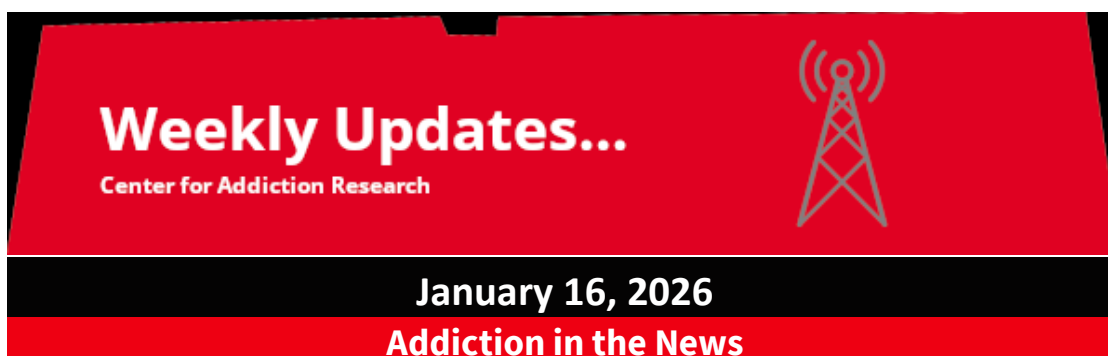


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) to change your communication preferences. Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the Center for Addiction Research - our mission is to accelerate scientific progress in the prevention and treatment of substance use disorders and their consequences by fostering research collaborations across: 1) UC departments, colleges, and centers including Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center; 2) Local, regional, and state community and governmental partners; and 3) Other academic institutions and industry."



UC/ Regional News

Ohio AG Dave Yost rejects referendum petition to repeal ban on hemp, restrictions on marijuana

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost has rejected a petition to repeal a state law that added more criminal penalties to marijuana usage and totally banned "intoxicating" hemp products, saying it was misleading. Activists say they will make edits to the language in order to get the proposal on the November ballot. Activists will need to edit and resubmit their proposed referendum petition on Senate Bill 56, putting a roadblock in the way for THC supporters in their effort to collect the nearly 250,000 signatures needed to put the question to the voters. "When we put this on the ballot, people will be saying no to government..."

Total kratom ban? Ohio Pharmacy Board starts process months after temporary synthetic ban

CINCINNATI — Ohio is now looking to take kratom completely off the market. The Ohio Board of Pharmacy is moving forward with a new proposal to ban natural kratom. This comes after the board, along with Gov. Mike DeWine, put in place a 180-day ban on all kratom products that were not 100% natural back in December. The Board of Pharmacy says they are still working to make that ban permanent as well. "It's certainly not as profound as some of the other substances that we see within the community, but there is an impact of kratom within our community," said Dr. Nancy Pook, an emergency physician with Kettering Health. Pook...

Unique Ohio training equips professionals with tools to respond to people experiencing a psychedelic crisis

COLUMBUS, Ohio — It's overwhelming to interact with someone who is having an intense psychedelic experience. That's why a program has been introduced for first responders and behavioral professionals to better handle the situation. "We really wanted to be a leader in the country in providing training so that if someone comes to them in distress from having a psychedelic experience, that they have some basic skills and knowledge about what they can do to support that person," said Dr. Alan Davis, the Director of Ohio State University's Center for Psychedelic Drug Research and Education (CPDRE). Using a \$400,000 grant from the...

'It all started in the pod': Cuyahoga County's jail detox unit helps offenders choose sobriety

CLEVELAND, Ohio — After his latest arrest in July, Bryan Kubit braced for his ninth trip to prison, restarting a cycle he knew well by then: arrest, jail, prison, release – repeat. The 55-year-old said he considered himself a career criminal by then, cycling in and out of the Cuyahoga County jail and state prison, usually because of crimes tied to decades of drug and alcohol addiction. His charges over the years ranged from failure to comply with a police order to theft, aggravated robbery, assault and drug use. "You name it, I've done it, pretty much," he admits. "I'm not proud of it at all. Everything is pretty much due to drugs..."

