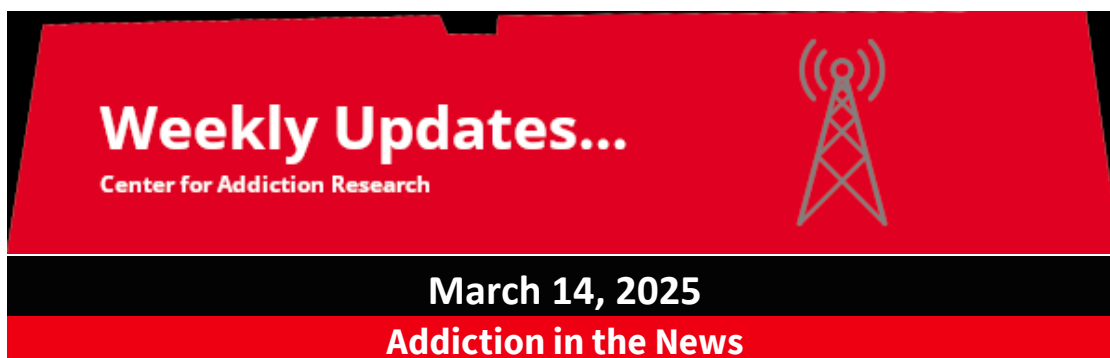


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu))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

#### **Do 'sin taxes' curb harmful behavior?**

The Ohio Capital Journal reports that Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine is proposing to create a child tax credit and to pay for it with increased “sin taxes” on tobacco. According to one analysis, the tax credit is expected to produce big gains for the state. Economists overwhelmingly agree on a second benefit — that taxes themselves on things like tobacco, gambling, and marijuana can reduce harmful behaviors, according to a survey of economists that was released on Tuesday. However, they said, those taxes would fall most heavily on the group that DeWine’s tax credit is meant to help — the poor. According to one analysis, the tax credit is expected to produce big gains for the state. Economists overwhelmingly agree on a...

#### **Ohio Legislators Present Bill Targeting Fentanyl Epidemic with Robust Measures and Education Reforms**

Yesterday, Ohio took a sturdy step towards combating the grip of fentanyl on its communities as State Representatives Cindy Abrams and Phil Plummer presented a potentially game-changing bill to the Ohio House Judiciary Committee. In a move that echoes the state's acute awareness of the opioid epidemic's toll, House Bill 88 introduces aggressive measures aimed at fentanyl distribution and drug trafficking operations within the state's borders. The proposed legislation arrives on the heels of harrowing statistics that paint a grim picture of overdose deaths, many attributed to fentanyl. "We are committed to continuing to work with our law enforcement and prosecutors on this life-saving legislation," Abrams stated...

## **Senate bill aims to crack down on sale of nicotine products to those under 21 in Kentucky**

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Lawmakers in Kentucky are working to crack down on the illegal sale of alternative nicotine, tobacco, and vape products to underage people. Senate Bill 100 would establish a division within the Department of Beverage Control Board to oversee the enforcement of retailers and require them to obtain a license. The bill has already passed in the Senate and House. Supporters say it's meant to crack down on the bad actors. SB 100 would dole out penalties to retailers that sell alternative nicotine, tobacco, and vape products without a license to anyone under 21. Stores would also be inspected yearly, and if they did not meet established conditions under the bill, their license could be revoked. Co...

## **Overdose deaths fall in Fayette County**

FAYETTE COUNTY, Ky. — Fayette County saw a decline in fatal overdose deaths in 2024. Lexington Mayor Linda Gorton said this is a significant step forward in the community's fight against opioid abuse. According to recent data, the county has seen a reduction in overdose fatalities, from 177 in 2023 to 120 in 2024. "This is a testament to the collaborative efforts of local programs, organizations, health care providers and harm reduction initiatives," Gorton said. The city identified the following key initiatives that contributed to the decline in deaths:

Expanded Access to Treatment: Increased availability of Medication-Assisted Treatment (MAT) and peer recovery support services. Harm Reduction...

