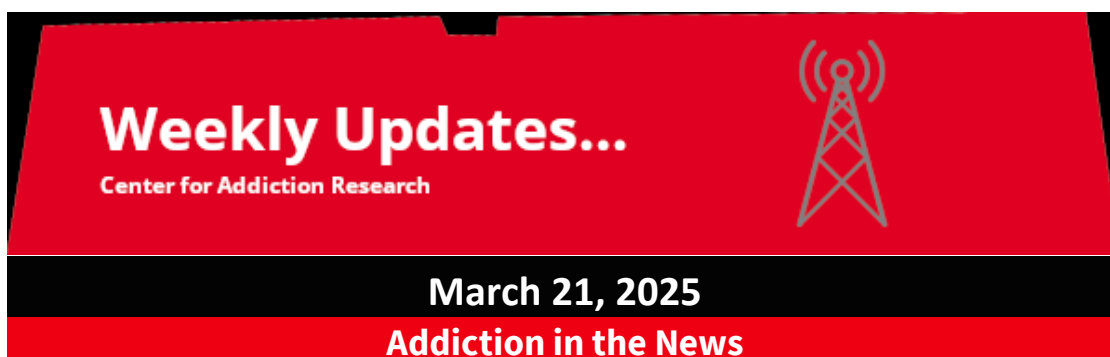


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

From 'emergency mode' to progress: How Hamilton County cut down its drug overdose death rate

HAMILTON COUNTY, Ohio — For the last decade, Hamilton County residents have had a front-row seat to a persistent problem — drug overdose deaths. They've also gotten to witness the solutions born out of crisis. Marking its 10th anniversary, members of the Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition (HC ARC) gathered Tuesday to commemorate the work done so far and discuss the work still left to do. "It takes a village to get this work done," Hamilton County Commissioner Denise Driehaus said. "We have done a lot of work to see that trend move downward, but there's still quite a bit of work to do." Officials unveiled data for the 2024 State of the Addiction Crisis annual report, which shows overdose deaths in the...

Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition marks 10th anniversary

The Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition (HC ARC) reports 270 people died from overdoses in 2024. The number follows a downward trend from 515 deaths in Hamilton County in 2021, and a crisis peak of 570 in 2017. "I think it's important to note that we started in a place where we were seeing significant increases in this community of overdose deaths, and we have done a lot of work to see that trend move downward," said Hamilton County Commission President Denise Driehaus, who serves as executive chair of the HC ARC steering committee. "But there's still quite a bit of work to do." The group released its 2024 annual report on the 10th anniversary of its founding in 2015 as the Heroin...

Data shows progress being made in reducing overdose deaths in Hamilton County

CINCINNATI — The Hamilton County Addiction Response Coalition released new trends in the fight to decrease overdose deaths. Over the last four years, overdose deaths have decreased from 515 to 270. Overdose deaths peaked in 2017 at 570. "So when you look at the big picture now, it makes sense to see three years in a row of reduction of overdose deaths. And to see such a dramatic drop of almost 52% since the peak in 2017," said Newtown police chief Tom Synan. Synan is also the co-founder of the response coalition. He believes the work they have done has helped to decrease the number of deaths, at the same time he said there is still lots of work to be done, with more than 200 dying every year from an overdose. "Here's the...

'Story of hope': Cincinnati a model of change for Ohio, nation in reducing OD deaths

CINCINNATI (WKRC) — Three and a half years ago, Mike Dusold of White Oak faced the devastating news that his son, Brian, had died of an overdose. Brian, a father himself, left behind a 3-year-old child and had another on the way. Despite the tragedy, Dusold wants to focus on the hope and recovery Brian experienced in his final years. "My message and Brian's story is the story of hope because his last five years were unbelievable," Dusold said. "So, my message to those who have loved ones struggling with substance use disorder [is to] accept that there is hope and take advantage of the things that are out there." Brian was one of 515 overdose deaths in Hamilton County in 2021. However, recent data from the Hamilton...

Butler County officials identify spike in suspected overdose deaths this month

BUTLER COUNTY, Ohio — The Butler County Coroner's Office is investigating an increase in suspected overdose deaths during the month of March. According to data from the coroner's office, there were six suspected overdose deaths from March 10 through March 16. Prior to that spike, Butler County was averaging two deadly overdoses per week over the last 10 weeks. The overdoses were primarily concentrated in New Miami Village and Hamilton, the coroner said. Middletown and Sharonville also reported overdose incidents. Of the six people who died, all of them were men, with three of the victims aged 55-64. An investigation into the spike remains ongoing by the coroner's office.

Fact check: Has legal cannabis increased crime in Ohio?