Central Ohio correctional facilities awarded nearly \$1 million for addiction treatment

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) – Five central Ohio correctional institutions have received a combined total of nearly \$1 million in state grants to support addiction treatment. In late December, the Ohio Attorney General's Office announced the fourth round of recipients for the Opioid Remediation Grant Program. Facilities can use the funding to hire full-time addiction-services coordinators or purchase medications and supplies for inmates experiencing withdrawal. "These grants do more than prevent overdoses – they give inmates a fighting chance to break the cycle of substance abuse and incarceration," Ohio...

Kentucky's first medical cannabis processor is opening in Dayton

DAYTON, Ky. — Kentucky's first operational medical cannabis processor, Bison Processing, is opening in Dayton. As the first facility of its kind in the state, Bison Processing will be responsible for taking Kentucky-grown cannabis and transforming it into safe, lab-tested medical products—such as tinctures, edibles and topicals—for patients registered in the Kentucky Medical Cannabis Program. "Team Kentucky approved our first processor, Bison Infused in Dayton," Gov. Andy Beshear said in a Thursday press conference. The governor went on to add that the "announcement about the first processor coming online means..."

Immanuel Baptist Church to host support group for Families/Parents of Addicted Loved Ones

On a Wednesday afternoon in November, Emily Holladay, senior pastor of Immanuel Baptist Church in Frankfort (IBC), put down her phone, sat back in her chair, and sighed. She had just received her third phone call, in as many days, from someone dealing with addiction in their family. Though not all these conversations were with church members, each person reached out because they hoped to find a listening ear and a comforting word, so they dialed a local pastor for help. The stories were all different. Some were parents whose adult children were struggling with drug and alcohol abuse. Others had spouses at home showing signs of...

Music therapy research program helps Indiana residents recovering from opioid use disorder

A team of music therapy researchers at Indiana University Indianapolis is partnering with Hoosier communities to help residents recover from chronic opioid use. The team was recently awarded \$310,000 through a State Opioid Response Grant from the Indiana Division of Mental Health and Addictions. The funds will help the program expand, demonstrating IU's leadership in finding innovative, effective solutions for addiction recovery and mental health across the Hoosier state. In Marion County, the team led by Kate Myers-Coffman, visiting assistant professor of music therapy in the Herron School of Art and Design, has been...

National News

Treating addiction with immunotherapy: Study links alcohol use and the immune system

A 2024 U.S. national survey reported that 11.8% of males and 7.6% of females ages 12 and older met the criteria for Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) in 2023, meaning they could not stop or control alcohol use despite serious health and relationship consequences. Some individuals are more susceptible to alcohol addiction than others, especially due to genetics, mental health, and social environment. Currently, there are only three FDA-approved medications for reducing alcohol cravings—all targeting addiction as a brain-based disorder. A new interdisciplinary study from BYU, however, opens an angle of neuroimmune research...

Using rare sugars to address alcoholism

While investigating the FGF21-oxytocin-dopamine system, a mechanism that regulates sugar appetite, a team of researchers at Kyoto University noticed reports suggesting that the protein FGF21 may regulate alcohol ingestion. The team's original aim had been to address sugar appetite in lifestyle-related diseases, but since alcohol is a fermented product of sugar, they speculated that perhaps the body contains a system that recognizes both alcohol and sugar as the same entity. Excessive alcohol consumption is a major global health issue, and effective countermeasures for prevention and treatment are limited. Patients with...

New dietary guidelines omit alcohol limits

The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the Department of Agriculture (USDA) released the updated Dietary Guidelines for Americans, federal nutrition guidelines that are updated every five years. The main point: The new guidance aligns with earlier versions in suggesting limited alcohol consumption, but it does not offer specific recommendations on what that means and omits warnings on the health risks of alcohol. Previous versions of the guidelines have for decades recommended no more than 1-2 alcoholic drinks per day, most recently recommending no more than 1 for women and...

CBD treatment reverses key effects of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder in mouse model

Cannabidiol (CBD) could become a therapeutic tool to address some of the most frequent and disabling consequences of fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD), a condition caused by alcohol exposure during pregnancy. This is one of the main conclusions of a preclinical study conducted in mice by researchers at the Institute for Neurosciences (UMH-CSIC). Published in *Biomedicine & Pharmacotherapy*, the study shows that CBD treatment normalizes emotional behavior and vulnerability to addiction in animals exposed to alcohol during the perinatal period, particularly in females. Additionally, the treatment improves gene alterations...

