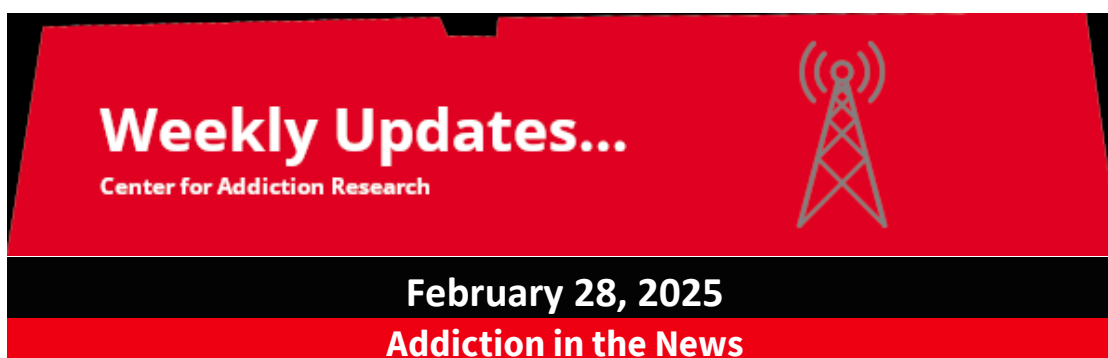


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu))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

#### **NKY Health officials issue alert after 2 suspected overdose deaths, dozens of cases**

Northern Kentucky health officials have issued an alert after two dozen suspected overdoses have occurred in the last week. Officials say there have also been two suspected fatal overdose deaths over the last 24 hours. Authorities say over the last week, there have been 24 suspected overdoses. Health officials say people who use drugs should carry naloxone, utilize the Addiction Helpline (859-415-9280), never use alone or utilize the Never Use Alone Hotline (877-696-1996). NKY Health's statement is the second drug overdose-related alert to be issued in Greater Cincinnati over the last week. Saturday, the Clermont County coroner issued a public warning regarding an increase in overdoses that he called "significant"...

Stay up-to-date on research projects being conducted by CAR members: [Projects \(uc.edu\)](#)

Stay up-to-date on CAR member publications: [Publications \(uc.edu\)](#)

### **National News**

#### **Doctors can do more to aid recovery from substance use disorder, study suggests**

The vast majority of people who have a substance use disorder (SUD) never seek treatment. At most, 10% of adults with a drug or alcohol use disorder have entered any type of inpatient or outpatient treatment program, as reported by SAMHSA. But according to a new study published recently by researchers at Touro College of

Osteopathic Medicine in New York City, when a physician offers advice on cutting down on drinking or provides treatment information, people are significantly more likely to get help. The research, published in the journal *Cureus*, was conducted by third-year medical student Abigail Smurzynski and...

### **A history of isolation and alcohol use may impact depression treatment**

Ketamine can effectively treat depression, but whether depressed patients with alcohol use disorder can safely use ketamine repeatedly remains unclear clinically. To investigate this possibility, Mohamed Kabbaj and colleagues from Florida State University modeled aspects of human depression in rats using long-term isolation and assessed how isolation and alcohol exposure alter ketamine intake. The findings have been published in *eNeuro*. The authors found that a history of isolation and alcohol use influence the rewarding properties of ketamine in a sex-dependent manner. Female rats took ketamine more than males in...

### **Unlicensed retailers provide youths with easy access to cannabis in New York City, study reveals**

A new study, led by researchers at Columbia University, suggests it is easy for youths to purchase cannabis from unlicensed dispensaries in New York City, despite state laws that bar access to recreational cannabis to those under age 21. The article, "Cannabis Access by Retailer Type in New York City," was published in the journal *Pediatrics*. "Regulation to restrict access in this age group is based on evidence that cannabis affects working memory, brain development, and increases addiction risk when used at an early age," says Ryan Sultán, an assistant professor of clinical psychiatry at Columbia University Vagelos...

### **A hazy legal landscape means people can get high on hemp products, even where pot is prohibited**

In Texas, where I live, marijuana has long been illegal. Yet on a busy street in my Houston neighborhood, at least five stores within a half-mile of each other sell cannabis products that promise a strong high. Texas isn't alone. Due to a mix of recent legal changes and an uncertain policy landscape, residents in roughly half of American states have easy access to impairing hemp products that bear a strong resemblance to marijuana and are far less regulated. As hemp sales soar—reaching nearly US\$3 billion in 2023—a number of states are tightening their restrictions, while experts are analyzing the public health implications.

