

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. **The next weekly newsletter will be distributed on 1/9/2026 - we at CAR wish you and your loved ones a wonderful holiday season and a happy New Year!** 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

News from the Ohio Valley Node: CTN-0152 Opens for Recruitment!

The CTN-OVN has successfully led pre-initiation activities for the CTN-0152 (Evaluation of Tirzepatide as an Adjunct to Buprenorphine (TAB); **Lead Investigator – Dr. T. John Winhusen, CAR Director**) study, and the first two sites are now open for participant recruitment. TAB is a double-blind, randomized, placebo-controlled, intent-to-treat trial designed to evaluate the effect of weekly subcutaneous (SQ) tirzepatide versus placebo as an adjunct to buprenorphine maintenance treatment (BUP) for opioid use disorder. Approximately 310 participants who have recently initiated BUP will be randomized across 10 study sites. Congratulations to the study teams at Vanderbilt University Medical Center (Nashville, TN) and West Virginia University Medicine Healthy Minds – Chestnut Ridge (Morgantown, WV) for being the first two sites to open for recruitment!

Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition's Virtual Monthly Engage & Exchange

Thursday, January 8, 2026 – 9:00 AM – 10:00 AM ET

An Hour of Insights, Collaborative Conversations, and Open Forum

The Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition wants to foster meaningful dialogue and collaboration among coalition members, community stakeholders, and experts in addiction response space here in Hamilton County and the broader region. The primary goals of these virtual monthly calls are to recap recent developments we may have from most recent steering committee meetings, share

community updates, and really just provide a platform for knowledge exchange whether that be through guest presentations and roundtable discussions.

Overdose deaths down in Butler County as Narcan access increases

BUTLER COUNTY, Ohio — Fatal drug overdoses are on a downward trend locally and in Ohio, which local health departments are attributing to increased access to harm reduction resources, like Narcan. Area counties are also seeing concerning trends with opioids being laced with other illicit drugs, creating other health risks for people using these substances. “Butler County has steadily been observing a decrease in unintentional fatal drug overdose cases over the last couple of years,” said Jordan Meyer, senior epidemiologist in the harm reduction program at the Butler County General Health District. In Butler County, there were 184 overdose deaths in 2022, 130 deaths in 2023 and 88 deaths in 2024, according to the...

Ohio Board of Pharmacy places temporary ban on opioid-like kratom products

CINCINNATI — Smoke shops across Ohio have been hit with a temporary ban on synthetic kratom products that contain an opioid-like compound. The Ohio Board of Pharmacy put a 180-day ban on the sale of all forms of kratom that aren't 100% natural. “This is nasty, nasty stuff, and it needs, frankly, to go away,” said Ohio Gov. Mike Dewine. “There's no dispute about that. Everybody thinks that needs to go away.” According to the Ohio Department of Agriculture, kratom is a tropical tree in the coffee family whose leaves can be ground into a powder and can help with pain, anxiety and opioid use disorder. Supporters of the ban...

Ohio lawmakers mull psychedelic drug for addiction, PTSD treatment

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) — Ohio lawmakers are exploring the possibility of using a psychedelic drug to treat patients with severe addictions or post-traumatic stress disorders. A committee met for the first time on Wednesday to study whether the next General Assembly should allow ibogaine, a psychedelic compound derived from a West African root vegetable, to be used in behavioral health treatments. “I represent Portsmouth, Ohio which was the ground zero for the opioid epidemic,” Rep. Justin Pizzulli (R-Scioto County), chairperson of the new committee, said. “I worked next to what is now called a pill mill in a strip mall at...

Senators Paul and McConnell split on future of Kentucky's \$300 million hemp industry

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (WAVE) - Senator Rand Paul warns Senator Mitch McConnell of bringing “devastation” to Kentucky’s \$300 million hemp industry. Hemp farmers and retailers are fighting back after McConnell pushed strict restrictions through Congress on many popular hemp THC products. Critics argue the restriction effectively bans most hemp consumer and agricultural products. Paul expressed frustration on Monday and said McConnell was not interested in compromising. “If he sees an accomplishment in destroying a multimillion-dollar, actually billion-dollar industry, I don’t see that as an accomplishment,” Paul...

National News

AI can help primary care clinics spot risky drinking habits

On any given day in a busy primary care clinic, doctors and others often ask patients about their alcohol use, and try to gauge if it falls into healthy or problematic range. Patients might even complete an alcohol use questionnaire on a clipboard or their smartphone while they wait for their appointment. But a new study suggests that artificial intelligence might help increase the chance that people with risky drinking patterns or signs of alcohol use disorder (AUD) will get the outreach and help they need. That's important, because only about 10% of people who qualify for the diagnosis of AUD have actually gotten help in the past...