## **Louisville likely to spend \$2.9 million on addiction prevention, treatment**

Louisville has received another \$2.9 million from the lawsuit settlements with pharmaceutical companies that fueled America's opioid crisis. Mayor Craig Greenberg wants to spend the money on addiction treatment and prevention, including significant funding for programming aimed at Jefferson County Public Schools students. This is the fourth round of opioid settlement funding the city is distributing. In 2023, Louisville appropriated the first \$1.5 million to overdose prevention programs like Narcan distribution and HIV and hepatitis C testing. Another \$5.3 million went to 21 community groups last year and Goodwill's Another Way Program and the city's Substance Use Services Center received \$6.6...

## **Indy-based group to launch AI chatbot to help those struggling with opioid addiction**

INDIANAPOLIS – An Indianapolis-based group is offering a new option to help those struggling with opioid addiction. Overdose Lifeline will introduce a new AI chatbot service called KATE. The launch coincides with Black Balloon Day, a time to remember lives lost to an overdose. The anonymous chatbot is designed to help Hoosiers navigate substance abuse questions, harm reduction and overdose prevention. It will be available in more than 20 languages, giving it the ability to reach well beyond Indiana. KATE stands for knowledge, advocacy, trust and

education. It's designed to help people dealing with substance abuse as well as those seeking help for a friend or loved one. For Justin Phillips, the CEO of...

## **National News**

### **2017 to 2023 saw decline in exclusive cigarette smoking, rise in vaping**

Decreases in exclusive cigarette smoking and increases in exclusive electronic cigarette use were seen among U.S. adults from 2017 to 2023, according to research published in Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. René A. Arrazola, M.P.H., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues describe trends in the use of commercial tobacco products, including combustible tobacco products, smokeless tobacco products, and e-cigarettes (e-cigarettes meet the federal definition of tobacco products) among adults during a seven-year period. The analysis included adult participants (annual range, 21,153 to 31,997) in the National Health...

### **Study finds patients are more than twice as likely to quit smoking with talking therapies**

Research from the University of Bath, published on No Smoking Day 2025, shows that integrating smoking cessation support into NHS Talking Therapies for depression and anxiety increases quit rates. This is an important step in addressing the high rates of smoking in this population. Led by Dr. Gemma Taylor at the University of Bath, alongside researchers from several other institutions, the study published in *Addiction*, also found that adding smoking support to mental health treatment didn't disrupt therapy. Instead, it offered a practical way to tackle mental and physical health together. The trial was conducted across four NHS...

### **Top addiction researcher Nora Volkow on NIH cuts, optimism and the limits of RFK Jr.'s 12-step experience**

BETHESDA, MD — Nora Volkow, the federal government's top drug addiction researcher, laughed when asked how a spate of recent policy changes at the National Institutes of Health had affected her day-to-day work. "They have increased my blood pressure and heart rate," Volkow said before declining to answer specific questions about Trump administration policy changes, instead referring them to the Department of Health and Human Services, the NIH's parent agency. But in an interview on the research agency's campus here last week, Volkow delivered an impassioned defense of the NIH and the National...

### **Study examines a novel way to bring addiction care and HIV prevention to people who inject drugs**

Researchers from the HIV Prevention Trials Network (HPTN) have presented results from the HPTN 094 ("INTEGRA") study at the 2025 Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI) in San Francisco. The main findings from this randomized controlled trial that enrolled persons who inject drugs showed that similar numbers of participants were on medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and antiretroviral therapy (ART) for HIV care or prevention at 26 weeks post-

randomization either to an intervention arm that provided integrated services with peer navigation in a mobile unit or to an active control arm that...

### **Female sex hormone protects against opioid misuse, rat study finds**

The opioid epidemic has claimed more than half a million lives in the U.S. since 1999, about three-quarters of them men, according to the National Institutes of Health. Although men's disproportionate rates of opioid abuse and overdose deaths are well-documented, the reasons for this gender disparity are not well understood. A new study in rats by researchers at Washington University School of Medicine in St. Louis suggests that one underlying cause may be biological. The findings are published in the journal *Neuron*. Male rats in chronic pain gave themselves increasing doses of an opioid—specifically, fentanyl—over time...

### **Study: Medicaid expansion does not lead to increase in non-prescribed drug use**

A new study has found that extending state Medicaid coverage did not increase the likelihood of prescription opioid or benzodiazepine misuse among people who use drugs. People who inject drugs and experience poverty are at an increased risk of health conditions such as HIV and tuberculosis, as well as overdose. While this population stands to benefit from health services provided through Medicaid expansion, prior reports have claimed that extending Medicaid coverage to this group encourages misuse of opioids. A new study led by researchers at Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) and Emory University...

