



# Annual Report 2021

*Celebrating **54** years of helping individuals and families  
in our community live healthy and drug-free lives.*



*Get answers. Get help. Get better.*



**Virginia Guy**  
**Executive Director**

***The Drug Education Council provides a continuum of services addressing prevention, intervention, counseling and recovery support.***

This year brought its share of challenges, as well as opportunities, as we have continued to adapt our programs and services to meet the changing needs of our community. Over the last two years, we have experienced great success in providing prevention and education programs in spite of constantly changing community conditions.

We are excited to be providing many of our programs and services in person, in addition to using online and virtual platforms, when needed, and are mindful of the need to ensure that we observe CDC standards and protocols for safety.

Our efforts include programs focusing on youth, families and individuals, as well as community-wide programs that work to create norms that decrease the risk of addiction for people of all ages.

It is only through the support and continuing generosity of our friends and benefactors that we are able to provide the programs and services that can help individuals and families put their lives back together and work to build a healthy, supportive environment for the valuable young people in our community. Together, we can make a genuine difference in our circles of influence.

Thank you all for your continuing support of all that we do. We appreciate you more than we could ever express!

2021

# Red Ribbon Leadership Awards Program



# Prevention Education for Youth



# 2021

## Community Outreach & Awareness



## Virtual Education and Media Campaigns



# 2021

## Gulf Coast Conference on Addiction and Recovery



## Mobile City-County Youth Council



## ***Addressing New and Emerging Issues in 2022***

As we look to 2022, the Drug Education Council is working to mobilize our community to address the critical issue of youth vaping. We are partnering with schools, community centers, faith-based organizations, and others in the community to present consistent, community-wide messages to increase awareness about the importance of preventing youth vaping. These programs will share information about the harmful consequences of e-cigarette and vape product use, and increase awareness about how these products are being marketed to young people through popular apps and online platforms.

In the past 5 years, the use of vape products has sky-rocketed among adolescents and young adults. Nationally, nearly one in five high school students report vaping, nearly 40% of them every day or almost daily. Locally, we are seeing increasing rates of vaping among students in middle and high school and, alarmingly, among students in elementary schools, with some as young as 8 or 9 years old.

This poses great danger to young people's health with adverse effects ranging from acute lung injury to long-term addiction. The teen years into young adulthood are periods of crucial brain development, increasing the risk for addiction. In addition, vaping affects the brain pathways that control attention, learning, mood and impulse control.



Reaching young people with the facts they need to make informed decisions is critical.

***Together, we can reduce the rates of youth vaping in our community!***

## ACCOUNTABILITY

- Financial accounts are audited annually by an independent CPA firm, following all applicable guidelines.
- The Drug Education Council maintains the Alabama Department of Mental Health-Substance Abuse Services (ADMH-SAS) Divisions highest level of certification for Administration and Prevention.
- Program effectiveness is monitored and evaluated by a variety of methods. The Drug Education Council works closely with professional evaluation consultants to develop appropriate and valid methods of program assessment.
- Evaluation results are used to determine need for modification or improvement of program services.



UNITED WAY PARTNER AGENCY



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### *Background and Perspective*

The Drug Education Council had its beginnings in 1967, when a group of civic leaders and professionals founded the Southwest Alabama Council on Alcoholism, dedicated to the rehabilitation of people suffering from the disease of alcoholism. Since 1979, the agency has focused on addressing the need for the prevention of alcohol and other drug abuse, through education and prevention programs in Mobile and other counties in the region. In 1986, the name of the agency was officially changed to the Drug Education Council, Inc.

Each of our many programs and practices is based on the four core beliefs that provide the guidance and vision of the agency.

- **Every one of us is important and deserves to be nurtured.**
- **Every one of us has a responsibility to promote healthy choices.**
- **The abuse of alcohol and other drugs is preventable.**
- **Addiction is treatable and recovery happens.**