Trump 'considering' push to reclassify marijuana as less dangerous

US President Donald Trump on Monday said his administration could push to loosen federal restrictions on marijuana, reclassifying it as a less dangerous drug. "We are considering that," Trump told reporters after he was queried whether an executive order on the issue was being discussed. "A lot of people want to see it, the reclassification, because it leads to tremendous amounts of research that can't be done unless you reclassify, so we are looking at that very strongly." At the federal level, marijuana is currently classified as a Schedule I substance, in the same league as drugs like heroin and LSD. The government considers these drugs to...

Young adults are using cannabis to sleep at alarming rates

New data from the University of Michigan's annual Monitoring the Future Panel Study shows that using substances to help with sleep is common among young adults. The study, funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, found that 22% of Americans ages 19 to 30 said they used cannabis, alcohol, or both to help themselves sleep. Cannabis was used much more often than alcohol for sleep. About 18% of young adults reported using cannabis to fall asleep, while 7% said they used alcohol for the same reason. Among those who had used cannabis at any point in the past year, 41% said helping themselves fall asleep was one...

Women Getting Bad Advice on Cannabis Use in Pregnancy, Study Finds

While most cannabis retailers recommended women not use blunts or tobacco while pregnant, about one in five suggested prenatal cannabis use was safe, according to a cross-sectional study of California retailers. Out of 505 cannabis retailers, or "budtenders," surveyed by secret shoppers, roughly 80% said that prenatal use of blunts (cigar wrappers filled with cannabis) and tobacco was unsafe, but only 40% said using cannabis while pregnant was unsafe, reported researchers led by Kelly Young-Wolff, PhD, MPH, of Kaiser Permanente Northern California in Pleasanton, in JAMA Network Open. Far more...

Cannabis use not a barrier to quitting nicotine vaping, clinical trial finds

Adolescent and young adult nicotine vaping has become an urgent public health concern, as 2024 marked the first year that nicotine vaping was the most initiated drug. Though vaping is the most common way young people use nicotine, few treatments exist to help those trying to quit. What's more, a 2022 Drug Alcohol Dependence study reported that around half of young people who vape nicotine also use cannabis, though the impact of this dual substance use on treatment outcomes remains unclear. A new clinical trial by investigators from Mass General Brigham found varenicline—a medication used to help patients quit nicotine...

Young adults commonly mix cannabis with nicotine and tobacco

Simultaneous use of cannabis with nicotine and tobacco products is common among cannabis users—particularly those who vape—according to a new study from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. The research also shows that both vaped and smoked cannabis use have increased over time, with more participants initiating use than quitting. Until now, the frequency, patterns, and motivations for cannabis use in early adulthood have remained understudied. The findings are published in Tobacco Induced Diseases. The study reveals that young adults in the New York City area—including those...

Researcher leads global push to cut tobacco harms in people with mental health conditions

A University of York professor has called for urgent international action to tackle what he describes as an "unseen epidemic" of tobacco-related deaths among people with mental ill health. Writing in the New England Journal of Medicine, Professor Simon Gilbody and colleagues highlight the disproportionate impact of smoking on people with mental health conditions such as depression, schizophrenia and bipolar disorder. They are around three times more likely to smoke than the general population, reducing life expectancy by 15–20 years, largely due to tobacco-related diseases. The team points to evidence from the...

Most Americans still get nicotine wrong

Nicotine is the drug that keeps people coming back to cigarettes, but not the substance that causes serious health effects in people who use tobacco. It is the tar and toxic chemical mix in tobacco and tobacco smoke that causes cancer, lung disease and 490,000 deaths in the U.S. each year. Researchers have known for decades that many Americans incorrectly think nicotine to be inherently deadly, but different studies have reached different conclusions about the prevalence of the misconception. Now, new work from Rutgers Health explains why previous studies have disagreed and may suggest strategies for reducing misconceptions...

Smokers Who Vape More Likely To Quit Or Cut Back, Study Argues

Smokers who use cigarettes and vape devices interchangeably might not be doing themselves as much of a disservice as once feared, a new study says. These "dual users" are more likely to eventually quit smoking than people who smoke without

vaping, researchers reported Dec. 10 in the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. Dual users also are more likely to reduce their cigarette smoking rate, and thus reduce the amount of harmful chemicals they inhale from smoke, researchers said. "Smokers (and clinicians) sometimes believe that if smokers do not manage to stop smoking soon after starting vaping, they should stop..."