### **Increase in mortality associated with menthol cigarette use**

Menthol cigarettes are associated with increased mortality risk, according to a study published online Feb. 13 in *Tobacco Control*. Priti Bandi, Ph.D., from the American Cancer Society in Atlanta, and colleagues examined all-cause and cause-specific mortality risk according to baseline smoking status and menthol flavor status of the cigarette brand smoked for the longest period in a population-based prospective cohort study involving 969,349 persons enrolled in 1982 to 1983 with

six years of mortality follow-up. The researchers found 4,071 and 20,738 deaths among 73,486 and 281,680 persons who...

### **Novel cigarette pricing policy linked to decrease in sales in California city**

A recent study has found that an Oakland, Calif. law requiring cigarette prices to increase to a minimum of \$8 per pack led to a decline in sales, suggesting that these minimum floor price laws could complement tobacco taxation to reduce smoking rates. Tobacco price policies, such as taxation, are effective public health strategies that have long shown to reduce tobacco use by raising the prices of cigarettes and other tobacco products. Minimum price floor laws (MPFL)—which set prices below which cigarettes cannot be sold—are a somewhat newer fiscal tool that may also discourage tobacco use, according to a new study led by a...

### **Restricting flavored e-cigarettes cuts vaping rates but raises smoking rates for young adults, study finds**

In recent years, vaping has become popular as an alternative to traditional cigarettes. Flavored electronic cigarettes—known as e-cigarettes—have become so popular among young adults that some states have implemented restrictions such as flavor bans and taxes on e-cigarettes in an effort to reduce teen vaping. A new study from researchers at the University of Missouri and the Yale School of Public Health found that state restrictions on flavored e-cigarettes led to a decrease in vaping among young adults in the United States. However, those restrictions also led to an increase in traditional cigarette smoking...

### **New York sues major vape companies for targeting kids, teens**

New York is suing some of the largest vape distributors for allegedly fueling the country's youth vaping epidemic. New York Attorney General Letitia James announced the lawsuit against 13 major e-cigarette manufacturers, distributors and retailers for illegally marketing and selling popular flavored vape brands like Puff Bar and Elf Bar to minors. Selling flavored nicotine vapes has been banned in New York since 2020, but the products can still be found in corner stores and smoke shops in the city. "The vaping industry is taking a page out of Big Tobacco's playbook: they're making nicotine seem cool, getting kids hooked, and creating...

### **Opioid cash grab: As federal funding dries up, states turn to settlement money**

At a recent Nevada legislative committee hearing, lawmakers faced off with members of the governor's administration over how to fill gaping holes in the state's upcoming budget. At issue: whether opioid settlement money — paid by health care companies that were sued for fueling the opioid crisis and meant to help states abate addiction — should be funneled to two counties for a safety net program, Temporary Assistance for Needy Families, which is aimed at helping low-income children and families. Previous funding "will no longer be available after June 30, 2025," the budget proposal says. By then, billions of dollars in...

### **Novel tool slashes opioid crisis costs by 30%, could save lives**

A study published in the journal *Decision Analysis* unveils a powerful new tool to tackle the opioid crisis, offering a pathway to slash costs by nearly 30% while saving lives. "This groundbreaking research provides a roadmap to balance prevention and harm-reduction efforts effectively, potentially saving thousands of lives," says Sina Ansari of DePaul University. With synthetic opioids such as fentanyl driving record-high overdose deaths—more than 100,000 annually, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)—the urgency for effective solutions has never been greater. The study presents a...

### **FDA Approves New Label for Opioid Use Disorder Drug**

Feb. 25, 2025 – The FDA has approved a new treatment plan for a long-acting injection, making it easier for people with moderate to severe opioid use disorder (OUD) to start and keep up with their treatment. The FDA has approved an updated treatment protocol for a drug called Sublocade, making it easier for people with moderate to severe opioid use disorder (OUD) to begin and continue their therapy. The new extended clearance for Sublocade lets people get the injection after just one dose of buprenorphine (taken under the tongue or inside the cheek) and a one-hour wait to make sure it's safe. This means...

### **Study reveals split opinions on long-term opioid use for chronic pain**

Chronic pain is complex and difficult to treat. Prescribing opioid pain medications has become controversial but may help some patients. With the goal of informing clinician practice, a new study explores the harms and benefits of continuing and of discontinuing the long-term prescription of opioid medicines to adults with chronic pain. The authors analyzed the opinions of 28 experts on the harms versus benefits of maintaining, tapering or terminating opioid pain medication prescriptions for chronic pain, a common condition worldwide that is typically quite difficult to treat. "Management of patients at risk of...

