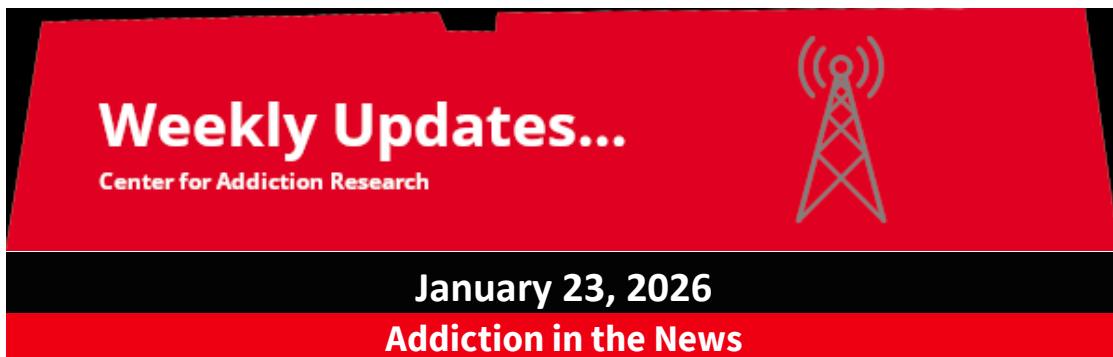


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu))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

### **[Study tests non-opioid treatments for severe post-stroke headaches](#)**

The University of Cincinnati is a site for a clinical trial testing a new approach to manage severe headaches that occur following subarachnoid hemorrhage (SAH), a type of stroke that accounts for approximately 10% of all strokes and affects 30,000 Americans each year. Charles Prestigiacomo, MD, is site principal investigator for the BLOCK-SAH trial, sponsored by the University of Florida. SAH is caused by a brain aneurysm, a tiny point of breakage in a blood vessel similar to a blister on a tire that can appear, grow and rupture. The aneurysm's rupture leads to bleeding around the brain tissue, and the current standard of care is...

### **[A decade after synthetic opioids surged, Cincinnati is part of a historic decline in deaths](#)**

Cincinnati — A decade ago, the streets around Cincinnati, Ohio, became a front line for America's deadliest drug crisis. Tom Synan, police chief of nearby Newton, and head of Hamilton County's Addiction Response Coalition, can still point out the places where opioid overdoses were once common, and where first responders were pushed to the brink. "August 19th through the 27th of 2016 — carfentanil hit the streets of Cincinnati," Synan told CBS News. "We've never been the same, and the country has never been the same." Carfentanil is an ultrapotent synthetic opioid used to tranquilize elephants and other large mammals...

## **Kentucky lawmakers take up bills to cut barriers to addiction medication**

FRANKFORT, Ky. — To combat the rising number of overdose deaths, two bills are before lawmakers that would allow doctors to prescribe a medication that could save lives. Lawmakers on both sides of the aisle are proposing legislation that would help patients access medication for substance use disorder. House Bill 153 and Senate Bill 82 would allow providers to prescribe buprenorphine for people with substance use disorder. It's a prescription Amanda Hall was grateful for when she was facing opioid dependency. "I don't know if I would have lived through that period of my life without buprenorphine. Like, I..."

## **First woman to graduate from Stable Recovery program, celebrates 8 months sober**

LEXINGTON, Ky. (LEX18) — At just 28 years old, Shahana Roberts has proven it's possible to get your life back on track after addiction. Roberts became the first female to graduate from the Stable Recovery Program, an addiction recovery center that combines equine therapy with building a healthier future. She completed the program after three months of intensive treatment. "It feels really good, like it's a huge accomplishment and not only just graduating the program, but now I have employment," Roberts said. "Like I feel good about myself, I'm in my kids' lives. You know I can do things that they can be proud of, and really accomplish..."