### **Incidents of children being poisoned by fentanyl have risen in the US, national data show**

Incidents of children in the US being poisoned by the synthetic opioid fentanyl "increased and became more severe," a new study reveals. Launched as Congress continues to review the HALT Fentanyl Act, the research follows an analysis of nonfatal fentanyl pediatric (aged 0–19) exposures reported to poison centers in 49 US states from 2015 through to 2023. In total, some 3,009 cases were detailed across the eight-year period. In 2023 alone, 44.6% were life-threatening incidents in which there was extreme harm that could have resulted in death if not treated—an increase of these severe cases from 15.9% in 2015. The majority (81.7%)...

### **Mindfulness-Based Therapy Reduces Opioid Craving by 67 Percent, Study Finds**

A randomized clinical trial published in *JAMA Network Open* found that incorporating online group mindfulness sessions into buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) significantly reduced opioid cravings compared to treatment as usual. The study, led by Dr. Zev Schuman-Olivier and colleagues from Cambridge Health Alliance and Harvard Medical School, examined the effectiveness of a 24-week virtual mindfulness-based program compared to a standard recovery support group using evidence-based practices. The trial included 196 participants across 16 U.S. states. The mindfulness-based program showed...

### **Deadliest phase of fentanyl crisis eases, as all states see recovery**

The deadliest phase of the street fentanyl crisis appears to have ended, as drug deaths continue to drop at an unprecedented pace. For the first time, all 50 states and the District of Columbia have now seen at least some recovery. A new analysis of U.S. overdose data conducted by researchers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill also found that the decline in deaths began much earlier than once understood, suggesting improvements may be sustainable. "This is not a blip. We are on track to return to levels of [fatal] overdose before fentanyl emerged," said Nabarun Dasgupta, lead researcher on the project, which...

### **Claimant says opioid victims won't get justice in proposed Purdue settlement**

When Purdue Pharma, the maker of OxyContin, declared bankruptcy in 2019, it had no debt and was worth more than a billion dollars. How is this possible? Well Purdue was facing trillions in claims over its role in the opioid crisis, which has killed more than 800,000 Americans. Purdue, and its wealthy owners, members of the Sackler family, wanted a bankruptcy settlement to resolve thousands of lawsuits. That massive settlement is now on the table, but after five years the legal battle goes on. The Sacklers continue to own Purdue Pharma – and, to this day, not a single victim has received any compensation. Ryan...

### **Philly's street fentanyl contains an industrial chemical called BTMPS that's an ingredient in plastic**

As much as half of the fentanyl sold on Philly's streets contains an industrial chemical used in plastics manufacturing. That's according to our November 2024 testing of fentanyl samples collected in Philadelphia's Kensington neighborhood, regarded as the largest open-air drug market on the East Coast. What's more, the amount, or concentration, of this industrial chemical in the drug samples often exceeded the amount of fentanyl. We are an epidemiologist and anthropologist whose research focuses on substance use disorders and the opioid overdose epidemic. Our team's findings were published in the Journal of the...

### **Five years of Covid exacted a terrible toll. Another epidemic has claimed even more lives**

The 2020s have inarguably been Covid-19's decade. Since the coronavirus outbreak was acknowledged as a pandemic exactly five years ago, the pandemic has killed well over 1 million Americans, derailed the global economy, and sparked political upheaval that continues today. It also yielded what many hail as the greatest scientific accomplishment in human history: the development of effective vaccines in under a year. Yet in dominating the early 2020s, Covid-19 also distracted from what is arguably a more significant public health emergency. Even at the height of the pandemic, more young Americans died of drug...

### **Reformulation of HIV prevention drug lenacapavir makes it last for a year**

A team of pharmaceutical researchers at biopharma company Gilead Sciences has announced that a reformulation of its HIV prevention drug lenacapavir allows it to persist in the body for up to a year. In their paper published in The Lancet journal, the group describes how they injected the new formulation into several HIV-free volunteers and tested them for up to a year, and what they found in doing so. Despite massive progress made in developing drugs to prevent HIV infections over the past several decades, millions of people are still infected every year, with many developing AIDs and dying. This, the researchers note, is...

