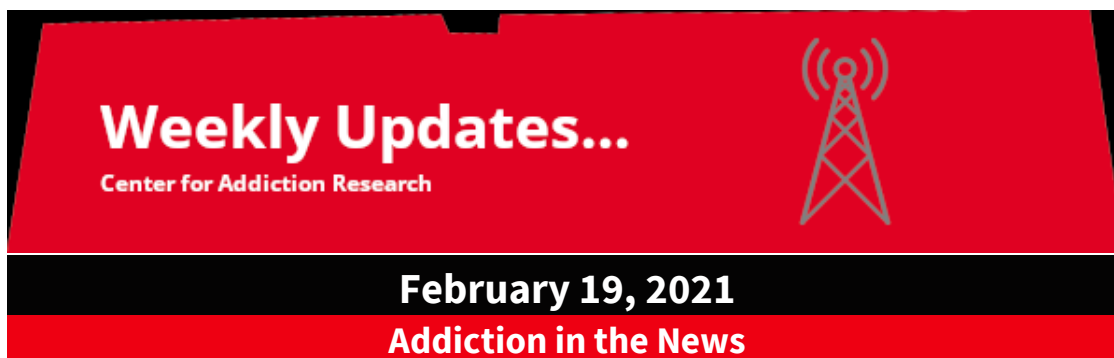


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members.

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 Supreme Court partnership to monitor drug court participants

Highland County Press

COLUMBUS – The Ohio Supreme Court is helping to bridge the information gap between the criminal justice system and healthcare providers as part of a landmark achievement for treating people struggling with substance use disorders. In a collaboration with the Ohio Board of Pharmacy, the Supreme Court will utilize information from active adult drug court participants and report it to the state's prescription drug monitoring program known as OARRS – the Ohio Automated Rx Reporting System.

National News

New Mexico Legislators Advance Bill Aimed To Legalize Recreational Marijuana.

The AP (2/15) reported, "Legislators advanced a proposal Monday to legalize recreational marijuana across New Mexico and lift the state's tight restrictions on production for its medical marijuana program." Following "more than six hours of testimony and deliberations, a legislative committee on health issues endorsed one Democrat-backed House bill and sidelined a second in efforts to set up a taxed and regulated marketplace for broad cannabis sales."

MSU Researcher Tests Cannabis-Based Drug To Fight COVID-19.

The [Lansing \(MI\) State Journal](#) (2/15, Johnson, 185K) reports that “parts of the marijuana plant could be a key to treating one of COVID-19’s deadly symptoms.” The immune system responds when “exposed to COVID-19, but sometimes so aggressively it affects lung function and makes it harder to breathe.” That’s where a new drug “containing cannabinoids...comes in.” Norbert Kaminski, a Michigan State University professor of pharmacology and toxicology, “is working with GB Sciences, a biopharmaceutical company, to develop a drug that prevents the lung inflammation that some experience after contracting COVID-19 that can lead to trouble breathing and death.”

Opinion: Prioritizing People Selling Cannabis For COVID-19 Vaccination Will Not Achieve Vaccine Equity.

In an opinion piece for the [Los Angeles Times](#) (2/11, 3.37M), columnist Erika D. Smith says owners and employees of cannabis shops in California are now eligible for the COVID-19 vaccine – putting them ahead of some teachers and cops. Smith explains that California considers those in the industry “healthcare workers” because cannabis is used for medicinal purposes. She concludes by saying inoculating people who sell cannabis “isn’t the way to achieve vaccine equity.”

Methamphetamine Deaths Rise Sharply

Methamphetamine overdose deaths surged in an eight-year period in the United States, according to a study that will be published today in *JAMA Psychiatry*. The analysis revealed rapid rises across all racial and ethnic groups, but American Indians and Alaska Natives had the highest death rates overall. <https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/methamphetamine-overdose-deaths-rise-sharply-nationwide>

Experts Call For Changes To Buprenorphine Policy.

[Stateline](#) (2/16, 2K) reports, “A growing chorus of medical experts is calling on the federal government to” change a DEA-related policy in order to make it easier to prescribe the opioid use disorder treatment buprenorphine. However, that policy change is not supported by the American Association for the Treatment of Opioid Dependence President Mark Parrino, who said, “We know what happens when doctors who prescribe opioids don’t have enough training – it’s called an opioid epidemic.” The article adds, “Instead of removing the guardrails designed to protect patients, Parrino argued, the federal government should consider policies that would increase Medicaid and private insurance reimbursement rates for treatment with buprenorphine and remove time-consuming pre-authorization rules that impede access to” that medication.

Arizona Senate Panel Approves Measure To Legalize Test Strips To Detect Fentanyl.

