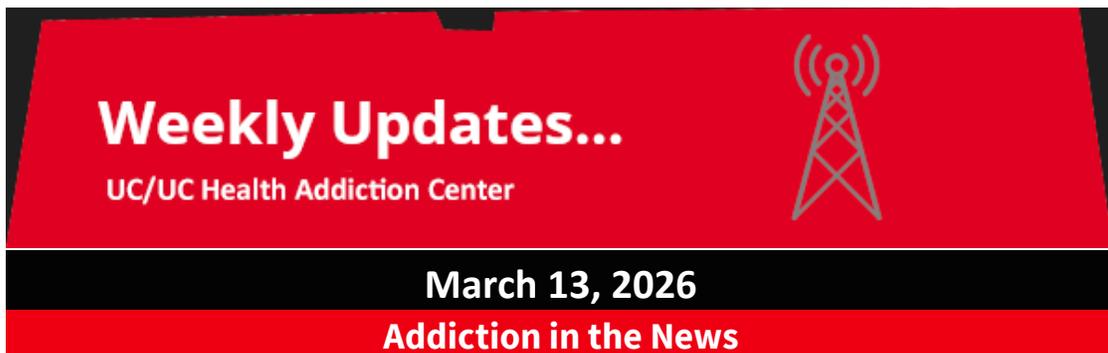


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) to change your communication preferences. Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the UC/UC Health Addiction Center - our mission is to generate new knowledge through innovative research, disseminate that knowledge through education and training, and provide high-quality, evidence-based treatment for individuals affected by addiction and related conditions. We are committed to supporting lifelong recovery and promoting dignity and respect for all individuals on their recovery journey.



### **UC/ Regional News**

#### **Prevention First survey shows teen substance use, mental health improving across Tri-State**

CINCINNATI — A new survey shows encouraging signs for teen mental health and substance use across the Tri-State, with fewer students reporting anxiety, depression and drug use compared to previous years. Prevention First's student survey found that most students are not using alcohol, tobacco or prescription drugs, and that marijuana use has dropped since the pandemic. In the fall of 2025, 23,982 students in 7th through 12th grade completed the local version of the International Survey Associates (ISA) questionnaire, formerly known as the Pride Survey. Sarah Sawmiller, senior director at Prevention First, said the survey...

#### **'Lawless executive overreach' | 2 Cincinnati breweries sue State of Ohio over looming THC drink ban**

CINCINNATI — Four Ohio breweries, including two from Cincinnati, are suing the State of Ohio over the looming THC drink ban. "This is gonna harm our business, it's gonna cost jobs, it's gonna cost people and it's gonna hurt Ohio as a whole," said Bobby Slattery, the owner of Fifty West Brewing Company, part of the lawsuit against the state. The lawsuit calls Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine's line item vetoes in Senate Bill 56 on every hemp beverage section a "lawless executive overreach." Cincinnati's Urban Artifact is also a part of the lawsuit. Scotty Hunter, Urban Artifact's CFO and head of sales, sent us a statement regarding the lawsuit. "We...

### **Recovery Ready designations grow as Kentucky expands treatment**

Years of advocating for people dealing with addiction are paying off at the Clark County Health Department's Recovery Community Center. "We have been heard," said Sheila Brown, director of operations. "This opened up the door for us to be able to help these folks in a wider range." Brown said she has seen a steady need for more resources aimed at housing and transportation stability. "We're beginning a journey that we need to learn how to do," Brown said. "Learning how to live again is part of the process; being able to get to job interviews, being able to apply for housing. We have expungement here." Thanks to...

### **National News**

#### **A single dose of psilocybin is more effective than nicotine patches for quitting smoking, study suggests**

A new study, published in JAMA Network Open, reports the outcome of a clinical trial out of Johns Hopkins University assessing the effectiveness of psilocybin as a treatment for smokers attempting to quit. The trial compared the effectiveness of one dose of the "magic mushroom" drug to months of the common nicotine patch, combined with cognitive behavioral therapy in both groups. The results might push psilocybin into the limelight as a more effective addiction treatment. Smoking is a major cause of poor health, leading to around 480,000 deaths annually in the US and 8 million worldwide. Many smokers...