## **Lawsuit claims Addiction Recovery Care in 'desperate straits,' owes feds \$28M**

Addiction Recovery Care, or ARC, Kentucky's largest provider of addiction treatment, has been hit by a federal lawsuit in New York, alleging it committed "massive fraud" in Medicaid and Medicare billing and is now scrambling to raise nearly \$28 million for a civil settlement with the federal government. The allegations are included in a lawsuit by Angelica Capital Trust against ARC and its owners Tim Robinson and his wife Lelia, of Louisa, claiming the company advanced ARC \$8 million which ARC failed to repay as promised. "ARC is wrongfully withholding this money because it is in desperate straits," said the lawsuit filed...

## **National News**

### **Alpha-2 receptor drugs reduce heavy alcohol drinking, study finds**

Alcohol use is widespread and alcohol use disorder (AUD) causes substantial harm. AUD affects 29 million individuals and causes more than 140,000 deaths annually in the U.S. alone. Individuals with AUD also often struggle with cognitive deficits, particularly in memory, attention, and cognitive flexibility, which can further undermine recovery. Current drug options are limited and only modestly effective, so more efficacious and better-tolerated options are urgently needed. Researchers at Boston University Chobanian & Avedisian School of Medicine report for the first time that guanfacine, a selective alpha-2 adrenergic drug...

### **Count, rate of ED visits for alcohol-specific diagnoses increasing**

The count and rate of emergency department (ED) visits for alcohol-specific diagnoses increased from 2003–2004 to 2021–2022 among male and female individuals, according to a report issued by the National Center for Health Statistics. Xianghua Yin, Ph.D., M.D., from the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland, and colleagues present ED visit estimates by sex from 2003–2004 to 2021–2022 for alcohol-specific diagnoses. The researchers found that from 2003–2004 to 2021–2022, there was a 101% increase in the count of ED visits for alcohol-specific diagnoses among male individuals, from 1,986,000 to...

### **Vaping after stopping smoking linked to lower risk of relapse back to smoking**

Smokers who quit with the help of e-cigarettes often continue vaping, but it is not known whether this promotes or prevents relapse back to smoking. Led by Queen Mary University of London's Professor Peter Hajek, this study in the journal *Addiction*, "Continuing use of e-cigarettes after stopping smoking and relapse: Secondary analysis of a large randomized control trial" provides the first evidence that smokers who successfully stop smoking with the help of vapes and continue to use them may be reducing their risk of relapse. Only a relatively small proportion of smokers who quit with the help of nicotine replacement therapies...

### **For those with addiction, going into and coming out of prison can be a minefield.**

At the Ninilchik Community Clinic on Alaska's rural Kenai peninsula this summer, Dr. Sarah Spencer stood next to a patient lying on an exam table, and swiped her belly with alcohol. The patient was there for a monthly buprenorphine shot to treat her opioid use disorder – a shot she thought might be her last for a while since there was a warrant out for her arrest. The Alaska Department of Corrections does not provide comprehensive access to this life saving medication. "I'm gonna give you a little pinch," Spencer said, sliding the needle into a fold of skin on the patient's belly for the subcutaneous injection. Alaska's not an outlier. Despite...

### **Most Americans see opioid overdose as a serious crisis needing urgent action**

Approximately 88% of adults view opioid overdose deaths as a very serious problem with high agreement across political groups, according to a national survey conducted by Weill Cornell Medicine researchers. However, political differences over who is responsible will shape the country's next phase of drug policy. Historically, Americans have viewed people who use opioids as primarily responsible for the overdose crisis, with conservatives especially emphasizing personal responsibility for addiction. However, the new study, published Jan. 16 in *JAMA Network Open*, demonstrates that across the political spectrum, more...

### **Harm reduction vending machines in New York State expand access to overdose treatment and drug test strips**

Two studies led by an opioid treatment program run by the University at Buffalo and UBMD Emergency Medicine have found that harm reduction vending machines installed across New York State are well utilized and provide critical, lifesaving services to high-risk individuals who might not otherwise have access. The studies, published in the Journal of Addiction Medicine, evaluate the performance of the 15 harm reduction vending machines installed throughout New York State by the MATTERS Network, based at UBMD Emergency Medicine and UB. MATTERS (Medication for Addiction Treatment and Electronic Referrals) now...

