



NOTRE DAME  
OF MARYLAND  
UNIVERSITY

To our incoming Gator families,

It brings us great joy to welcome our students to campus this fall so that they can fully engage in on-campus learning opportunities and build friendships. With their arrival, we, along with you as their family, have the opportunity to help them make healthy decisions as they navigate their college experience.

**Before your student arrives on campus, we encourage you to have an important conversation about how they can support their own wellness when they come to campus, and how the use of substances such as alcohol and cannabis can impact their success.**

Social media, movies, TV, and perhaps even our past experiences may lead us to the conclusion that alcohol and other substances are an inevitable part of the college experience. However, we know from data that this is not the case. In fact, “Gen Z” drinks less than previous generations. However, those students who choose to use alcohol and cannabis are more likely to have immediate impacts such as skipping class and getting a lower quality of sleep and these impacts do add up—leading to lower GPAs, lost opportunities such as internships, and ultimately, a lower likelihood of graduating on time, achieving long-term goals, and being ready for employment.

You may think “they don’t want to hear it from me”, or “my opinion doesn’t matter”, but we are here to tell you that it does. Research has shown that families are one of the most important influences on their child’s drinking habits, and that your influence remains even after your child leaves for college. **When you talk, they hear you.**

How can you begin? Start with a conversation. At Notre Dame of Maryland University, as part of the [Maryland Collaborative](#), we stand firm with 18 other colleges and universities across Maryland in our commitment to prevent student harm from excessive drinking and use of substances. The Maryland Collaborative’s [College Parents Matter website](#) provides a comprehensive resource that not only shines light on the *why*, but most importantly, the *how*. By visiting [College Parents Matter](#), you can find evidence-based answers to questions such as:

- “I’ve never spoken to my child about alcohol—is it too late?”
- “What messages should I communicate regarding underage and excessive drinking?”

Helpful [conversation tips](#) and prompts provide direct advice on what to say and how to say it, making for more comfortable and productive conversations on [topics](#) like alcohol, cannabis, navigating roommates and housing, spring break, and topics we hope we never have to encounter—such as sexual assault and impaired driving.

We have an incredible opportunity to begin these discussions now to make change for their future. We, along with you, are 100% invested in seeing your student succeed. Please join me in the unwavering support of our students’ success as they become a member of the Gator family.

With gratitude,

Brandy Garlic, Ed.D.  
Associate Vice President for Student Life & Dean of Students  
Notre Dame of Maryland University