#### **Experimental vaccine could help turn the tide on America's opioid epidemic**

Virginia Tech researchers are advancing a new generation of vaccines designed to block opioids from reaching the brain and triggering their addictive effects, work that could help prevent overdose deaths that now exceed 100,000 each year in the United States. In a new study published in the Journal of Controlled Release, the researchers report that a novel hybrid lipid-polymer nanoparticle vaccine produced stronger immune responses and improved protection against oxycodone in mice. They also found that pairing a similar fentanyl-targeting vaccine with an immune-boosting adjuvant restored its...

#### **Prior authorization bans for buprenorphine alone may not improve treatment retention**

State laws that ban insurance prior authorization for buprenorphine—a leading medication for opioid use disorder—may not help more patients stay in treatment for the recommended minimum of 180 days, Weill Cornell Medicine researchers report. Though prescription buprenorphine can be a life-saving treatment that relieves opioid cravings and withdrawal symptoms, adherence to the medication is low. Published Mar. 6 in JAMA Health Forum, the study examined whether state laws prohibiting private insurance plans from requiring prior authorization improved treatment retention, which is essential for reducing relapse...

### **Study tracks 90 days after nonfatal opioid overdose, finds major care gaps**

A nonfatal opioid overdose is often treated as a near miss. But clinically, it is one of the strongest predictors of future harm—and one of the few moments when patients are actively engaged with the health care system. What happens next can shape outcomes long after the crisis has passed. At Yale School of Medicine (YSM), Maryam Kazemitabar, Ph.D., associate research scientist (general medicine), studies how health systems respond in this critical window. In a recent paper published in the *Journal of Addiction Medicine*, she examined care in the 90 days following a nonfatal opioid overdose. We spoke with her about what her...

### **FDA to Address Unused Opioids in American Homes**

The U.S. Food and Drug Administration today issued a Request for Information (RFI) seeking public comment on potential new standards for in-home opioid disposal products. This effort is part of the agency's broader work to combat the opioid crisis. Companies selling opioid analgesics are currently required to make available prepaid mail-back envelopes to outpatient pharmacies and other dispensers. Now, the agency is considering whether to require that opioid sponsors, through dispensers, make available in-home disposal systems. "Having unused opioids laying around at home can be a significant risk to those..."

### **New Jersey's opioid gap persists as high-risk counties fall further behind**

Opioids such as fentanyl are "indiscriminate killers" that can be misused by people from all walks of life. But where you live may be more influential than previously realized, according to researchers at Rutgers University. In a study of New Jersey counties, researchers discovered that between 2014 and 2022, the likelihood of being treated for an opioid use disorder or dying from an overdose was sharply higher in counties with elevated social vulnerability scores. Additionally, the gap in opioid risk between counties with high and low vulnerability hasn't budged in more than a decade. On some measures, it has...

### **Scientists discover the brain protein that drives cocaine relapse**

Relapsing into cocaine use is not simply a matter of weak willpower. New research shows it can result from lasting biological changes in the brain. Scientists have found that cocaine use alters brain circuits in ways that can make the urge to return to the drug extremely difficult to resist. Researchers at Michigan State University discovered that cocaine changes how the hippocampus works. This brain region plays a key role in memory and learning. Their study, supported by the National Institutes of Health and published in *Science Advances*, helps explain why cocaine addiction is so difficult to treat and points toward potential new...

### **Rethinking how we measure recovery from substance use**

Nearly 50 million people in the United States struggle with substance use disorders, and nearly three in four use more than one substance. People with polysubstance use disorders are more likely than single drug users to suffer poor health, relapse

from treatment, and overdose. They're also three times more likely to die. The American Psychiatric Association's Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders Fifth Edition does not acknowledge polysubstance use disorder. The predominant recovery paradigm tells people with multiple substance dependencies that they aren't in recovery until they achieve complete...

