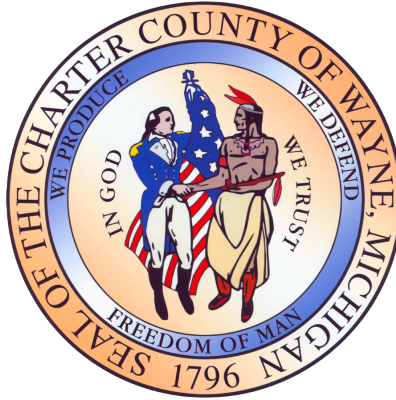




## **PRESS RELEASE**

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### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**Wayne County Commission Youth Council Addresses  
Substance Abuse and Mental Health Issues in teen up  
40% since COVID-19**



Detroit, Michigan – April 19, 2024 – In response to mental illness among youth has gone up forty (40%) since Covid-19 and the rise of youth substance abuse issues, the Wayne County Commission Youth Council (WCCYC), comprised of 10th to 12th-grade students appointed by Commissioners, will convene on **April 23 at 10:00 am at 500 Griswold in the Commission Chambers** to present a resolution drafted by youth for adoption by the county commission.

Commissioner Monique Baker McCormick (D-Detroit), a driving force behind the establishment of the commission in 2020 as chair and administrator of WCCYC, underscored the importance of empowering student voices in addressing these pressing issues.

"From the pandemic to the threat of violence in schools, students today have endured significant challenges, and they are actively seeking solutions for themselves and their peers," emphasized Commissioner McCormick.

The Youth Council has been instrumental in providing platforms for students to engage directly with elected officials, advocating for change and presenting resolutions to address critical issues. Notably, their efforts have inspired the Detroit Wayne Integrated Health Network to adopt innovative concepts, derived from the Wayne County Commission Youth Council, to employ youth from Wayne County schools as mental health advocates.

Members of the Youth Council, if appointed by a Commissioner will represent youth in one of 15 county commission districts. Each appointee this year attended monthly meetings since the start of the school year via zoom and met at various location such as the Detroit Institute of Art, Wayne State University, Commission Chambers, annual Advocacy Day in Lansing Michigan and the War on Trash Clean-up community project being held at the Detroit River International Wildlife Refuge in Trenton. The presentation of the resolution and an annual report will mark the council's final official act of the 2023-24 school year.

Past resolutions presented by the Youth Council and adopted by the commission have addressed vital issues such as gun safety, better funding for the state's poorest school districts (several of which are located in Wayne County), and increased mental health counseling in schools following the COVID-19 pandemic.

"Each year, Youth Council members tackle issues relevant to high school students their age, and we always take their recommendations seriously," stated Wayne County Commission Chair Alisha Bell (D-Detroit).

Students interested in being agents of change and advocating for their peers are encouraged to seek appointment to the Youth Council by reaching out to Youth Council Chair, Commissioner

Baker McCormick's office at 313-224-0884 or  
bakermccormickstaff@waynecountymi.gov.

For further information or inquiries, please contact Commissioner  
Baker McCormick at 313-268-8802 or  
Bakermccormickstaff@waynecountymi.gov

🌟 **#WayneCountyYouthCouncil #Success #WCCYC**

**See the following resolution below:**

## **RESOLUTION No. 2024-001**

### **Reducing Youth Substance Abuse as it relates to Mental Health**

By Members Zion McCann, Keyaira Johnson, Nidhi Narendra Kumar, Noah Gubin, Thomas Besek, Kelli Cox, Maddison Fleming, Maya Freitas, Leah Irving, Jahnean Jackson, Jayla Jackson, Payton Kitchen, Priya Roy and Olivia Sherwood

WHEREAS, the Wayne County Commission Youth Council recognizes substance abuse and mental health disorders are significant public health concerns affecting millions of individuals worldwide; and

WHEREAS, with COVID-19, mental illness among the youth has gone up forty (40%); and

WHEREAS, substance abuse and mental health disorders often co-occur and can connect with each other, leading to severe consequences for individuals and society as a whole; and

WHEREAS, as of 2022, youth between the ages of 12 to 17, at least nineteen and a half percent (19.5%) of around 4.8 million people, have had a major depressive episode; and

WHEREAS, a substantial rate of comorbidity exists, with millions of people experiencing a co-occurring disorder involving mental health and substance abuse. Mental health challenges exacerbate the risk factors for substance abuse, leading some individuals with mental illnesses to resort to alcohol or drugs as a means of coping. Shockingly, only seven percent (7%) of these individuals seek treatment for both conditions, leaving nearly sixty percent (60%) without any form of assistance; and

WHEREAS, statistics indicate an alarming rise in substance abuse among youth in our region, with significant implications for their academic achievement, social integration, and overall development; and

WHEREAS, the prevalence of substance abuse among Wayne County youth underscores the urgent need for comprehensive prevention, intervention, and support services to mitigate the adverse effects and promote healthy lifestyles.

Now therefore be it RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council asks the Wayne County Commission on this 23rd day of April 2024 to endorse collaborative efforts among governmental agencies, educational institutions, healthcare providers, and families to address the root causes and consequences of substance abuse among Wayne County youth; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council acknowledges the crucial role of after-school opportunities in mitigating substance abuse among youth, recognizing that engaging and constructive activities contribute to healthier lifestyles; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council advocates for the expansion and enhancement of after-school programs, clubs, and extracurricular activities in Wayne County schools, aimed at providing youth with positive outlets for self-expression, skill development, and social interaction; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council requests that all Wayne County schools provide students with substance abuse issues and/or mental health issues free counseling during school hours to address the issues and to provide professionally developed methods to cope and/or address the source of their issues; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council encourages Wayne County schools to inform families of preventative measures for their children, and offer resources and therapeutic methods to promote and obtain sobriety in struggling children, as well as provide families access to parenting classes; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council encourages the development of peer mediation programs to provide youth with dignity, positive support and a common age understanding of the struggles youth face; and be it further

RESOLVED, that the Wayne County Commission Youth Council implores the State of Michigan, and every school board and school district in Wayne County, to commitment funding to help youth struggling with substance abuse and/or mental health illnesses; and be it further

RESOLVED, that this resolution memorializing its requests be forwarded to the Wayne County Commission, the State of Michigan, and all school boards and school districts located within Wayne County, Michigan.