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) — As Ohio lawmakers weigh changes to voter-approved cannabis law, NBC4 investigated concerns contributing to the call for reform. Ohio lawmakers in favor of marijuana law changes said legalizing cannabis leads to increases in crime and traffic accidents. Ohio House Speaker Matt Huffman (R-Lima), a sponsor of one pending marijuana bill, equated cannabis to alcohol concerning crime. See previous coverage of proposed cannabis law changes in the video player above. "This is all true for marijuana," Huffman said. "The more

alcohol is available, the more people drink and the more bad behavior results. We're not going to ban alcohol. We're not going to ban marijuana. But there...

DOGE cancels \$699K OSU research grant examining cannabis use in LGBTQ+ women

COLUMBUS, Ohio (WCMH) — An Ohio State professor's federal research grant worth nearly \$700,000 was cancelled by DOGE on March 11, a university spokesperson confirmed. Dr. Christina Dyar's research study on the link between cannabis use disorder and LGBTQ+ women received a \$699,000 federal grant in 2024. This month, the Elon Musk-led DOGE cancelled Dyar's grant from the National Institute of Health (NIH). See previous coverage of federal grant pause impacts in central Ohio in the video player above. According to the CDC, cannabis use disorder occurs when people are unable to stop using cannabis even when it is causing problems in their health or social interactions. The NIH and National Institute on...

Kentucky proposes changes to buprenorphine prescribing, dispensing rules

The Kentucky Board of Medical Licensure recently proposed new changes to regulations around the prescribing and dispensing of buprenorphine, also known by its brand name Suboxone, a Food and Drug Administration approved medication used to treat opioid-use disorder. Experts say the changes would increase barriers for people who rely on it to keep their lives stable. Michelle Lofwall is a professor in the Departments of Behavioral Science and Psychiatry at the University of Kentucky. She said the stricter rules send a discouraging message to people in recovery. "And we know," said Lofwall, "low-barrier care, where patients can really get access to the medication and they can add on what's needed..."

Louisville Metro Council approves fourth round of opioid settlement spending

Louisville Metro Council approved Thursday the proposed spending package for the fourth round of funding the city has received from lawsuit settlements with the pharmaceutical companies that fueled the opioid epidemic. The bulk of the \$2.9 million proposal from Mayor Craig Greenberg will go to expanding in-school and after-school programming aimed at preventing kids from developing drug addiction in the first place. There's also \$315,000 to help families that are trying to force a loved one into addiction treatment through Casey's Law. That measure allows families to seek court-ordered treatment, but they must cover the cost of two mental health evaluations. The only part of the spending plan that drew...

National News

Fewer than half of Medicaid managed care plans provide all FDA-approved medications for alcohol use disorder

As health complications and deaths from alcohol use disorder (AUD) increase in the United States, it is critical that people who could benefit from medications have access to the drugs that the US Food and Drug Administration has approved to treat AUD. Yet, for individuals who have alcohol use disorder and are covered by

Medicaid, accessing these medications is difficult; past research indicates that only about 1 in 20 Medicaid enrollees with alcohol use disorder receive these drugs. Now, a new study led by Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) suggests that limited insurance coverage may be a possible barrier to...

Deep dive: Family caregivers' journeys navigating alcohol use disorder

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a major global public health issue, affecting more than 28 million adults in the United States and causing 3 million deaths each year worldwide. The impact of AUD extends beyond the individual. At least five people are affected by an individual's drinking problem, with family members typically stepping into the role of primary caregiver. Caregivers, burdened by the severity of alcohol-related issues, frequently struggle with ineffective coping, leading to feelings of hopelessness. However, most research focuses on helping individuals with AUD and promoting abstinence, neglecting their support...

Alcohol and cancer risk: What we know

Most people know about the connection between cigarettes and cancer risk, but does drinking cause cancer? It's something rarely discussed, despite years of evidence that alcohol increases cancer risk. In fact, a recent report from the U.S. Surgeon General stated that alcohol consumption was the third leading preventable cause of cancer in the U.S., behind tobacco use and obesity. Yet many Americans aren't aware of the connection between alcohol and cancer risk. According to the 2024 American Association for Cancer Research (AACR) Cancer Progress Report, only about half of Americans who took a recent survey...

Young adults in pain start using cannabis earlier and are more likely to mix it with alcohol, research finds

Contrary to popular belief, young adults can experience significant acute and even chronic pain—which can motivate them to use cannabis. A pair of recent articles by researchers in Binghamton University's Psychology Department shed light on this dynamic. The study titled "Pain Predicts Cannabis Initiation Among Emerging Adults: Results from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study" was recently published in Behavioral Medicine, while another paper titled "Pain Predicts Past-Month Co-Use of Alcohol and Cannabis Among Emerging Adults" appeared in the journal Alcohol. The research for...