Sharp rise in nicotine pouch use in Great Britain driven by young men

Use of nicotine pouches has risen substantially in Great Britain over the last five years, particularly among young men, with one in 13 (7.5%) men aged 16 to 24 now using them, according to a new study led by researchers at UCL (University College London). The study, published in the journal *The Lancet Public Health*, found that use of pouches overall had increased from 0.1 to 1% of all adults, equivalent to about 522,000 people. Most users (69%) also reported using other nicotine products such as cigarettes or vapes, but one in six (16%) had never regularly smoked, the researchers found. The team looked at data from...

Vapes, pouches, shisha, cigarettes: Nicotine in all forms is toxic to the heart and blood vessels, say experts

Nicotine is toxic to the heart and blood vessels, regardless of whether it is consumed via a vape, a pouch, a shisha or a cigarette, according to an expert consensus report published in the *European Heart Journal*. The report brings together the results of the entire literature in the field and is the first to consider the harms of all nicotine products, rather than smoking only. The report highlights a dramatic rise in the use of vapes, heated tobacco and nicotine pouches, particularly among adolescents and young adults, with evidence that three-quarters of young adult vapers have never smoked before. The authors of the report...

Pregnant women with opioid use disorder get more health care, but few medications

Perinatal mothers enrolled in Michigan Medicaid between 2012 and 2021 who had opioid use disorder were more likely to have a premature birth and to use more health care services than mothers without OUD, according to a University of Michigan study. However, researchers found that only 47% of mothers with opioid use disorder were prescribed medication to treat it. The study is important because perinatal substance use is a critical public health problem in the United States and a primary driver of maternal morbidity and mortality, said Clayton Shuman, associate professor at the U-M School of Nursing. "Although greater health care...

Two Extended-Release Buprenorphine Doses Effective in High-Risk Opioid Use Disorder

Two dose levels of maintenance treatment with extended-release buprenorphine (Sublocade) improved opioid abstinence in patients with high-risk opioid use disorder (OUD), a randomized trial showed. After two buprenorphine injections during an induction phase, the proportion of responders (defined as weekly opioid

abstinence of at least 80% for weeks 20-38) proved similar with eight monthly maintenance injections of a 300-mg buprenorphine dose versus a 100-mg dose (23.2% vs 20.2%, $P=0.48$), according to Robert Dobbins, MD, PhD, of Indivior in North Chesterfield, Virginia, and colleagues. Prespecified subgroup analyses...

Integrating methadone treatment into primary care increases guideline-concordant care

Integrating methadone treatment into primary care settings improves adherence to guideline-concordant health care for opioid use disorder (OUD), according to a study published online Dec. 9 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Eteri Machavariani, M.D., from the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues compared health care use among persons with OUD receiving methadone in specialty clinics versus primary care centers in Ukraine, from January 2018 to December 2023, in a two-group randomized controlled trial. A total of 1,459 adults with OUD initiating or receiving methadone...

DESIGNATING FENTANYL AS A WEAPON OF MASS DESTRUCTION

By the authority vested in me as President by the Constitution and the laws of the United States of America, it is hereby ordered: Section 1. Purpose and Policy. Illicit fentanyl is closer to a chemical weapon than a narcotic. Two milligrams, an almost undetectable trace amount equivalent to 10 to 15 grains of table salt, constitutes a lethal dose. Hundreds of thousands of Americans have died from fentanyl overdoses. The manufacture and distribution of fentanyl, primarily performed by organized criminal networks, threatens our national security and fuels lawlessness in our hemisphere and at our borders. The production and sale of...

Reported use of most drugs remains low among US teens

For the fifth year in a row, use of most substances among teenagers in the United States has continued to hover around the low-water mark reached in 2021. The findings come from the latest report of the Monitoring the Future Survey, an annual survey of drug use behaviors and attitudes among 8th, 10th, and 12th graders that has been supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) for 51 years. Researchers, based at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, detected a sharp decline in reported use of most drugs from 2020 to 2021. This substantial falloff was largely attributed to disruptions in drug availability and in the...

A decline in churchgoing linked to more deaths of despair

A decline in religious participation among middle-aged, less educated white Americans may have played a role in the widely noted increases in "deaths of despair," a new study finds. Researchers found that states that had the largest declines in churchgoing from 1985 to 2000 also had larger increases in death by drug overdoses, suicide and alcoholic liver disease—what have been called deaths of despair. While the increase in deaths of despair has often been linked to the

introduction of OxyContin and other new opioids in the late 1990s, this study shows the trend began years earlier when religious participation started to fall...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

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

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