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## PRESS RELEASE

### **Belize Observes International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking**

*Belmopan, June 26, 2024.*

Today, as the world observes the 2024 International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking (World Drug Day), the National Drug Abuse Control Council, under the Ministry of Health and Wellness, underscores the critical importance of investing in prevention. This year's theme, "The Evidence is Clear: Invest in Prevention," calls for action rooted in science, research, and respect for human rights to achieve a Belize free of substance misuse.

Effective drug policies are grounded in a deep understanding of the social, economic, and health implications of substance use. This year's World Drug Day campaign emphasizes that prevention is not just a policy option, but a necessity for fostering healthy and resilient communities.

The National Drug Abuse Control Council – Ministry of Health and Wellness (NDACC-MoHW) is committed to preventing substance misuse through education, research, and community engagement. The goal is to create a nation where individuals and communities thrive, free from the harmful effects of substance misuse.

NDACC – MoHW has been at the forefront of prevention efforts through various school and community programs in Belize such as:

- **School-Based Programs:** Creating comprehensive and educational initiatives in schools to focus on equipping youths with the knowledge and skills to make informed and safe decisions. Programs include interactive prevention sessions, peer education, and collaboration with educators to integrate substance misuse prevention into the curriculum.
- **Community Outreach:** Working closely with community leaders and organizations to create environments that support healthy lifestyles. Our community programs offer support services, recreational activities, and public awareness campaigns to prevent substance misuse and foster community resilience.

- **Parental Engagement:** Recognizing the pivotal role of parents, resources and training are provided to help families communicate effectively about the dangers of substance misuse and build strong, supportive home environments.
  
- **Research and Data:** Investing in research to continually refine strategies, and measure the impact of ongoing prevention efforts. Evidence-based approaches ensure that the programs are effective and responsive to the needs of our communities.

On this International Day against Drug Abuse and Illicit Trafficking, NDACC – MoHW calls upon all sectors of society to join us in amplifying prevention efforts. Guided by science, compassion, and solidarity, the global drug problem can be resolved and individuals will be empowered to lead healthy, fulfilling lives.

## **Ends**

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