



Today's Date: May 8th, 2023

Release Date: IMMEDIATE

Gabriella Smith
*Director of Communications &
Community Engagement*
(434) 238-7727

Local youth speak up during National Prevention Week

Lynchburg, VA – The Healthy Youth through Prevention and Education (H.Y.P.E.) Club is speaking up about their mental health needs, and they have much to say! The H.Y.P.E. Club serves as a youth advisory council to the Central Virginia Addiction and Recovery Resources (CVARR) coalition. Each year, H.Y.P.E. Club members identify challenges faced by their peers and develop a prevention plan that includes innovative strategies to reduce the use of tobacco, nicotine, vaping, and other substances among their peers. This year, students from E.C. Glass and Heritage High Schools identified poor mental health as a driver for the use of tobacco, vaping, alcohol, and other drugs among teens. They also identified the need for parents, educators, and other caring adults to better understand the mental health challenges facing youth, how to recognize signs and symptoms, how to support young people, and how to get them help.

To share their message with the community, the students created an awareness campaign with messages for parents and other caring adults to address their identified needs and concerns during National Mental Health Awareness Month, this May. The campaign will make its debut on cable television, ABC 13 WSET evening news, and streaming services such as Netflix, Hulu, YouTube, and Peacock, throughout the month of May. On Tuesday, May 9th at 4:00pm, students will be present at Lynchburg City Schools and various destinations throughout the city to place yard signs highlighting their messages across the community.

“It is inspiring to see the youth collaborate, share their experiences as well as invest their time and energy into the creative development of this campaign.” Shares Januwaa Davis, Prevention Program Manager at Horizon Behavioral Health. “They have taken full advantage of this powerful opportunity to speak on behalf of their peers regarding challenges that are very important to their overall wellness. We are exceedingly proud of their efforts and leadership.”

[Click here](#) to watch the video developed by the H.Y.P.E. Club, with support from Horizon Behavioral Health, Media Partners Inc., and the Virginia Foundation for Healthy Youth (VFHY).

##

Horizon Behavioral Health has been the primary public behavioral healthcare provider in the Region 2000 area for more than 53 years. In the last year, Horizon provided services to approximately 12,000 adults and children, addressing problems with mental health, substance use and intellectual disabilities. Horizon is accredited by CARF International. This represents the highest level of accreditation that can be given to a behavioral health organization.