The stop-smoking medication varenicline may also work for cannabis use disorder

A new randomized controlled trial has found promising evidence that the smoking cessation medication varenicline (Chantix/Champix) can help people with cannabis use disorder (CUD) to reduce cannabis use. CUD is a rising problem globally, partly due to recent legalization in several countries and US states, and until now no medications have been found to treat it. CUD is characterized by continued use of cannabis despite "clinically significant impairment" such as ignoring important social, occupational, or recreational activities and persistent use despite physical or psychological problems associated with cannabis. Cannabis use is...

More surgical patients are on opioid use disorder medications, and hospitals must modernize pain care

As more Americans receive treatment for opioid-use disorder, that progress is increasingly showing up in the operating room, creating an urgent need to modernize how pain is managed during and after major surgery, according to a study in the February 2026 issue of *Anesthesiology*. The study documents a steady rise in surgical patients using medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD), highlighting a gap between current surgical pain practices and the needs of today's patients. "From the patient's perspective, our study reinforces that addiction treatment is medical care—not something to pause or hide before surgery...

Slow Heart Rate May Signal Xylazine Involvement in Opioid Overdoses

Bradycardia on arrival at the emergency department (ED) appeared to be a positive predictor of xylazine detection among patients with opioid overdose, an observational study suggested. Among patients with opioid overdose, bradycardia on initial vital signs was associated with a higher likelihood of xylazine detection (adjusted OR 2.11, 95% CI 1.06-4.06), reported Jennifer S. Love, MD, of the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai in New York City, and co-authors in *Addiction*. This marks the first time that researchers have tied this symptom to the novel adulterant, also known as "tranq." While the association was...

Study focuses on safer opioid prescribing

With an estimated 5 million Americans battling opioid use disorder—resulting in tens of thousands of deaths each year—a new study by the University of Texas at Arlington examines how updated Centers for Disease Control and Prevention guidelines can help nurse practitioners reduce misuse and protect patients. In 2023, approximately 105,000 people died from drug overdoses—nearly 80% of which involved opioids, according to the CDC. The UT Arlington study, recently published in *The Nurse Practitioner*, examines how the CDC's revised guidelines in 2022 provide clearer, more practical direction for nurse...

Many drug-use treatment providers in NC demand unpaid labor, limit access to evidence-based treatment

A new study finds many organizations that provide residential drug- and alcohol-use services in North Carolina have mandated labor requirements. Organizations with labor requirements are less likely to provide recommended evidence-based treatment for opioid-use disorders and are more likely to operate without a state license for adult substance-use services. "More than a third of residential substance-use service providers in the state require patients seeking treatment to engage in some form of labor," says Jennifer Carroll, lead author of the study and an associate professor of anthropology at North Carolina State...

Reddit and TikTok, with the help of AI, are reshaping how researchers understand substance use

When you think of tools for studying substance use and addiction, a social media site like Reddit, TikTok or YouTube probably isn't the first thing that comes to mind. Yet the stories shared on social media platforms are offering unprecedented insights into the world of substance use. In the past, researchers studying people's experiences with addiction relied mostly on clinical observations and self-reported surveys. But only about 5% of people diagnosed with a substance-use disorder seek formal treatment. They are only a small sliver of the population who have a substance-use disorder—and until recently, there has...

White House Reverses Proposed \$2 Billion Cut to Addiction and Mental Health Grants

On January 14th, the White House reversed a \$2 billion cut to federal grants supporting addiction treatment, overdose prevention, and mental health services, after widespread concern from lawmakers, providers, and grantees across the country. Earlier this week, Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) grantees were notified that their grants would be abruptly terminated, effective immediately. The notices cited “non-alignment with SAMHSA priorities” and left thousands of programs uncertain about their ability to continue providing services. By Wednesday evening...

Could psychedelics harness neuroplasticity to treat addiction and other mental illness?

