

ILLINOIS PREVENTION SUMMIT

AUGUST 7, 2025

Get ready to ignite your impact! This one-day free virtual summit is your chance to connect with other prevention professionals across Illinois and learn about valuable tools and resources to amplify your prevention programs and services.

The virtual summit is open to all those in Illinois working on substance use prevention, including Substance Use Prevention Program (SUPP) Grantees, Drug-Free Communities Coalitions, other prevention coalitions, StopAct grantees, BASE grantees, and other prevention advocates and partners.

You can join us for the entire day or attend the sessions that interest you most. After the event, all sessions will be recorded and available on the Prevention First website.

No CEUs will be provided for attending this event.

THE AGENDA

OPENING REMARKS	9:30-9:50
THE STRUGGLE IS REAL	10:00-11:00
SUBSTANCE USE DATA	11:15-12:15
EXPLORING ILLINOIS PREVENTION	1:15-2:45
WHAT DOESN'T WORK IN PREVENTION	3:00-4:00
CLOSING REMARKS	4:00-4:15

REGISTER

SESSION DETAILS

The Struggle IS Real: Applying an Equitable and Trauma-Informed Lens to Prevention

Samantha Alonis, Deputy Director, Bureau of Prevention, IDHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery
Patrick Price, Prevention and Program Services Administrator, IDHS Division of Behavioral Health and Recovery
Donna Nahlik, Director of Prevention & Community Education, Chestnut Health Services

Adverse Childhood Experiences—including systemic community and environmental factors such as racism, discrimination, poverty, etc.—increase the risk of poor outcomes later in life. Yet, many prevention efforts put the onus on the individual to overcome their adversities and make healthy choices, which neglects the impacts that trauma and systemic inequities have on diminishing people’s options. Some responses to trauma and inequities reflect toxic positivity (e.g., “it could always be worse; just get

over it; it’s time to move on;” etc.) and the myth of meritocracy, which is a socialized belief that anyone can pull themselves up by their own bootstraps. This stigmatizing approach may cause people to go down a shame spiral and feel hopeless if they have initiated substance use. This session will offer innovative ideas on how to validate people’s lived experience, challenge the status quo, and dig deeper to address the root causes of substance use through a health equity lens.

Substance Use Data: Leveraging the Illinois Youth Survey and Other Sources

Crystal Reinhart, Senior Research Scientist, Center for Prevention Research and Development
Mishell Morales, MSW, Survey Research Outreach Specialist, Center for Prevention Research and Development

This session will provide tips for vetting data sources on substance use and other topics, including identifying local and national data sources, comparison data, and trend data.

Things to consider when using data for your program needs and future planning will also be discussed.

SESSION DETAILS

Exploring Illinois Prevention Resources

During this session, program representatives from four different State and Regional Substance Use Prevention Programs funded by IDHS SUPR will highlight the wide range of substance use prevention resources and training opportunities available for Illinois preventionists and youth.

Prevention First Resource Centers

Jake Levinson, Cannabis Policy Resource Center Administrator

Jody Heavilin, Alcohol Policy Resource Center Administrator

Bryant Laiche, Youth Prevention Resource Center Administrator

IABH

Ashley Webb, Chief Operating Officer and Vice President of Programs

Cebrin Goodman Teen Institute (CGTI) - CGTI is a youth leadership program that holds two conferences throughout the year: our week-long CGTI conference in July and our weekend-long Mid-Year conference in January. These events promote healthy decision making, leadership development, and positive change utilizing the strategic prevention framework model.

Operation Snowball, Inc. (OS) - Snowball is an international youth program that empowers student leaders through prevention education, community advocacy, and leadership development to create a positive impact.

Generation Lead - Generation Lead is a statewide youth public awareness campaign aimed to prevent, reduce, and delay initial substance

for youth. We empower youth to make informed, healthy choices about substance use and misuse by providing essential resources and evidence-based knowledge.

OMNI Youth Services

Julie Berry and Makayla Ratcliffe
Preventure and The Illinois Human Performance Project

Preventure is an evidence-based preventative health program aimed to equip youth with self-efficacy and behavioral skills.

The Illinois Human Performance Project is a chapter of a national program developed by John Underwood, an international researcher focusing on how lifestyle decisions can impact your mental and physical performance. Through scientific research we know that sleep, blue light, nutrition, exercise, drugs, alcohol, and mindset play a large role in how our bodies perform. Our program provides education to teens, parents, and school personnel to identify ways to increase the potential of our human performance in all areas of life.

Public Health Institute of Metropolitan Chicago

Julio Flores, Program Director of the Alliance Program

The Alliance promotes safety, support, and healthy development for LGBTQ+ youth in Illinois through advocacy, education, youth organizing, and professional development.

SESSION DETAILS

What Doesn't Work in Prevention

Kris Reed, Co-Director, Great Lakes Prevention Technology Transfer Center

In the world of substance misuse prevention, we often hear about what does work—research-backed strategies that make a real impact. But what about the methods that don't work? Surprisingly, many communities continue to use outdated, ineffective, or even harmful prevention practices despite decades of research showing they fail to deliver. This session will

explore the common yet misguided approaches still in use, shedding light on why they don't work and the unintended consequences they can create. Join us to rethink the status quo, equip yourself with the knowledge to advocate for change, and help build more effective prevention efforts in your community.



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