



Mon, May 4–Wed, May 6, 2026
Hyatt Regency at Reston Town Center

Agenda is subject to change and is not final.

Updated: March 11, 2026

This dynamic event brings together hundreds of professionals from across the country who are dedicated to improving the health and well-being of youth and young adults.

Attendees will explore innovative strategies and best practices addressing critical issues such as tobacco and nicotine use, substance use, childhood obesity, and other intersecting youth health challenges.

Day 1 - May 4

7:30 am–5 pm Registration & Check-In

7:30–9 am Breakfast

9–9:10 am Opening Remarks

Host C.J. Stermer, VFHY and Prevention Connections staff

9:10–9:40 am Keynote

Beyond a Seat at the Table: Cultivating Authentic Youth Collaboration, *Taanvi Arekapudi with host C.J. Stermer*

9:50–10:50 am Breakout Sessions

- Fresh Air, Clear Future: Youth Taking Charge in Creating Tobacco-Free Outdoor Spaces, *Virginia Y Street youth & Missouri Next to Rise youth*
- Ultra-Processed Foods: Definition, Debate, and Direction, *Sandy Curwood, PhD, RDN*
- Strategic Advocacy: Power Mapping for Policy Impact, *Cat Atkinson & Rachael Deane*
- Beyond Punishment: A Collaborative School & Community Intervention Model for Student Substance Use, *Nicky Clark & Megan Gordon*

11:10 am–12:10 pm Keynote

How to Find the Meaning of Your Life, *Arthur C. Brooks, PhD*

12:30–1:30 pm Lunch

12:45–1:30 pm Small Bites Sessions

- Strategies for Successfully Conducting Research Among Youth and Young Adults, *Patrick Madden, MBA*
 - Healthy Communities Action Teams Meetup, *VFHY Staff and Grantees*
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1:45–2:45 pm Breakout Sessions

- Preventing Our Youth From Becoming Addicted to the Newest Nicotine Products: U.S. and Global Trends, *Jeremiah Mock, MSc, PhD*
 - Stop the Scroll: Fentanyl Prevention Communications for Gen Z, *Rescue Agency & VFHY staff*
 - Energy Drinks and Youth: Risks, Marketing, and Policy Solutions, *Frances Fleming-Milici, PhD*
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3–3:30 pm Keynote

Building Community Through Art: Fostering Empathy, Connection, and Collaboration, *Hamilton Glass with host C.J. Stermer*

Day 2 - May 5

8 am–3 pm Registration & Check-In

8–9 am Breakfast

9–9:05 am Opening Remarks

Host C.J. Stermer

9:05–9:35 am Keynote

The Power of Youth Voice in Changing Policy for Healthier Communities, *Virginia Y Street youth, New Mexico Evolvement youth, Oklahoma Youth Action for Health Leadership youth, & Missouri Next to Rise youth*

9:50–10:50 am Breakout Sessions

- Strengthening Coalition Engagement for Long-Term Impact, *Lisa Aslan, MPH*
 - Gambling and Tech Addiction: When Screen Time Becomes a Health Risk, *Aaron Weiner, PhD*
 - The Evolvement Model: Engaging Youth to Shape Healthier School Policies, *Virginia Y Street youth & Oklahoma Youth Action for Health Leadership youth*
 - The Myths, Dangers, and Science of Vaping Nicotine and Cannabis, *Michelle Peace, PhD*
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11:05 am–12:05 pm Breakout Sessions

- Effective Cannabis Prevention Messaging for Virginia Teens in a Post-Legalization Landscape, *Rescue Agency & VFHY staff*
 - How to Talk About Drug Use in Popular Media, *Aaron Weiner, PhD*
 - Supporting Positive Group Behavior in Classrooms, *Lisa Aslan, MPH*
 - Civic Engagement as a Pathway to Youth Well-Being, *Marc Oommen*
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12:20–1 pm Keynote

Youth Prevention Messages That Increase Risk Perception: A New Messaging Framework, *Jeff Jordan*

1–2 pm Lunch

1:15–2 pm Small Bites Sessions

Tobacco Prevention Grantee Meetup, *VFHY Staff and Grantees*

2–3 pm Keynote

Aligning our Systems with the Science for Prevention and Healing, *Nadine Burke Harris, MD*

4:30–7 pm Networking Reception at The Pavilion

Day 3 - May 6

7:30–8:30 am Breakfast

8:30–9:15 am Keynote

Rewriting the Recipe: From Nutrition Raps to Nutrition Policy, *Caree J. Cotwright, PhD, RDN, LD*

9:15–9:30 am Break

9:30–10:15 am Keynote

Advancing Tobacco Prevention and Control: Progress, Challenges, and Opportunities, *Brian King, PhD, MPH*

10:15–10:30 am Closing Remarks

11 am Hotel Checkout



For the most up-to-date agenda and more, visit championsforyouthsummit.org.