### **Kratom to be tested for addiction risk in clinical trial**

Popular for its stimulating and pain-relieving properties, the herb kratom can be as easy to buy as a bag of chips in many parts of the U.S. That's also raised questions about whether kratom should be more closely regulated. A new clinical trial expected to begin this summer seeks to provide more insight into kratom's potential for abuse by comparing the leaf's draw to that of the addictive opioid oxycodone. While it'll take years to provide findings, the research will inform "whether we view it as a potentially therapeutic substance or something more like oxycodone that needs to be more regulated," said Ynhi Thomas, a physician...

### **A 'twin epidemic': Co-prescribed stimulants and opioids linked to higher opioid doses**

The combination of prescribed central nervous system stimulants, such as drugs that relieve ADHD symptoms, with prescribed opioid medications is associated with

a pattern of escalating opioid intake, a new study has found. The analysis of health insurance claims data from almost 3 million U.S. patients investigated prescribed stimulants' impact on prescription opioid use over 10 years, looking for origins of the so-called "twin epidemic" of combining the two classes of drugs, which can increase the risk for overdose deaths. "Combining the two drugs is associated with an increase in overdose deaths. This is...

### **A new path to recovery: Scientists uncover key brain circuit in the fight against cocaine use disorder**

Imagine a future where the grip of cocaine use disorder can be loosened, where cravings fade, and the risk of relapse diminishes. A new study published in Science Advances, led by Penn Nursing's Heath Schmidt, Ph.D., brings this vision closer to reality. The research has identified a critical brain circuit that plays a pivotal role in regulating cocaine-seeking behavior. Cocaine use disorder casts a long shadow, trapping individuals in a cycle of dependence and leaving limited options for effective treatment. This study delves deep into the brain, offering crucial insights into the underlying mechanisms of this complex disorder. By understanding...

### **Cocaine user experiences reduced withdrawal cravings with GLP-1 therapy, case study reports**

A doctor from the University of Palermo in Italy has published a case study of an adult cocaine user who experienced reduced withdrawal symptoms when given GLP-1 therapy. In the case study published in the Journal of Medical Case Reports, Doctor Vincenzo Maria Romeo reports on the treatment of an obese adult male patient with a history of cocaine abuse and how he responded to GLP-1 therapy. Over the past couple of years, GLP-1 therapies have taken the medical community by storm as they have been confirmed as drug-based therapies to lose weight. The drugs Ozempic and Wegovy were initially developed for diabetic...

### **CDC Reports Nearly 24% Decline in U.S. Drug Overdose Deaths**

New provisional data from CDC's National Vital Statistics System predict a nearly 24% decline in drug overdose deaths in the United States for the 12 months ending in September 2024, compared to the previous year. This is the most recent national data available and shows a continued steep decline in overdose deaths. Provisional data shows about 87,000 drug overdose deaths from October 2023 to September 2024, down from around 114,000 the previous year. This is the fewest overdose deaths in any 12-month period since June 2020. "It is unprecedented to see predicted overdose deaths drop by more than 27,000 over a single...

### **2022 to 2023 saw decrease in rate of drug overdose deaths in United States: Report**

From 2022 to 2023, there was a decrease in the age-adjusted rate of drug overdose death in the United States, according to a report published in the February Health E-Stats, a publication of the National Center for Health Statistics. Matthew F.

Garnett, M.P.H., and Arialdi M. Miniño, M.P.H., from the National Center for Health Statistics in Hyattsville, Maryland, describe changes in drug overdose mortality by selected drug type and state from 2022 to 2023. The researchers found that from 2022 to 2023 the age-adjusted rate of drug overdose deaths in the United States decreased 4.0 percent (32.6 to 31.3 deaths per...

### **Call for regulation to protect people with substance use disorder from exploitative marketing practices on social media**

People seeking online support for addiction recovery may encounter cynical marketing by the addiction treatment industry that sometimes prioritizes financial gain over clients' health and well-being, according to a study of public discourse around substance use recovery on Twitter. Among people trying to quit or reduce their use of alcohol or other substances, engagement with clinical treatment remains low. More typically, people with alcohol use disorder (AUD) or other substance use disorders (SUDs) seek community-based mutual-help groups (such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous, or SMART Recovery). Since...

## **Funding Opportunities**



## **GRANTS & FUNDING**

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

Due to a pause in communications, there are no new NIH Grants Funding Opportunities to post this week.

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