The AP (2/17) reports that an Arizona Senate committee “has unanimously approved a measure that would legalize the use of test strips that can detect the presence of the potent opiate fentanyl.” The measure “by Democratic Sen. Christine Marsh was prompted by the death of her 25-year-old son, Landon Marsh, last year.” The Senate Health and Human Services committee “approved SB1486 on Wednesday, and it now goes to the full Senate for consideration.”

NIH HEAL Digest: [Breaking Through the Wall of Stigma](https://heal.nih.gov/news/stories/breaking-through-the-wall-on-stigma), <https://heal.nih.gov/news/stories/breaking-through-the-wall-on-stigma>

Oregon Decriminalises Drugs For Personal Use.

The Economist (2/11, 2.37M) reports behind a paywall that “getting caught with a small amount of drugs in Oregon is now like getting a traffic ticket.” At the beginning of this month, Oregon “became the first state to decriminalise possession of even hard drugs for personal use.” Rather than “face criminal charges, those in possession of small amounts of drugs (defined as having less than 1 gram of heroin or MDMA, 2 grams of methamphetamine or cocaine, 12 grams of psilocybin, 40 units of methadone or LSD, or 40 pills of oxycodone) will face a \$100 fine or a health assessment that could lead to rehabilitation rather than jail time.” Nora Volkow, “director of America’s National Institute of Drug Abuse at the National Institutes of Health, encourages decriminalisation alongside support policies and prevention programmes to protect children and adolescents from addiction.”

Senators Push For Legislation To Address US Drug Overdose Deaths.

The Hill (2/11, Gans, 5.69M) reports Sens. Rob Portman (R-OH) and Sheldon Whitehouse (D-RI) “said Thursday that the COVID-19 pandemic has further complicated efforts to win the fight against opioid and drug addiction.” Portman, speaking at an event for The Hill, “said the U.S. had the lowest overdose rate in decades as recently as 2018, but last year saw the worst overdose rate in U.S. history.” Portman also said new legislation – co-sponsored by Whitehouse – could help address the new surge of overdose deaths in the US.

Woodcock Rejects Request To Put Firewall Between Staff Who Communicate With Drug Companies, Officials Who Examine Marketing Submissions.

BioCentury (2/16, Usdin, Subscription Publication) reports in paywalled coverage that “Acting FDA Commissioner Janet Woodcock has rejected a request to erect a firewall between agency staff who interact with drug companies during the development process and officials who review marketing submissions.” According to BioCentury, “Limiting interactions between FDA staff and sponsors would slow

drug development and contradict explicit instructions from Congress, Woodcock stated.”

Mental Health Providers Stretched Thin As Demand For Services Surges.

The [New York Times](#) (2/17, Caron, 20.6M) reports, “Since the first coronavirus case was confirmed in the United States more than a year ago, the number of people in need of mental health services has surged.” However, “many say that they are languishing on waiting lists, making call after call only to be turned away, with affordable options tough to find,” and “providers, who have long been in short supply, are stretched thin.” The CDC, in August, “published a report which concluded that in late June, 40 percent of adults in the United States had been struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues, and rates of depression and anxiety had risen since 2019.”

US Life Expectancy Dropped By One Year In First Half Of 2020.

The [New York Times](#) (2/18, Tavernise, Goodnough, 20.6M) reports “life expectancy in the United States fell by a full year in the first six months of 2020, the federal government reported on Thursday, the largest drop since World War II and a grim measure of the deadly consequences of the coronavirus pandemic.” The new data give “the first full picture of the pandemic’s effect on American life spans, which dropped to 77.8 years from 78.8 years in 2019.” The data “also showed a deepening of racial and ethnic disparities: Life expectancy of the Black population declined by 2.7 years in the first half of 2020, slicing away 20 years of gains.”

[USA Today](#) (2/18, Rodriguez, 12.7M) reports “health experts fear U.S. life expectancy in 2020 as a whole will be worse than the half-year numbers because they do not account for the fall and winter surges that led to record COVID-19 deaths.”

The [Wall Street Journal](#) (2/18, Adamy, Subscription Publication, 8.41M) reports that in December, CDC National Center for Health Statistics mortality-statistics branch chief Robert Anderson predicted life expectancy may drop two or three years when data on the entire year of 2020 are released. **[The surging opiate epidemic has also contributed to this drop.]**

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-DA-21-040](#)

[Notice of Change to Key Dates for PA-21-110, "Pilot and Feasibility Studies in Preparation for Substance Use Prevention Trials \(R34 Clinical Trial Optional\)"](#)

[RFA-OD-21-002](#)

[Tobacco Regulatory Science \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-NS-21-033](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for HEAL Initiative: Analgesic Development Initial Translational Efforts \[Small Molecules and Biologics\] \(U19 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[NOT-NS-21-034](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for HEAL Initiative: Planning Studies for Initial Analgesic Development Initial Translational Efforts \[Small Molecules and Biologics\]](#)

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