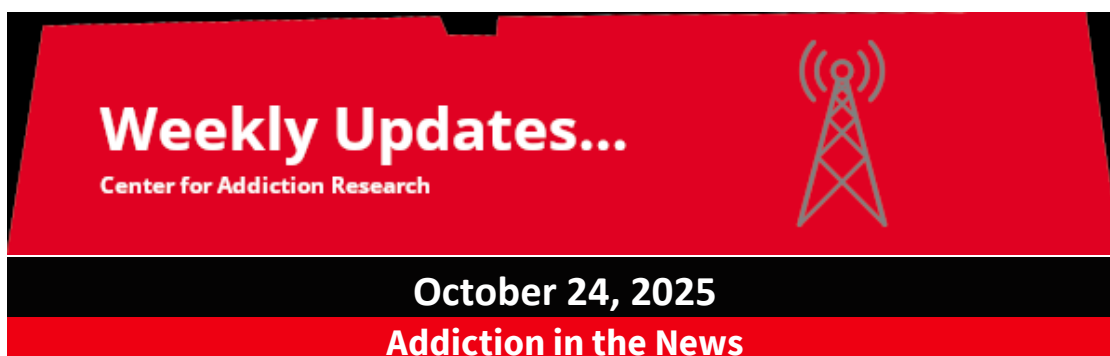


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) 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 reports alarming uptick in deadly synthetic opioids, including carfentanil

CINCINNATI — A dangerous drug believed to be about 100 times more potent than fentanyl is being seized at an increased rate in Ohio. According to Ohio Attorney General Dave Yost, the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigation is reporting a continued rise in drug seizures involving carfentanil and other deadly synthetic opioids. So far in 2025, BCI forensic scientists have identified carfentanil in 199 items that were submitted to the bureau's laboratory for testing. A deadly synthetic opioid, carfentanil is about 100 times more potent than fentanyl and about 10,000 times more potent than morphine, according to Yost. Carfentanil is not approved...

Ohio House to introduce proposal allowing stores to sell THC drinks, but bans other hemp products

COLUMBUS, Ohio — The Ohio House Republicans are set to introduce legislation that would allow stores and breweries to sell THC-infused drinks, but prohibit all other forms of "intoxicating hemp" products. Also in the proposal, exclusively shared with us, cities would get their long-awaited tax revenue from marijuana dispensary sales. This comes as a court blocks Gov. Mike DeWine's hemp ban. Years of negotiating on marijuana and hemp policy — with nothing to show for it. "Frankly, the legislature had not taken action," DeWine said Tuesday. After nearly two years, DeWine took matters into his own hands last week, signing an executive order temporarily banning what he calls "intoxicating hemp," low-level...

Statehouse advances bill to tighten Ohio marijuana, hemp laws

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio House lawmakers advanced Senate Bill 56 on Wednesday, which aims to address concerns around the state's recreational marijuana program. The bill includes bans on smoking and vaping in public and restrictions on out-of-state purchases. The bill would ban smoking and vaping marijuana everywhere except for a private residence and prohibit the possession of marijuana bought in any out-of-state dispensary. The legislation also caps the amount of THC in certain products and includes new rules for intoxicating hemp, which lawmakers say has long been operating in a legal gray...

Gov. Mike DeWine signs bill changing school policies regarding religion, overdose reversal drugs

OHIO — Governor Mike DeWine, R-Ohio, signed a bill into law that would allow a student to leave school for religious instruction and gives more guidelines to schools about overdose reversal drugs. Students will be able to leave for at least one period per week for religious instruction if the student's parent or guardian gives written consent and that the religious entity maintains attendance records that would be made available to the school district. The law also requires transportation to and from the place of instruction is the parent or entity's responsibility, no public funds are expended and no public school personnel are...

Ohio launches first mobile medication units to expand access to lifesaving treatment

CHILLICOTHE, Ohio — On Friday, representatives with the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health (DBH), Anchor Addiction and Wellness Center, and the Paint Valley Alcohol, Drug Addiction, and Mental Health (ADAMH) Board gathered in Chillicothe to unveil Ohio's first Mobile Medication Units (MMUs), which will deliver lifesaving treatment to individuals in seven rural counties. "These units will connect individuals in high-need areas with medication-assisted treatment for opioid use disorder," said DBH Interim Director Tia Marcel Moretti. "Data show when people are facing instability in their lives, they're far more likely..."

Ohio THC products recalled statewide, sold at multiple local dispensaries

According to a statement, the DCC has issued a product recall for certain products manufactured by Klutch Processing, LLC and Green Investment Partners, LLC. The agency was alerted by a dispensary that certain products sold by Klutch Processing, LLC, edible gummies, were "not marked with a universal THC symbol on each serving." In the case of Green Investment Partners, LLC, the agency said it investigated a complaint and found the same issue. Ohio law requires the universal THC symbol on each serving, and as a result the affected products are not compliant, per the agency. "The Division's rules are aimed at..."