The potential use of psychedelics in the treatment of various mental health conditions has made these drugs a hot area of scientific research, as well as growing public interest. A variant of ketamine called esketamine is already FDA approved and utilized for treatment-resistant depression, and the FDA has designated formulations of psilocybin and MDMA for the treatment of depression and PTSD, respectively, as “breakthrough therapies,” a process designed to expedite their development and review. NIDA is actively funding research on these compounds—NIDA and the National Institute on Mental Health are the largest...

What's behind this country's dramatic drop in the number of new orphans?

Over the past several decades, a hopeful story has played out across southern Uganda. The number of children who've lost a parent has plummeted, from nearly one in four in the early 2000s to just 6% in 2022. New research suggests the decline in orphanhood – defined as the loss of at least one parent – was driven by HIV foreign aid programs. "I'm about 70 now," says study co-author Dr. David Serwadda of Makerere University in Uganda. "I've never seen a program intervention that has had this huge impact." Serwadda was working in Uganda during the mid-1990s, when the HIV pandemic was claiming more than 100,000 lives...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

There are no new NIH Grants Funding Opportunities to post this week.

CAR Member New Publications

Gender-specific addiction research needed now more than ever: Reflections from 25 years of the NIDA Clinical Trials Network Gender Special Interest Group

Aimee N.C. Campbell, A. Kathleen Burlew, Constance Guille, Mia A. Haidamus, Denise A. Hien, Therese Killeen, Michelle R. Lofwall, Margaret M. Paschen-Wolff, Christi A. Patten, Dawn E. Sugarman, T. John Winhusen, Ludmila N. Bakhireva, Amy M. Loree, Shayna Mazel, Shelly F. Greenfield

Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.josat.2025.209849>

ABSTRACT

Despite rising rates of substance use disorders (SUD) in women and the narrowing of the SUD gender prevalence ratio in the U.S., large knowledge gaps in gender-specific treatment remain. The NIDA Clinical Trials Network (CTN) Gender Special Interest Group (GSIG) has provided opportunities to bring the gender lens to national multi-site clinical trials, ancillary studies, secondary data analyses, recommendations for data collection and demographic data, among other contributions to CTN and the SUD treatment field. This commentary provides background on gender differences and the knowledge gap, a history of the CTN GSIG, and its accomplishments via gender specific trials and key secondary analyses. The commentary will close with future directions and recommendations for research including improving the inclusion of intersectional identities in recruitment reach and analyses, reproductive health, pregnant and parenting people, and methodological considerations for clinical trials to enhance capacity to collect and understand data related to gender.

A community-driven approach to address substance use and create a Great Plains American Indian addiction and recovery research agenda

Brynn Luger, Anna Kihlström, Brinda Sivaramakrishnan, Allison Kelliher, Frankie Kropp, Carmen Rosa, T. John Winhusen, Donald Warne, the CTN0129 participating Tribal communities

American Journal of Community Psychology

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1002/ajcp.70039>

ABSTRACT

Substance use, specifically opioid and methamphetamine use, is of increasing concern among American Indian (AI) populations in the Great Plains. This community-driven participatory study investigated the impacts of substance use and community-defined needs in treating addiction. It determined the priorities for future research on behavioral health and substance misuse in the Great Plains region. Behavioral health and social services professionals and community stakeholders were identified from eight Great Plains communities and invited to attend eight focus groups (N = 47). Conversations were audio-recorded, transcribed, and coded by the research team. The qualitative data analysis

identified four themes: (1) Challenges with Treatment and Recovery, (2) Impact of Substance Use, (3) Reasons for Substance Use, (4) Solutions and Research Priorities. The findings highlight barriers to substance use disorder (SUD) treatment ranging from policy issues to lack of funding. The most significant finding centered on integrating cultural strengths into treatment and recovery programs, including Ceremony Assisted Treatment (CAT). Data reports for each participating organization were provided to disseminate outcomes in their respective communities. Other key findings suggest that addressing the root causes of substance use disorder, along with early intervention and comprehensive counseling services, are essential for long-term success.

Highlights

- Impacts of substance use in Great Plains American Indian Tribal communities.
- Engagement with Great Plains Tribal communities to guide future research priorities.
- Integrating cultural strengths into treatment and recovery programs is necessary.

Critical issue of addiction and associated community challenges in the Great Plains Tribal region.

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