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Frederick County Health Department

Barbara A. Brookmyer, M.D., M.P.H. ▪ Health Officer

A message from the Local Behavioral Health Authority:

September 24, 2025

From crisis to connection: How Frederick County supports recovery

September is National Recovery Month, a time to celebrate the strength and resilience of individuals living in recovery and to recognize the systems and people who support that journey.

In Frederick County, recovery isn't a distant hope. It's a living, breathing reality grounded in science, compassion, and community.

This month, we not only honor those in recovery, but also reflect on the coordinated public health and public safety systems that make recovery possible.

Recovery by the numbers

Over the past year, Frederick County has expanded its reach through programs that support recovery at every stage of crisis. Peer support specialists trained 2,539 community members in overdose response.

Our harm reduction program served 460 people through the Street Safe Program and conducted 278 hours of street-based outreach.

The Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD) program served 48 individuals, while the Community Outreach and Support Team (COAST) reached 902 people, providing peer support and community paramedicine.

We received 34 referrals to peer support services from the Frederick County Sheriff's Office and 28 referrals from the Frederick Police Department.

Andrea L. Walker, MPH, MA, CPRP ▪ Director, Frederick County Behavioral Health Services

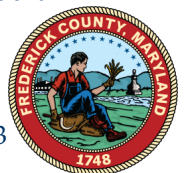
Local Behavioral Health Authority (LBHA), Prevention Services, Youth/Adolescent Services, Adult Evaluation & Review Services (AERS), Adult Recovery and Harm Reduction Services

350 Montevue Lane ▪ Frederick, MD 21702

Phone: 301-600-1755 ▪ Fax: 301-600-3298 or 301-600-1781 ▪ MD TTY: 1-800-735-2258

Detention Center Treatment Programs ▪ 7300 Marcie's Choice Lane ▪ Frederick, MD 21703

Phone: 301-600-3145 ▪ Fax: 301-600-3144 ▪ MD TTY: 1-800-735-2258





The 24/7 Crisis Walk-in center, academic detailing efforts, and coordinated law enforcement partnerships have all contributed to a multi-layered safety net — reaching people where they are, before it's too late.

We must continue to protect and strengthen the housing continuum, recognizing that stable housing remains essential to sustained recovery. As funding landscapes shift, it's more important than ever to preserve access to recovery housing, a critical bridge between crisis and long-term healing.

Voices from the field

Below are quotes from certified peer recovery support specialists — individuals with lived experience of addiction or co-occurring mental health challenges who are trained to support others in recovery — working here in Frederick (In Maryland, certification requires formal training, supervised practice hours and an exam to ensure peers can use their lived experience to safely and effectively):

“Recovery is a daily practice for me that protects my relationships and strengthens my true self. Providing hope and compassion to those still suffering supports my foundation as a peer. Peer work is utilized through camaraderie and ultimate trust.”

“My recovery means no more having to beg, borrow or steal to support my addiction. It means not having to see the hurt and disappointment on the faces of my family, friends and loved ones. It means no more mornings of sickness, desperation, and anxiety. It means hopefulness, new beginnings, independence, centering, self-worth, responsibility, respect and happiness. It means so much more than I'm able to convey.”

“Now, the next chapter in my life is that of a peer recovery specialist. I am humbled by this opportunity to learn and give back to the wonderful community of Frederick County and share all the amazing resources. I am hopeful and filled with a new sense of purpose through the outreach and work we provide at The Street Safe Program.”

“Recovery saved my life, but it wasn't just one moment. It was dozens of small supports over time, peers who believed in me, officers who treated me with dignity, and a system that didn't give up.”

A new approach to recovery

Frederick County's recovery ecosystem didn't always exist.

Today, we have systems in place that bring together law enforcement, public health, emergency responders, and clinical partners. Programs like the Law Enforcement Assisted Diversion (LEAD), mobile crisis, and 24/7 crisis stabilization services offer real



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alternatives to incarceration and hospitalization, pathways rooted in support and stability.

How you can help

Recovery is a community responsibility. If you or someone you love needs help, call or text 988 — the nationwide hotline for mental health, substance use and suicide crises.

You can support the work by volunteering, attending a local overdose response training, sharing this column, or simply learning more. Everyone has a role to play.

Recovery is not a linear path, and it's not one-size-fits-all. But here in Frederick County, we are building systems that respond with humanity, flexibility, and hope.

To those in recovery: We see you.

To those doing the work: We thank you.

Together, we are proving that recovery is not only possible — it is already happening.

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