### **America must not learn to live with 72,000 overdose deaths a year**

In May 2025, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention announced that drug overdose deaths had fallen 27%, from roughly 110,000 in 2023 to about 80,000 in 2024. Provisional data through late 2025 projects a further drop to around 72,000. As an addiction researcher at Stanford, and someone in long-term recovery, I felt the relief of that news personally. I also watched as my colleagues exhaled for the first time in years. After two decades of relentless escalation, the overdose curve had finally bent downward. Policymakers are celebrating and calling it “unprecedented progress.” The CDC is framing it as saving “more than 81 lives...

### **GLP-1s have transformed weight loss and diabetes. Is addiction next?**

There's new evidence that GLP-1 drugs like Ozempic can reduce the risk of addiction. A study of more than 600,000 veterans followed for up to three years found that those who started taking a GLP-1 drug for diabetes were about 15% to 20% less likely to misuse substances ranging from alcohol to opioids. Many people who take GLP-1 drugs like Wegovy and Zepbound for weight loss often experience unpleasant side effects. Brain scientists are trying to find ways to avoid them. Brain scientists are seeking weight-loss drugs without the nausea. The study, which appears in *The BMJ*, a medical journal, also found that GLP-1 drugs...

### **Substance use on the rise among Gen Z in their early 20s**

Around seven in 10 (68%) young adults who are part of generation Z report binge drinking in the past year, with almost a third (29%) regularly consuming six or more alcoholic drinks in one sitting, according to new UCL research. For the study, researchers from the UCL Center for Longitudinal Studies analyzed data from nearly 10,000 people born across the UK in 2000-02 who are taking part in the Millennium Cohort Study. At age 23, study participants were asked how often they used drugs and alcohol and took part in other potentially addictive behavior, such as gambling. The study's authors compared these data with reports from...

### **Review of 153 studies links youth media use to later mental health risks**

Children and teenagers who spend more time on digital media are more likely to experience mental health, behavioral and academic difficulties later on, according to a major international review published in *JAMA Pediatrics*. The review, led by James Cook University Senior Research Fellow Dr. Sam Teague, analyzed 153 studies following children and adolescents aged between 2 and 19 years, for up to two decades. Results showed that higher levels of media use were consistently

linked to more depressive symptoms and behavioral problems, higher risk of substance use and self-harm, and poorer school...

## Funding Opportunities



## GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

### UC Foundation Funding Opportunity

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or [russecg@foundation.uc.edu](mailto:russecg@foundation.uc.edu) at **least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunity, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

### Funds Spur Exploration of Link Between Metabolic Health and Psychiatric Disorders

Deadline: [March 18, 2026](#)

The Baszucki Group has announced a competition for the Metabolic Psychiatry Scholar Award, a funding initiative designed to support early-career scientists and clinicians who advance research at the intersection of metabolism, psychiatry, and neuroscience. Selected scholars will receive up to \$150,000 in funding over an 18-month period to support original research projects. This program aims to promote innovative research that improves understanding of the relationship between metabolic health and mental health. As metabolic psychiatry continues to emerge as a promising field, the award seeks to encourage groundbreaking studies that may transform mental health treatment and outcomes. Proposed research must focus on translational or clinical approaches that explore the links between metabolic health and psychiatric disorders. Priority research areas include investigating use of metabolic therapies such as therapeutic nutritional ketosis in the treatment of serious mental illness; studying biological mechanisms through which ketogenic or other metabolic interventions influence mental health; conducting clinical research on the relationship between metabolic and psychiatric health; and integrating metabolic therapies into clinical practice, while embedding research within patient care systems. Eligibility for the award requires applicants to hold a PhD, MD, or equivalent degree and maintain an independent faculty or investigator position at a university, medical school, or research institution with nonprofit status (or an international equivalent). Applicants must be in their first independent role for between two and six years at the time of the Letter of Intent submission. Researchers from diverse academic disciplines are encouraged to apply, provided they demonstrate a strong commitment to advancing the field of metabolic psychiatry. International applicants are welcome, and all application materials must be submitted in English. Overall, the Metabolic Psychiatry Scholar

Award program seeks to identify and support promising investigators whose work has the potential to expand scientific understanding of metabolic approaches to mental health treatment. By investing in innovative research and fostering collaboration among early-career scholars, the Baszucki Group aims to accelerate discoveries that could significantly improve the lives of individuals living with serious mental illness.

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