### **Researchers drop projects, consider switching fields after a year of Trump funding cuts and layoffs**

After a year of government layoffs and sweeping funding cuts under President Trump, many researchers are hanging on by a thread. The administration has said it is realigning federal spending to match its agenda, but scientists respond that even proposals that advance the White House's goals have been ignored or cut. Medical advancements, education research, defense priorities — no area has proven safe from frozen funding, which has also come alongside massive reductions in the government agencies that support these areas. As Trump marks one year back in office on Tuesday, analysts and professors are considering...

### **Psilocybin could treat depression via a non-hallucinogenic receptor**

Psychedelics, psychoactive substances that alter people's perceptions, mood and thought patterns, have recently shown promise for the treatment of some mental health disorders, including depression and substance use disorders (SUDs). A psychedelic compound that has proved to be particularly promising for the treatment of depression is psilocybin, which is derived from some varieties of hallucinogenic mushrooms. When ingested, psilocybin is converted into psilocin, an active substance that influences how neurons communicate with each other. Past studies suggest that it affects the functioning of multiple serotonin...

### **Internet Gaming Disorder is affecting a significant portion of young adults**

Researchers out of Spain and Italy report a globally pooled Internet Gaming Disorder prevalence of 6.1% among adults ages 18–35. Internet Gaming Disorder is considered a condition for further study in DSM-5-TR, with official classification in ICD-11. Gaming problems often get viewed as an adolescent concern, while evidence indicates growing vulnerability in young adults. Late adolescents and young adults tend to show higher levels of depression, anxiety, and stress, along with lower self-esteem, compared to healthy regular gamers. DSM-5-TR includes nine criteria for Internet Gaming Disorder, including...

## People with 'binge-watching addiction' are more likely to be lonely, study finds

While many people binge-watch their favorite shows, binge-watching addiction is associated with loneliness, according to a study published in PLOS One by Xiaofan Yue and Xin Cui from Huangshan University in China. COVID-19 drove many people indoors and onto the couch, driving concerns about mental health, especially as people were also isolated and distressed. Now, while many people have resumed daily activities, some people binge-watch to the point of addiction—experiencing obsession, increases in TV consumption, and negative impacts on daily life. To understand how binge-watching addiction might be related to loneliness...

## 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

### Cigarette use and smoking cessation goals among pregnant women with opioid use disorder

Elizabeth E. Krans · Daniel Lewis · Antoine Douaihy · Michelle R. Lofwall · Frankie Kropp · Peter R. Martin · Reesha S. Sanghani · Jesse N. Cottrell · T. John Winhusen

*Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.josat.2025.209865>

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** Cigarette smoking rates among pregnant women with opioid use disorder (OUD), are significantly higher than those found in the general population.

**Method:** We conducted a secondary analysis of baseline data from a multisite, randomized clinical trial comparing two different buprenorphine formulations on outcomes during pregnancy. Cigarette use and smoking cessation goals were evaluated with the Fagerström Test for Nicotine Dependence and the Thoughts About Abstinence (TAA) questionnaire respectively. Factors associated with differences in cigarette use and smoking cessation goals were compared.

**Results:** Among 156 participants, 85 (54.5 %) reported that they currently smoked cigarettes. Most participants had a desire to quit smoking (TAA score = 6), but they had low expectations of success (TAA score = 4) and a relatively high perceived difficulty (TAA score

= 6.5) of quitting during pregnancy. Among participants who smoked, less than half (45.5 %) had a smoking cessation goal. Participants who had a smoking cessation goal were significantly more likely to have a stronger desire to quit and higher expectations of success in quitting than participants who did not have a goal.

**Conclusions:** Many pregnant women with OUD would like to quit or reduce smoking during pregnancy. A combination of pharmacologic and non-pharmacologic interventions to reduce or eliminate cigarette use should be incorporated into obstetric and substance use treatment clinical settings. Smoking cessation interventions should be aligned with patients' goals and preferences.

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