Nicotine pouches popular among college students, especially in fraternities

Many college students are experimenting with nicotine pouches, which could lead to an increase in young people dependent on the highly addictive chemical, new research suggests. More than 15% of undergraduates and more than 11% of graduate students told a research team from The Ohio State University that they had ever tried a nicotine pouch. And about 3% of the students said they use the pouches at least monthly. Certain groups, including fraternity members, reported much higher rates – more than 41% of students in a fraternity said they'd tried a pouch such as Zyn. The study included more than 1,400 undergraduate...

Medicaid change for KY Appalachians with substance use disorder will cost us all | Opinion

For Kentuckians with substance use disorders (SUDs), the stakes are high. Amid an ongoing overdose epidemic that has hit our state exceptionally hard, House Resolution 1 will only thwart our ability to obtain lifesaving care by adding red tape to Medicaid and gutting the program which over 20% of adults with an SUD nationwide rely on for treatment access (KFF). This summer, Congress passed H.R. 1 and signed it into law. Among its many provisions, the bill drastically cuts federal funding to Medicaid — the nation's largest health care payer, including for addiction treatment — and mandates new work reporting requirements...

Florida company will buy Addiction Recovery Care, continue 'core mission,' says founder

Addiction Recovery Care, or ARC, Kentucky's largest provider of treatment and recovery services, has announced its pending sale to Ethema Health Corp., a Palm Beach, Florida-based behavioral health company. ARC reported the potential sale in a news release Wednesday, saying the two companies have "entered into a letter of intent" for Ethema to acquire the assets and operations of ARC. It did not disclose the sale price. Once the fastest-growing provider of addiction services in Kentucky, ARC has foundered over the past 14 months amid reports of an ongoing FBI investigation into possible health care fraud...

National News

Study considers how labels can convey alcohol's cancer risk

Scientists have known alcohol causes cancer for years. But it has been a tall order to get people to understand this risk and change their drinking patterns. It is estimated that alcohol causes 741,300 cancers globally each year. About a quarter of these are related to consuming just two drinks a day or less. Despite the medical consensus around this issue, less than half of U.S. adults are aware that alcohol consumption significantly increases one's risk of developing several types of cancer. This led to the U.S. Office of the Surgeon General issuing a report in January 2025 to suggest adding revised warning labels on alcoholic beverages...

College students who experienced family dysfunction as children sometimes turn to alcohol to cope

College can be a joyful time—of learning, forming lifelong friendships and having fun. But it's not without its challenges. National Collegiate Alcohol Awareness Week, Oct. 19–25, brings attention to the struggles faced by students on campuses across the U.S., calling for increased education and resources. At William & Mary, Associate Professor of Psychological Sciences Adrian Bravo '12 expands that work. Collaborating with an international team of researchers and undergraduate students, he's teasing out the cross-national trends that might explain why certain students are more vulnerable to alcohol use disorders. A...

Frequent heartburn could help screen for alcohol use disorder, study finds

A new study from Saint Louis University (SLU) reveals that individuals with frequent heartburn—clinically known as gastroesophageal reflux disease (GERD)—have a higher chance of being diagnosed with alcohol use disorder (AUD) within two years. Researchers are urging primary care providers to screen GERD patients for alcohol misuse during routine visits. Alcohol use disorder affects millions of Americans and contributes to nearly 178,000 deaths each year. Despite the availability of effective treatments, many people go undiagnosed, especially in primary care settings where doctors have regular contact...

Your DNA may shape how you use cannabis

Researchers at the University of California San Diego School of Medicine, working with the genetic testing company 23andMe, have pinpointed regions of the human genome linked to cannabis use. Their discoveries reveal new genetic connections to psychiatric, cognitive, and physical health, offering insights that could eventually guide prevention and treatment strategies for cannabis use disorder. The findings were published on October 13, 2025, in *Molecular Psychiatry*. "Cannabis is widely used, but its long-term effects on health remain poorly characterized," said Sandra Sanchez-Roige, Ph.D., associate professor of...

Smoking both cannabis and tobacco may alter brain's 'bliss molecule,' study finds

People who use both cannabis and tobacco show distinct brain changes compared to those who use cannabis alone, according to a new study led by McGill University researchers at the Douglas Research Center. The finding may help explain why people who use both cannabis and tobacco often report increased depression and anxiety, and why quitting cannabis is harder for them than for people only using cannabis. "This is the first evidence in humans of a molecular mechanism that may underlie why people who use both cannabis and tobacco experience worse outcomes," said lead author Rachel Rabin, Associate Professor in...

