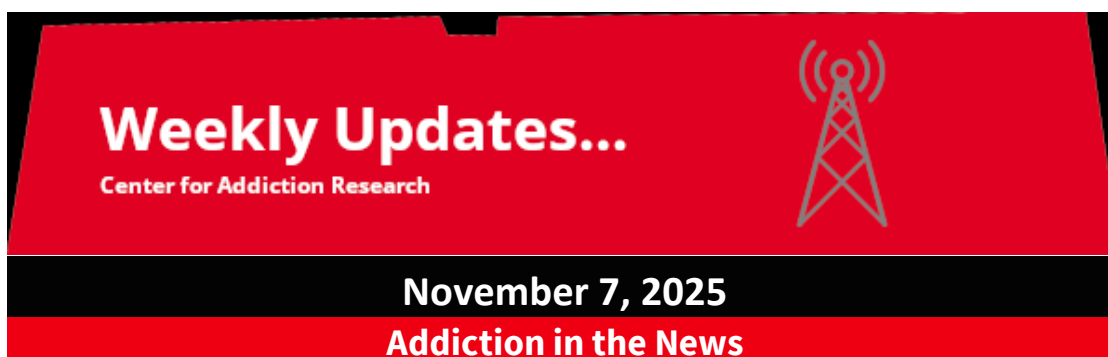


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

Congratulations to **Dr. Jayme McReynolds, Assistant Professor of Pharmacology and CAR Member**, for being named a Research Rising Star at the UC College of Medicine's recent Celebration of Research. We look forward to her future accomplishments.

Congratulations to **Dr. Joel Sprunger (CAR Member)** on his well-deserved promotion to UC Associate Professor of Psychiatry, effective September 1, 2026. This promotion recognizes his exceptional contributions to the department.

Hundreds displaced after addiction treatment center loses Medicaid funding; Owner federally charged

Hundreds of people seeking addiction treatment services are losing the places they stay. As reported on News Center 7 at 11:00, Clearview Treatment Services, a drug addiction treatment center, has lost its Medicaid funding. Federal investigators said the center was part of the Department of Justice's 2025 National Healthcare Fraud Takedown, and the owner is facing fraud charges. News Center 7's Taylor Robertson spoke with Clearview's lead counselor, Ryan Schell. He said Medicaid pays for almost everything at the center. Last week, he found out there was no more money. The center had to hurry and find places for more...

Experts warn against rising carfentanil use in Ohio

Ohio experts warn against the rise of a lethal synthetic opioid known as carfentanil. The substance is 100 times more potent than the synthetic opioid, fentanyl, which

killed 48,422 people in 2024, and 10,000 times more potent than morphine, a non-synthetic narcotic. According to the Ohio Bureau of Criminal Investigations, usage of the drug reached its height in 2017. However, usage is beginning to rise again, with 199 samples found so far in 2025, more than the last two years combined. Out of these 199 samples, six of them were found in Athens County, and several others were found in the neighboring counties, including...

Governor moves to block access to addictive form of kratom; 7-OH added to narcotic list

Gov. Andy Beshear has announced that his administration is taking action to prevent the sale and distribution of a dangerous substance in Kentucky by moving to classify 7-hydroxymitragynine (7-OH) as a Schedule I narcotic. This will make it illegal to sell, possess or distribute any isolated or concentrated forms of 7-OH in the state. "We have marked three straight years of declines in overdose deaths in Kentucky, and that is progress we're committed to building on as we work to protect more lives in the fight against addiction," said Gov. Beshear. "Deadly and addictive drugs like 7-OH have no place in our..."

National News

Heterosexist discrimination linked to alcohol use among LGBTQ+ students of immigrant origin

Lesbian, gay, bisexual, and queer college students distressed by harassment targeting their sexuality are at a higher risk for alcohol use, especially if they are of immigrant origin. This is among the findings of a new study that examined the links between heterosexist discrimination, anxiety, and drinking among LGBTQ+ college students. Both sexual and racial minorities are known to face greater alcohol-related risks than their heterosexual or white peers. Research has linked adverse health outcomes, including drinking behaviors such as using alcohol to cope, with anxiety generated by discrimination. Little is known, however...

