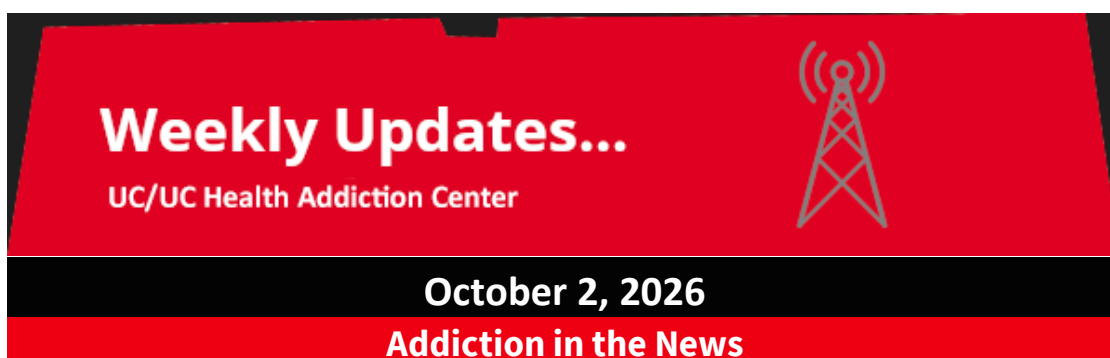


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email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

Thank you for your interest in the UC/UC Health Addiction Center - our mission is to generate new knowledge through innovative research, disseminate that knowledge through education and training, and provide high-quality, evidence-based treatment for individuals affected by addiction and related conditions. We are committed to supporting lifelong recovery and promoting dignity and respect for all individuals on their recovery journey.



UC/ Regional News

Overdose deaths surge in Ohio prisons as the system struggles with recovery resources: 3News Investigates

CLEVELAND — Prison is supposed to break the cycle of crime and addiction. But what happens when the drugs follow people behind bars? Drug overdose deaths inside Ohio prisons have increased sharply over the last decade, according to data from the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction. A 3News Investigates review of hundreds of pages of incident reports also provides a glimpse into suspected overdoses, desperate efforts to save inmates' lives and some of the ways drugs have made it inside state facilities. For Jasmine Kochheiser, those dangers aren't something she learned about from a...

Beshear highlights Kentucky's progress in fight against addiction during recovery month

During Recovery Month, Gov. Andy Beshear highlighted the progress Team Kentucky has made in fighting addiction. By increasing access to recovery resources, reducing the stigma around asking for help and removing dangerous drugs from communities, Beshear's administration has secured four straight years of declines in overdose deaths in the commonwealth. "Addiction has devastated our communities — we've lost too many folks to this disease. That is our past. But we will not accept it as our future," Beshear said. "Here in Kentucky, we've shown what is possible. We've led the way by letting folks know it's OK..."

National News

Even light drinking may harm brain health, new research suggests

New research suggests even light alcohol consumption could negatively affect brain health, challenging the long-held belief that a glass of wine a day may keep dementia away. The study, published in the Journal of the American Medical Association, found four drinks a week may be linked to smaller brain volume and declining language skills. Scripps News Medical Contributor Dr. Omer Awan said the findings are nuanced. "It's not saying that alcohol causes dementia. That's an important point that I want viewers to understand. But what it is saying is that alcohol is one among many modifiable factors that can elevate your risk for..."

Quitting Alcohol May Trigger Brain Changes Linked to Relapse Risk, Study Finds

Some mice stopped drinking. Then, after a period of forced abstinence, some began seeking alcohol again, even when researchers made the drink unpleasant. The difference was not only in their behavior. Scientists also found changes in activity in a specific brain region among the mice that developed this pattern. Published in Molecular Psychiatry in 2026, the study by Doyle et al., titled "Alcohol abstinence precipitates alcohol seeking and aversion resistant intake in association with increased BNST activity," examined how forced abstinence affected later alcohol seeking in mice. The research follows a specific trail...

Study shows how music may help tackle addiction

New research has found evidence that music can alter how the brain processes emotions in people receiving treatment for drug and alcohol addiction, as well as reduce their cravings. The study, published in the journal Addiction Neuroscience, is the first to investigate brain activity during music therapy sessions to treat substance use disorders, and combined electroencephalography (EEG) recordings with questionnaires and interviews with participants. Carried out by a team from Anglia Ruskin University's Cambridge Institute for Music Therapy Research led by Dr Clemens Maidhof, Dr Filippo Pasqualitto and Professor...

How do Denmark and the UK compare when it comes to alcohol and drinking habits?

For decades, Denmark and the UK have been known as countries where alcohol plays a big role in people's social lives. The two countries make an interesting comparison because both have strong drinking cultures. For years, Denmark has appeared near the top of European rankings for teenage alcohol use, with Danish teenagers consistently reporting higher levels of drinking than their peers in much of Europe—including the UK. Binge drinking has historically been a particular concern in the UK, especially among young adults. But drinking habits have changed substantially since the 2000s, with the proportion of UK adults who...