### **Broadly Neutralizing Antibodies Delayed Rebound in HIV Patients Who Stopped ART**

SAN FRANCISCO -- Most patients with HIV who received two broadly neutralizing antibodies (bNAbs) after pausing antiretroviral therapy (ART) avoided rebound for 5 months, a randomized trial showed. At 20 weeks from analytical treatment interruption (ATI), 75% of participants who received bNAbs had not rebounded compared with 8.8% of those who received placebo (HR 0.09, 95% CI 0.04-0.21, P<0.0001), reported Sarah Fidler, PhD, MBBS, of Imperial College London, at the Conference on Retroviruses and Opportunistic Infections (CROI). The median time to rebound was 62.3 weeks for the participants who received...

### **Some malaria, HIV, TB programme cuts reversed by US, groups say**

LONDON (Reuters) -Some lifesaving health projects that had their U.S. funding contracts abruptly terminated last week have received letters reversing that decision, several of the groups told Reuters. The aid recipients said the decisions were promising, but that their work remains in limbo as funding for their projects from the world's biggest donor had not yet restarted. The Trump administration canceled on Thursday around 90% of contracts funded by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the U.S. State Department, sending shockwaves across the global aid community. Michael Adekunle Charles, chief...

### **Novo's Studies of GLP-1s for Addiction Limited to Ongoing Phase II**

Despite comments made by a Novo Nordisk official this week, the company confirmed to BioSpace that it has no additional clinical trials of its GLP-1 drugs in addiction beyond a Phase II trial testing semaglutide and two other drugs with alcohol use as a secondary endpoint. Thursday, Reuters reported that Martin Holst Lange, head of development at Novo, had told an online conference on Thursday that his company plans to investigate how its GLP-1 medicines can help people with addiction. However, in response to questions from Biospace, a Novo spokesperson said that Lange was referring to already ongoing work...

### **'Deliberate trauma': SAMHSA employees detail a federal agency in shambles**

The new administration's decision to fire a tenth of the workers at the federal government agency that oversees mental and behavioral health will imperil efforts

to curb suicides and drug overdose deaths, according to current and former employees. Roughly 100 employees of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration were let go according to insiders' estimates. That's more than 10% of the agency's workforce, the 2025 fiscal report shows. The stories from former and current workers, who spoke with STAT on condition of anonymity out of fear of retaliation, mirror similar news of chaos and confusion spilling...

## 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.

### Other Funding Opportunities:

Apply now to the following 2025 resident and early career psychiatrist research award opportunities!

### Resident and Early Career Faculty Opportunities

Application Deadline: April 1, 2025

1. [AACAP Pilot Research Award for Early Career Faculty and Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Fellows](#). Supported by AACAP and the Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation
2. [AACAP Pilot Research Award for General Psychiatry Residents](#). Supported by Industry Supporters

These awards:

1. Offer \$15,000 to those who have an interest in beginning a career in child and adolescent mental health research.
2. Offer the opportunity to submit a poster presentation for AACAP's 2026 Annual Meeting, October 26-31, 2026, in Atlanta, GA.
3. Include travel support to attend AACAP's 2026 Annual Meeting.

### Early Career Psychiatrist Opportunity

Application Deadline: April 1, 2025

- [AACAP Junior Investigator Award. Supported by AACAP](#), the Klingenstein Third Generation Foundation, and Industry Supporters
- Offers up to \$30,000 a year for two years for one child and adolescent psychiatry early career faculty member to facilitate research relevant to our

understanding, treatment, and prevention of child and adolescent mental health disorders.

**[AACAP Child and Adolescent Psychiatry Research Institute \(CAPRI\)](#)**

Application Deadline: April 1, 2025

1. This two-day event at AACAP's Annual Meeting is the beginning of a two-year journey for up to 12 early research career child and adolescent psychiatrists to receive ongoing mentorship from leaders in the field AND career development planning through exposure to skills and strategies to bolster the chances of independent grant funding as a principal investigator (PI) of a career development (K) award or other equivalent National Institutes of Health (NIH) grant mechanisms.

For more information or if you have any questions, please contact [research@aacap.org](mailto:research@aacap.org) or visit AACAP's Awards page.

The availability of all awards is contingent upon the receipt of adequate funding. AACAP has the right to waive informalities.

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