen and loved, I matter, I can influence my life and my health, I can overcome hard things, and I have support. The toolkit emphasized practical actions for fostering these beliefs and highlighted how they serve as protective factors that buffer youth against risks.



The summit featured a youth panel discussion, including three students from the Musselman High School Youth Drug-Free WV Coalition, who shared candid insights and answered questions from both HIDTA staff and attendees.

The event opened with remarks from key leaders, including Jeff Beeson (HIDTA), Ivan Bates (Baltimore City State's Attorney), Stephanie Mavronis (Mayor's Office of Neighborhood Safety and Engagement), and Roger Hartley (University of Baltimore). Presentations were delivered by experts such as Dr. Lora Peppard (ADAPT), Jody Kamon (Center for Behavioral Health Integration), and trainers from the Central East Prevention Technology Transfer Center. Overall, the summit provided valuable tools, perspectives, and inspiration for professionals committed to uplifting youth and supporting their resilience.

FRIENDSHIP MEAL

Members of the Charles Town Initiative and the Jefferson-Berkeley Alliance (JBA) recently volunteered at the “Friendship Meal” hosted by Charles Town Presbyterian Church on October 4th, where they served a warm, homemade meal to community members. The event fostered connection, kindness, and fellowship—core values shared by JBA, CTI, and the church. JBA and CTI are grateful for the opportunity to support this meaningful community tradition and extend hospitality to neighbors across Jefferson County.



Charles Town Initiative

JBA

JEFFERSON-BERKELEY ALLIANCE



PAINTING ON THE LAWN

A Shepherd University Drug-Free WV Youth Coalition Event



The Youth Drug-Free WV Coalition at Shepherd University recently hosted a Painting on the Lawn event to promote personal wellness, healthy lifestyles, and community connection. Students, faculty, and local residents were invited to take part in a collaborative paint-by-numbers activity on the campus lawn. Over 22 participants joined in to relax, express creativity, and enjoy time outdoors while supporting the Coalition's mission of fostering a healthy, drug-free community. The event served as a vibrant reminder that art, mindfulness, and shared experiences can strengthen both individual well-being and the collective spirit of the Shepherd community.

PAINTING ON THE LAWN
Paint-by-number kits provided for free!

This activity emphasizes **personal wellness, healthy lifestyles, and community** as we collectively participate in a self-care activity of painting in nature!

Open to all students, faculty, and staff!

***Meet on the MIDWAY**
(Storer ballroom alternate location in case of inclement weather)

October 1 (Wednesday)
1:00 pm - 3:00 pm

Sponsored by : **Drug-Free^{WV}**
A Coalition For Our Community

Co-sponsored by : **SOURCES OF STRENGTH**

COMMUNITY HEALTH ALERT: DANGEROUS METALS FOUND IN POPULAR DISPOSABLE E-CIGARETTES

Disposable e-cigarettes (also called “dPODs”) like ELF Bar, Esco Bar, and Flum Pebbles have become extremely popular among teenagers and young adults. While marketed as a safer alternative to cigarettes, recent research reveals alarming levels of toxic metals in these products, posing serious health risks.

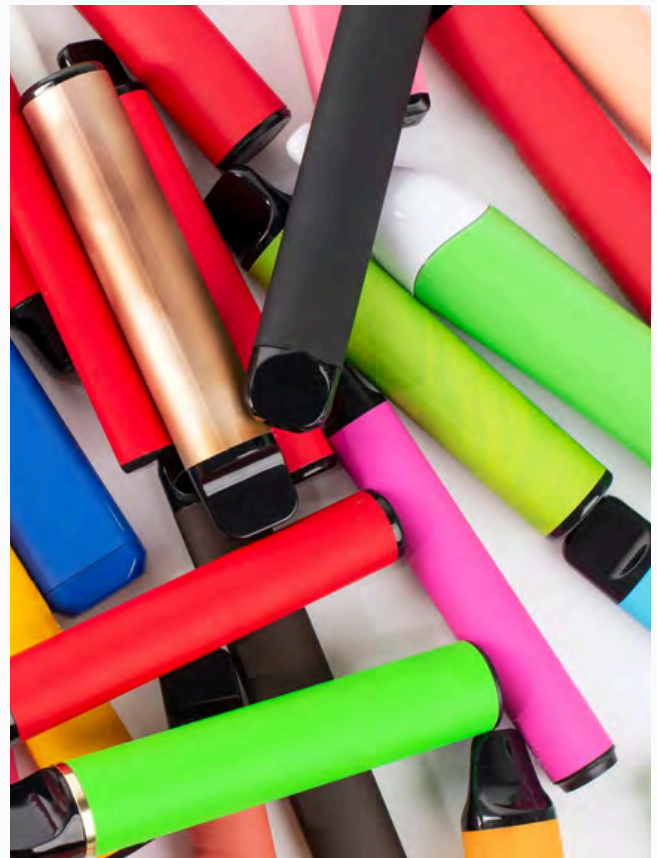


Key Findings:

- Metal emissions increase with use. Chromium levels start very low but can increase nearly 500 times after 1,500 puffs, while nickel starts a little higher and can increase more than 500 times over the same number of puffs. In other words, the longer someone uses the device, the more of these potentially harmful metals they inhale.
- Lead and other metals are present in high concentrations. Esco Bar devices showed extremely high levels of lead, copper, nickel, and zinc in both e-liquids and aerosols. These metals come from non-heating components like leaded bronze sheaths and battery connectors.
- Antimony, another toxic element, was elevated in Flum Pebble and Esco Bar aerosols, while ELF Bar generally had low levels. Other metals like cadmium, tin, arsenic, and bismuth were detected in smaller amounts but were still higher in Esco Bar products.

Why this matters:

- Inhalation of these metals can damage the nervous system, lungs, heart, and kidneys. Children and adolescents are especially vulnerable to lead exposure, which can impair brain development.
- Metals like iron, chromium, and nickel can cause inflammation and increase the risk of respiratory diseases, including asthma, lung fibrosis, and cancer.
- Over time, repeated use leads to cumulative exposure. Studies show that metal and metalloid concentrations in disposable e-cigarettes can be up to 4 orders of magnitude higher than older e-cigarette models, making them far more hazardous.



What you should know:

- Even new devices contain metals in e-liquids before use.
- As devices age and are puffed more, metal concentrations in the aerosols increase, especially in devices with degraded coils or leaded components.
- Flavored or nicotine-free products are not safer; toxic metals are still present.

Take Action

- Avoid using disposable e-cigarettes, particularly for adolescents and young adults.
- Educate friends, family, and students about the hidden dangers of metals in e-cigarette aerosols.

Protecting our youth from preventable exposure to toxic metals is urgent. The popularity of disposable e-cigarettes masks a hidden health crisis, one that can have long-term consequences for the nervous system, lungs, and heart.

OCTOBER 17

LOVING OUR COMMUNITY

a free event for everyone

5-7 pm

DINNER
HYGIENE ITEMS & CLOTHES
LOTS OF FREE SERVICES
CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES



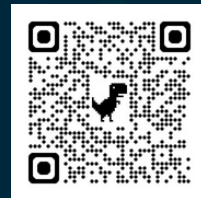
First Presbyterian Church
220 S. Queen St., Martinsburg

For more info, call/text 304-676-7138

October is...

SUBSTANCE USE & MISUSE PREVENTION MONTH

Telling the Prevention Story



Share Your [#MyPreventionStory](#)