

# 2026 Public Service Announcement Contest

## PSA Topic: Why I Choose to Be Drug-Free

Ideas: In this PSA, you could explore how having **goals** and working toward achieving them plays a big role in making **good decisions** and staying **drug-free**.

In addition to having goals, knowing the harmful effects of drugs and alcohol helps people make good decisions. Below is some information on the risks.

- Drugs and alcohol affect children and adolescents in a much more negative way than adults. It is because the brain of a young person is not fully developed until the age of 25 years old.
- All drugs will affect a person's judgement, ability to form new memories, learning, reaction time, impulse control, and decision-making.

### Marijuana

- It is illegal to buy or use marijuana under the age of 21. It is also illegal for adults to provide marijuana products to those who are under 21.
- Marijuana is a mind-altering (psychoactive) drug produced by the Cannabis plant. THC is the main chemical ingredient that produces the psychoactive effect (makes someone 'high').
- THC disrupts the brain's ability to form memories and learn new things.
- Marijuana can have permanent damaging effects on developing brains. It can lower a person's IQ if they use it regularly in their teen years.
- Students who use marijuana tend to get lower grades and are more likely to drop out of school.
- Marijuana is highly addictive. 1 in 6 youth marijuana users becomes addicted.
- Frequent marijuana use has been linked to depression, paranoia, and anxiety.
- Playing sports or video games? – marijuana can affect timing, coordination, movement and weaken someone's performance.
- Longtime marijuana users report being less satisfied with their lives, having memory and relationship problems, poorer mental and physical health, and less career success.
- Drivers who test positive for marijuana are over 2 times more likely to be involved in a crash.

### Alcohol

- It is illegal to buy or consume alcohol under the age of 21. It is also illegal for adults to provide alcohol to those who are under 21.
- If a person drinks alcohol before the age of 15, they are 5 times more likely to be alcohol dependent than someone who waited until the legal age of 21.
- Alcohol impairs judgment and can lead someone to making decisions they wouldn't normally make.
- Research shows that teens who drink score lower on tests than those who don't and are more likely to perform poorly at school or even drop out of school.
- Alcohol consumption lowers speed, endurance, strength, and concentration - all key factors in an athlete's success.
- One time getting drunk equals 14 days of lost training effects (for sports). One person's individual decision to drink alcohol would affect the entire team.
- Underage drinking can result in other negative consequences such as alcohol poisoning, alcohol-related motor vehicle crashes, other injuries, legal problems, etc.
- Alcohol consumption is linked to an increased risk of developing cancer.

### Tobacco and Vaping

- The legal age to purchase tobacco or vape products is 21.
- Teenagers who vape and use e-cigarettes (electronic cigarettes) are more likely to try cigarettes and other tobacco products.
- Nicotine in either tobacco or vaping liquids is very addictive.
- A person can start feeling addicted after smoking only a few cigarettes or after smoking or vaping only for a few days. People who start smoking/vaping when they're young have the hardest time quitting.
- There are thousands of toxic chemicals in cigarettes and in vaping products. They affect the health of a person's lungs, and some of the chemicals can cause cancer.
- Teens who smoke have many more colds, coughs, throat and nose problems than those who don't.
- Smoking cigarettes and vaping are major risk factors for a heart attack.
- Smoking causes bad breath, stains teeth and tongue, and helps tartar build up on teeth.
- Teens who smoke or vape are more likely to have panic attacks, anxiety problems, and depression.



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Visit [www.cmchcc.org/psa](http://www.cmchcc.org/psa) for more information and to submit your PSA.  
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