How tobacco retail exposure impacts smoking behavior

Studies have found that the density of tobacco retailers in a neighborhood is associated with smoking, the leading cause of preventable disease and death. But what if smokers and policymakers were able to understand the impact of this exposure not just on a population level but at the individual level? Rather than relying on longer recall periods and assumptions about how people move through their neighborhoods, as many studies do, what if researchers could follow the movements and behaviors of smokers more naturally—hour by hour, day by day? University of Pennsylvania researchers have found that people who...

Study shows ads for prescription smoking cessation drugs help reduce smoking rates, but OTC ads fall short

A new peer-reviewed study in the journal *Marketing Science* finds that direct-to-consumer (DTC) advertising for prescription smoking-cessation drugs meaningfully reduces cigarette use. At the same time, the research found that advertising for over the counter (OTC) nicotine products does not reduce cigarette use. The research highlights how advertising can either support or undermine public health goals when it comes to smoking cessation, depending on the type of cessation product being promoted. The study, "Investigating the Impact of Advertising on Smoking Cessation: The Role of Direct-to-Consumer Prescription Drug..."

Tobacco smoking in childhood associated with premature cardiac damage, heart failure and sudden death

Active and passive tobacco exposure during childhood and adolescence represents a critical preventable risk factor for premature cardiovascular disease, according to a new narrative review published in *Trends in Cardiovascular Medicine*. The article provides up-to-date evidence regarding the epidemiology, risk factors and clinical implications of active and passive smoking on a growing heart and discusses the prospective and likely causal relationships between tobacco exposure and structural and functional heart damage. Summing up recent research, the authors also highlight some associations between...

Hidden toxins in e-cigarette fluids may harm lung cells

A study by University of California, Riverside, scientists has found that two toxic chemicals can form when the main ingredient in most e-cigarette fluids is heated, and that these compounds can harm human lung cells. The researchers characterized the toxicity of methylglyoxal and acetaldehyde, both known toxins that can be generated during the heating of vaping liquids containing propylene glycol. While these chemicals are already recognized as harmful in other settings, their impact during vaping has not been well understood until now. Using lab-grown human airway tissue, the team exposed cells...

The hidden victims of the opioid crisis: the ones who lived

John-Bryan “JB” Jarrett was supposed to be fishing on the Saturday morning of Labor Day weekend, September 2020. Over dinner the night before, he told his mom, Jessica, he wanted to be on the water by 7am. Jessica and JB were unusually close. When her work brought her to Austin, she stayed in his spare room; when the pandemic hit, she moved in for good. Despite a full life – a girlfriend, a job, a side hustle running an online thrift store – he welcomed her. They planted vegetables, packed meals for homeless people, watched true crime, even shared their phone locations. That morning, Jessica woke up eager to text...

Nursing facilities can’t blanket ban people with addiction history, per N.C. settlement

Two skilled nursing facilities in North Carolina reached a settlement this month that bars them from discriminating against people with a history of substance use — potentially setting a precedent for how long-term care facilities nationwide treat people with addiction. Under the settlement, the facilities are to adopt new antidiscrimination admission policies and apply reasonable judgment to individual applicants, instead of automatically denying them based on past substance use. The policies apply to people taking addiction medications like methadone and buprenorphine, as well as those who currently use illegal drugs; facilities...

Stopping long-term opioid treatment unlikely to increase suicide risk, major study finds

People on long-term opioid treatment can be reassured that stopping these medicines is not likely to increase their risk of suicide or fatal overdose, thanks to a major new study from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Center (NDARC) at UNSW Sydney. The Australian-first research, based on data from 3.57 million people prescribed opioids, found no evidence of an association between opioid discontinuation and death from suicide or overdose. With growing concerns about the limited benefits and potential risks of long-term opioid use, there is increasing interest in understanding what happens when these medicines are tapered...

Updated CPR guidelines tackle choking response, opioid-related emergencies and a revised Chain of Survival

DALLAS, Oct. 22, 2025 —The “2025 American Heart Association Guidelines for Cardiopulmonary Resuscitation (CPR) and Emergency Cardiovascular Care (ECC),” published today in the Association’s flagship journal, *Circulation*, marks the first full revision of lifesaving resuscitation guidance since 2020. Among the updates are expanded recommendations for managing choking and suspected opioid overdose, in addition to other lifesaving interventions. Each year, approximately 350,000 people in the U.S. experience an out-of-hospital cardiac arrest – when the heart suddenly stops beating – which results in...

Fewer than half of drug overdose survivors go to the hospital

Among survivors of drug overdose, fewer than half visited the emergency department, according to a study published online Oct. 16 in JAMA Network Open. Brendan Saloner, Ph.D., from Brown University in Providence, Rhode Island, and colleagues examined service use following a nonfatal overdose (NFOD). The analysis included a telephone survey of 2,097 adults who used cocaine, opioids, or methamphetamines in the previous 12 months. The researchers found that 25.7% of participants had experienced at least one NFOD in the prior year. During the most recent NFOD, use of naloxone was reported by 82.1% of survivors...