Getting paid to vape? Researchers say that's a dangerous combination

Vaping products are becoming smarter—and potentially more addictive. Some new devices now reward users with cryptocurrency and other incentives tied to vaping behavior. Researchers at MUSC Hollings Cancer Center are sounding the alarm about the emerging products in a new perspective published in the New England Journal of Medicine. They argue that by combining addictive substances with financial rewards, gamification and artificial intelligence, these devices increase addiction risk and undermine smoking cessation efforts. "What really stood out is that these products are rewarding people for engaging in an...

Newsom signs California law banning sales of single-use, battery-powered vapes

California will ban the sale of single-use, battery-powered vapes to fight plastic pollution under a law signed Monday by Gov. Gavin Newsom. Vapes, sometimes called electronic cigarettes, are battery-operated devices that contain aerosolized nicotine or cannabis, often with flavorings and other chemicals. Refillable and disposable options are sold. The ban targets single-use e-cigarettes, making it illegal to manufacture or import new or refurbished battery-embedded vapor devices starting Jan. 1, 2027. It also bans retail sales starting Jan. 1, 2028. The measure allows local governments or the state to fine people \$500 for their first...

Severe withdrawal cases point to growing medetomidine use

A powerful veterinary sedative, medetomidine, is increasingly appearing in street supplies of the already deadly opioid fentanyl, and the number of patients suffering from medetomidine withdrawal has quadrupled in recent years, according to a new analysis by researchers at the Perelman School of Medicine at the University of Pennsylvania. The work, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, confirms the observations of medical professionals who have been treating the drug's particularly severe withdrawal with specialized care, including infused medications and intensive care unit (ICU) stays. "You can't address something you can't...

(Please see related publication below from clinicians affiliated with the UCAC)

Experimental treatment in Pittsburgh has woman eyeing second chance at life

A 49-year-old woman traveled to Pittsburgh for an experimental treatment she said gave her hope for the first time in years. Jennifer King is getting brain surgery at Allegheny General Hospital to hopefully control her opioid addiction cravings. The mother of two and healthcare worker drove three hours for a recent appointment with her neurosurgeon, Dr. Nestor Tomycz, to adjust the electrode in her brain. If it works, King said she will finally be back to her old self. "I see the me from 13 years ago and before, when my kids were small and I raised them, and I didn't have any of these hang-ups or baggage," King said. She struggled for...

From binge eating to gaming: When everyday behaviors become addictions

When people think about addiction, they usually think about alcohol, drugs or gambling-related problems, but a major international study suggests some everyday behaviors, including excessive gaming, binge eating and compulsive sexual behavior, can share many of the same characteristics as recognized addictions. One of the world's most comprehensive reviews of behavioral addictions has found gaming disorder is 98.9% similar to gambling disorder, sharing many of the same risk factors, warning signs and underlying characteristics. Binge-eating disorder and compulsive sexual behavior disorder also showed...

DraftKings faces proposed class-action lawsuit over alleged AI-driven gambling promotions

DraftKings, the online sportsbook and casino, faces a proposed class action lawsuit after customers read reports alleging the company used artificial intelligence to target vulnerable gamblers with promotions that encouraged them to bet more and lose more money. West Virginia gambler Daniel Vest brought the lawsuit, which was filed Wednesday in Massachusetts Federal Court. He is seeking to represent a nationwide class of users who were allegedly identified through an AI model as likely to be persuaded by incentives to keep gambling. The lawsuit follows a recent New York Times report that said DraftKings worked...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-27-045](#)

HEAL Initiative: Whole Joint Health Program (R61/R33 Clinical Trial Required)

[RFA-MH-27-125](#)

Mechanistic Evaluation of Therapeutic Targets derived from Treatable Traits to Improve CNS Outcomes in People with HIV (R21/R33 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

New Publications from UCAC Faculty

Clinical progress note: Management of the hospitalized patient with medetomidine withdrawal

Rachel C. Caulkins DO, MPH, Michael R. Lawson MD, Melissa Previtera MLIS, Carolyn A. Chan MD, MHS

ABSTRACT

Medetomidine is an α_2 adrenergic agonist that has rapidly emerged as an adulterant in the US illicit opioid supply. Clinicians should suspect medetomidine exposure when opioid overdoses respond poorly to naloxone. Medetomidine withdrawal is clinically distinct from opioid and xylazine withdrawal and should be suspected when a patient with opioid withdrawal presents with significant rebound sympathetic activation, including hypertension, tachycardia, tremor, agitation, and refractory vomiting despite opioid agonist treatment. Management requires concurrent treatment of opioid withdrawal, early use of α_2 agonists, and escalation to dexmedetomidine infusion for severe cases. Greater access to testing and prospective treatment data are needed.

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