Genes, personality, and family may predict alcohol drinking in teens

Examining genetic, family, and personality characteristics may help identify those who are at high risk for drinking and drinking problems as teenagers. A study, published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, found these factors to be associated with drinking behaviors during teenage and early adulthood and could be used to identify teens who would benefit from prevention and intervention strategies to reduce their risk of developing drinking problems. The study analyzed data from a large cohort of children born in England between 1991 and 1992 to identify the relationship between genetic, familial, and...

Closer proximity to cannabis retail stores linked with more cannabis use but less drinking

A statewide study of more than 60,000 adult Oregonians shows that living near cannabis retail stores is associated with a greater tendency toward frequent

cannabis use but a lower likelihood of heavy alcohol consumption. The research, led by Oregon State University scientist David Kerr, looked at nine years of data from an ongoing telephone survey, the Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System, directed by the Oregon Health Authority. The work is published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Participants in the survey didn't need to know the locations of cannabis stores around them; that information was...

Tobacco still top cancer killer, despite falling smoking rates

Tobacco remains the leading preventable cause of cancer death in the U.S., despite a dramatic decline in smoking, a new American Cancer Society report says. More than 80% of lung cancer deaths are linked to tobacco, according to data from the inaugural release of the American Heart Association's U.S. Tobacco Atlas. That's even though cigarette smoking among adults cratered from 42% in 1965 to just 11% in 2023, researchers said. Quit rates also have skyrocketed, with a record 62% of smokers trying to drop the habit in 2022, the report says. However, smokers are shunning the low-dose CT chest scans that are recommended...

Proposed policy calls for reduced nicotine levels in cigarettes

The American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) has endorsed a federal policy that would make cigarettes far less addictive. The proposed policy by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) sets a maximum nicotine product standard, limiting nicotine levels in combustible cigarettes and related tobacco products to 0.7 milligrams per gram (mg/g)—about 95% less than what is currently allowed. That reduction would make cigarettes minimally or nonaddictive, striking at the chemical that keeps people hooked. The AACR policy statement is published in Clinical Cancer Research. Leading the policy statement...

Teen Nicotine Vaping Trends Show Powerful Evidence Of Addiction

Tweens and teens who vape are becoming hopelessly hooked on nicotine, a new study warns. Daily nicotine vaping nearly doubled between 2020 and 2024 among U.S. middle and high school students who use e-cigarettes, researchers reported Nov. 3 in JAMA Network Open. The share of teen vapers who puff every day rose from 15% to nearly 29%, the study found. Teens who vape daily also found it harder to quit their habit, researchers said. The percentage of daily vapers who unsuccessfully tried to quit rose from 28% to 53% during the same period, according to the study. “The rise in daily vaping and growing number of...

The hidden dangers of vapes: Study reveals chemicals, risks and teen use

Recent testing by a Virginia Commonwealth University forensic toxicology research lab is uncovering the hidden dangers of vapes and cannabis products used by more than a million school-age children across the country each year. The study also highlights the rise of vaping in schools, where unregulated devices are increasingly found among students. This past school year, VCU researcher Michelle Peace and her team in the Laboratory for Forensic Toxicology Research conducted extensive

research on e-cigarettes, collecting and evaluating nearly 1,300 products from K-12 schools in Virginia as part of a project that exposes the...

Vaping might seem safer than smoking but your heart could tell a different story

You may have heard that vaping is the "safer" choice than smoking. But what if the very thing designed to protect your health also puts your heart at risk? Vaping does not exist in isolation. It is part of a wider story about smoking, inequality and the growing burden of heart disease in the UK. Even after years of public health campaigns, smoking remains common in England's most deprived areas. The reasons are complex. People living with financial strain, insecure jobs and chronic stress are more likely to smoke. Targeted marketing and limited access to stop-smoking services make it even harder to quit. At the same time, one in two...

Maldives becomes the first country to impose a generational ban on smoking

The Maldives has become the first country in the world to impose a generational smoking ban, barring anyone born after Jan. 1, 2007, from ever smoking, purchasing or using tobacco. "The ban applies to all forms of tobacco, and retailers are required to verify age prior to sale," the health ministry said Saturday as the ban came into effect. The step "makes the Maldives the first country in the world to enforce a nationwide generational tobacco ban," it added. The South Asian archipelago, which has a population of over half a million, already enforces a complete ban on vapes and electronic cigarettes — regardless of age — in an...