Head of addiction medicine society warns of treatment cuts and rising threat of gambling

BOSTON — The president of a leading addiction medicine group issued stark warnings on hardline Trump administration policies on substance use, low rates of addiction treatment uptake, and a rise in problem gambling. But Stephen Taylor, the president of the American Society of Addiction Medicine, tempered his remarks with optimism. In particular, he expressed hope that his organization could find common ground with the Trump administration on access to addiction medications, and that GLP-1 medications could prove as effective for treating addiction as they have for diabetes and weight loss. The remarks...

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

Increasing access: Making naloxone available at highway rest areas

Tim Ingram, Sofia Rubi, Jennifer L. Brown, Joel Sprunger, Aimee Shadwick, Clark Crago, Michael S. Lyons, T. John Winhusen

Exploratory Research in Clinical and Social Pharmacy

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.rcsop.2025.100660>

ABSTRACT

Background: Naloxone is one of the most successful drugs in reversing the pharmacological effects of opioids and, in turn, preventing overdose. Increasing naloxone availability is an effective way to combat opioid-related overdose deaths. Recent changes

in legislation across the United States have provided the jurisdiction to make naloxone more readily available. Naloxboxes are transparent, unsecured containers stocked with naloxone that are strategically placed in semi-private public spaces, such as restrooms.

Objective: To assess the effectiveness of installing naloxboxes at highway rest areas in Ohio as a strategy to increase public access to naloxone. This assessment draws on the pilot partnerships with the Ohio Department of Transportation, emergency medical services, and public health agencies, and explores implications for broader community implementation.

Methods: In collaboration with existing Ohio organizations, the HEALing Communities Study leveraged local and national funding to facilitate the expansion of naloxone use through the deployment of naloxone boxes at Ohio highway rest areas.

Results: Naloxboxes were found to be well accepted by the public and sustainable in highway rest areas. Their successful implementation and ongoing maintenance relied on multisectoral support, requiring collaboration across community organizations, public health agencies, and other stakeholders.

Conclusions: This innovative approach promoted the widespread distribution of naloxone while still preserving anonymity.

Patient Acceptance of Rapid HIV Testing During Targeted Screening in the Emergency Department

Brianna N McMonagle, Robert Braun, Jude Luke, Anita Goel, Caroline Freiermuth

Western Journal of Emergency Medicine: Integrating Emergency Care with Population Health
DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5811/westjem.48500>

ABSTRACT

Introduction: It is concerning that 12.8% of the 1.2 million individuals in the U.S. living with HIV are undiagnosed. It is important to identify these patients so those affected receive evidence-based treatment and prevent spread. The objective of this study is to estimate acceptance rates of free, point of care fingerstick HIV testing for a sample of targeted, at-risk individuals in the emergency department (ED). Additionally, we assess how test acceptance varies with demographics and categorize why patients decline HIV testing.

Methods: This is a single-center retrospective analysis of survey responses and documented HIV testing in a targeted sample of patients presenting to an urban academic ED in the Midwest from 2022–2023. The survey and testing were done by trained health promotion advocates, who perform targeted screening on a convenience sample of patients with social risk factors. We report the prevalence of testing acceptance and reasons for declining testing. Comparison of demographics between the overall ED population and those offered testing was done using a two sample T-test for age, and Chi-squared testing for all other variables. Logistic regression was done to find associations between test acceptance and demographic or risk factors.

Results: Over 24-months, 3,249 unique patients were offered point-of-care (POC) HIV tests and 1,680 (51.7%) accepted, per Table 1. African American patients and those identifying as males were offered testing at a greater frequency than their overall representation in the ED. African American patients were more likely to accept testing than white patients (54.3% vs. 47.8%, OR=1.28, $p < 0.001$), while increased age was associated with decreased test acceptance (OR=0.98 per year, $p < 0.001$), per Table 2. All patients who accepted belong to at least one population of interest including high-risk heterosexual behavior (40.4%), youth ages 13–29 (34.9%), and women of color (25.8%). The most common reasons cited by patients who declined testing were not wanting to be interviewed (24%) and having a prior negative test within the last 3 months (19.1%).

Conclusions: Over half of those offered POC testing for HIV in the ED accepted, with a significant percentage of those who declined reporting recent negative testing. Younger age and African American ethnicity were associated with a higher acceptance rate. Adopting an opt-out screening system and addressing common reasons for declining testing may provide opportunities for increasing HIV test uptake.

© [2020 Center for Addiction Research]