The 'hard, slow work' of reducing overdose deaths is having an effect

Illicit drug overdoses and the deaths they cause are trending down this year, despite spikes in a handful of states, according to a Stateline analysis of data from the federal Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. A handful of places with rising overdoses are responding to the problem with cooperation, they say, by sharing information about overdose surges and distributing emergency medication. "The national conversation is just about warships in the Caribbean and drones and borders," said Nabarun Dasgupta, who studies overdose trends at the University of North Carolina. "It discounts this huge groundswell of Americans..."

A path to safer painkillers: Using cryo-electron microscopy, scientists visualize how opioids engage key brain receptor

Scientists have known for decades that opioids relieve pain by binding to molecular switches in the brain called mu-opioid receptors. What they didn't know—until now—was exactly what happens next. A team led by biologists at the USC Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences, in collaboration with the Keck School of Medicine of USC, has captured those receptors mid-action, creating the molecular equivalent of a slow-motion movie. Their discovery, published in *Nature*, could help scientists design painkillers that aren't as addictive and develop longer-acting overdose antidotes like naloxone, better known by its brand...

More states eliminating insurance hurdles for opioid use disorder medications

A new study from Tulane University found that, over the past decade, more states have moved to make it easier for people with opioid use disorder to get potentially life-saving medication. The study published in Health Affairs found that, as of 2023, 22 states have passed laws prohibiting private insurance plans from requiring prior authorization, a process that requires doctors to get insurer approval before prescribing certain medications for opioid use disorder. That's an increase from only two states in 2015. "This signals a positive trend that states are making legislative efforts to address the opioid crisis," said lead...

From Narcan to Gun Silencers, Opioid Settlement Cash Pays Law Enforcement Tabs

In the heart of Appalachia, law enforcement is often seen as being on the front line of the addiction crisis. Bre Dolan, a 35-year-old resident of Hardy County, West Virginia, understands why. Throughout her childhood, when her dad had addiction and mental health crises, police officers were often the first ones to respond. Dolan calls them "good men and women" who "care about seeing their community recover." But she's skeptical that they can mitigate the root causes of an addiction epidemic that has racked her home state for decades. "Most of the busts that go down are addicts," she said — people who need treatment, not...

Declining union membership could be making US working-classes less happy, more susceptible to drug overdoses

When fewer people belong to unions and unions have less power, the impact goes beyond wages and job security. Those changes can hurt public health and make people more unhappy. We're economists who research labor and health issues. Those are two of the main findings of studies that we have conducted. More unionization, more happiness. In the first study on this topic that we published in 2023, we found that increasing levels of union membership tends to make working-class people happier. We zeroed in on a question in the General Social Survey, which the University of Chicago makes available. It asks...

Taking prescription opioids for too long can be harmful. Here's how to cut back and stop

Opioids, such as oxycodone, morphine, codeine, tramadol and fentanyl, are commonly prescribed to manage pain. You might be given a prescription when experiencing pain, or after surgery or an injury. But while opioids may relieve pain in the short term, they provide little to no lasting improvement in pain or function beyond a few weeks for people whose pain isn't caused by cancer. Opioids can also cause side effects such as nausea, constipation and drowsiness, as well as serious risks such as dependence and overdose. Over the past decade, Australia has introduced initiatives to reduce opioid use and related harm. This...

Webinar: CTN Youth SIG: Advancing Equity Through Implementation Science in Adolescent Substance Use Prevention

Friday, November 21, 2025 (11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m. ET)

Presented by: Cady Berkel, PhD, Associate Professor College of Health Solutions Arizona State University Culturally and contextually grounded preventive interventions can address upstream risk and protective factors to improve equity, but only if they are implemented in systems that serve underrepresented groups. This presentation will share findings a program of community-based research conducted in partnership with multiple settings (e.g., pediatric primary care, family courts, corrections) to advance equitable access to evidence-based substance use prevention for adolescents and families. The talk will also discuss implementation science frameworks and designs to incorporate equity and accelerate the translation of research into practice.

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

Do Communities Implementing the Communities That HEAL Intervention Have Significantly Lower Rates of High-Risk Opioid Prescribing and Dispensing?

Frances R. Levin MD, Douglas R. Oyler PharmD, Denise C. Babineau PhD, Jennifer Villani PhD, Redonna K. Chandler PhD, Patricia R. Freeman PhD, Daniel P. Alford MD, MPH, Naleef Fareed PhD, Nicole Mack MS, Trang Q. Nguyen MD, DrPh, Daniel M. Walker PhD, Joella Adams PhD, Trevor J. Baker MS, Donna Beers MSN, RN-BC, Shoshana N. Benjamin MPH, Jennifer Bhuiyan PharmD, Derek Blevins MD, James L. David MS, Netrali Dalvi MPH, Lauren D'Costa BS, Daniel J. Feaster PhD, LaShawn Glasgow DrPH, Dawn A. Goddard-Eckrich EdD, Yi Han MA, Mallory Harris MSW, Timothy Hunt PhD, Charles Knott MPA, Adrienne Matson PharmD, Frank Mierzwa PMP, Lisa Newman MSPH, Edward V. Nunes MD, Emmanuel A. Oga MD, Monica F. Roberts PharmD, Aimee Shadwick MA, Abigail Shoben PhD, Svetla Slavova PhD, Laura Stinson PharmD, Gary A. Zarkin PhD, Bridget Freisthler PhD, Jeffrey H. Samet MD, Sharon L. Walsh PhD, T. John Winhusen PhD, Rebecca D. Jackson MD, Nabila El-Bassel PhD

AJPM Focus

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1037/pha0000764>

ABSTRACT

Introduction: Prescription opioids can contribute to risk for opioid use disorder and overdoses. Improving prescription opioid safety is a critical component in reducing opioid risks. This report aims to determine whether communities randomized to the Communities That HEAL (CTH) intervention have significantly different rates of prescription opioid safety measures.

Study Design: A multisite, 2-arm, community-level, cluster randomized, unblinded, wait-list controlled comparison trial designed to assess the effectiveness of the CTH intervention in reducing opioid-related overdose deaths among community residents 18 years of age or older (adults).

Setting/Participants: Sixty-seven (67) communities in Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio. “Participants” were communities in this study. Intervention: The Communities That Heal intervention consists of multiple dimensions: a coalition-driven community engagement process to select and support implementation of Evidence Based Practices; the Opioid-overdose Reduction Continuum of Care Approach, a compendium of Evidence Based Practices and technical assistance resources organized under overdose education and naloxone distribution, medication for Opioid Use Disorder, and prescription[DB1] opioid safety menus; and communication campaigns intended to reduce Opioid Use Disorder stigma and raise awareness and demand for naloxone and medication for Opioid Use Disorder [DB1] I pulled the intervention language from the body of the manuscript. Journal guidelines aske for no abbreviations in Abstract...so that is why everything is spelled out.

Main Outcome(s) and Measure(s): The main outcome was the number of adults with new incident high-risk opioid prescribing episodes after at least a 45-day washout. Other outcomes included the number of opioid-naïve adults with new opioid prescriptions limited to a 7-day supply, number of adults who received opioid prescriptions from multiple prescribers or pharmacies, and number of locations providing drug take-back services. Outcomes were assessed from July 2021-June 2022.

Results: There was no statistically significant difference in the adjusted rates for new incident high-risk opioid prescribing per 100,000 adults during the comparison period between intervention (1094.48 (95% CI: [1063.15, 1126.74])) and wait-list control communities (1121.90 (95% CI: [1079.62, 1165.84])). The adjusted relative rate comparing intervention to wait-list control communities was 0.98 (95% CI: [0.93, 1.02]; p-value=0.296). Similarly, there were no statistically significant differences between intervention and wait-list control communities for the other outcomes.

Conclusions and Relevance: Although no statistically significant differences were found in prescription opioid safety measures between study arms, improvement in these measures during the comparison period for both study arms suggested that there may have events outside the trial, such as published revised Center for Disease Control and Prevention clinical practice guidelines for prescribing opioids, that may have impacted study outcomes.

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