New study reveals high levels of fusarium mycotoxins in seized cannabis from Arizona and California

A recent study conducted by researchers from Arizona State University has uncovered alarming levels of Fusarium mycotoxins in illicit cannabis samples seized in Arizona and California. The study, "Evaluation of Fusarium Mycotoxins and Fungal Metabolites in Seized Cannabis in Arizona and California, 2023-2024," was published in Environmental Health Perspectives. The researchers found that 16% of the 118 samples tested positive for harmful mycotoxins, posing potential health

risks to consumers. This groundbreaking research highlights the unregulated and dangerous nature of black-market cannabis. The study...

Cannabis users face substantially higher risk of heart attack

Marijuana is now legal in many places, but is it safe? Two new studies add to mounting evidence that people who use cannabis are more likely to suffer a heart attack than people who do not use the drug, even among younger and otherwise healthy adults. The findings are from a retrospective study of over 4.6 million people published in JACC Advances and a meta-analysis of 12 previously published studies being presented at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session (ACC.25) held March 29–31 in Chicago. Marijuana use has risen in the United States, especially in states where it is legal to buy, sell and use the...

How using cigars, pipes or smokeless tobacco can harm your heart

The data on the health effects from smoking cigarettes has been clear for decades. Today, tobacco use causes nearly 1 in 5 deaths each year in the U.S. While many of these deaths are cancer-related, researchers have found that people who smoke are more likely to die from heart disease than lung cancer. In late 2024, a U.S. Surgeon General's report on tobacco use addressed challenges that have contributed to another generation being addicted to nicotine, including flavored products, and predatory marketing practices. But cigarettes are not the only culprit. While cigarette smoking rates have plummeted from nearly 50% of...

Some nicotine pouch flavors are much more addictive than others, research suggests

A paper in Nicotine & Tobacco Research indicates that different nicotine pouches, which have become very popular in recent years, particularly among young people, may influence user preferences very differently. An investigation using rats finds some flavors lead to much more nicotine consumption than others. The paper is titled "Effects of Sweeteners and Cinnamon Flavor on Oral Nicotine Choice Behaviors." According to the World Health Organization, tobacco use remains a major global health threat, with 1.3 billion tobacco users, and 8 million tobacco-related deaths annually. While cigarette smoking is the most prevalent form of...

Adolescents with mental health symptoms more likely to use multiple nicotine products, international research finds

A recent study led by Emily Hackworth, a 2024 graduate of the Arnold School's Ph.D. in Health Promotion, Education, and Behavior, and co-authors has found that youth (ages 16–19) with internalizing mental health symptoms (e.g., anxiety, depression, sadness, loneliness) are more likely to turn to nicotine products (particularly electronic cigarettes) than their peers. Published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research, the study also revealed that the pandemic and its aftermath has likely played a role in this relationship. "Internalizing mental health symptoms are highly prevalent among adolescents but are rarely diagnosed or treated..."

E-cigarettes linked to lower cardiac risks compared to tobacco cigarettes in people with HIV

Electronic cigarette use may pose lower cardiovascular risks in people living with HIV compared to tobacco cigarette use, new UCLA-led research shows. The study, published in the Journal of the American Heart Association, uses a novel laboratory model to examine the early stages of atherogenesis—the buildup of fats and cholesterol in the arteries. The findings suggest that electronic cigarettes (ECs) have a lower likelihood of causing changes associated with atherogenesis, compared to tobacco cigarettes (TCs), among those living with HIV. While smoking has dropped to all-time low levels in the U.S., this hasn't been the case for...

New telehealth restrictions may limit opioid use treatment

Weill Cornell Medicine researchers found that restricting telehealth prescriptions for opioid use disorder could keep thousands from accessing buprenorphine, a medication that helps people recover from addiction. The study, published in JAMA Network Open, warns that requiring in-person visits—as had been proposed by the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA)—may undo the progress made during the COVID-19 pandemic when telehealth increased access to this life-saving treatment. Previous studies show telehealth buprenorphine prescriptions improve treatment use and reduce overdose rates. Before the pandemic...

'Not dead but ... not OK.' As fentanyl kills fewer people, survivors need help

PHILADELPHIA — On a blustery winter morning, Keli McLoyd set off on foot across Kensington. This area of Philadelphia is one of the most drug-scarred neighborhoods in the U.S. In the first block, she knelt next to a man curled on the sidewalk in the throes of fentanyl, xylazine or some other powerful street drug. "Sir, are you alright? You OK?" asked McLoyd, who leads Philadelphia's city-run overdose response unit. The man stirred and took a breath. "OK, I can see he's moving, he's good." In Kensington, good means still alive. By the standards of the deadly U.S. fentanyl crisis, that's a victory. It's also part of a larger, hopeful...

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...

Fewer deaths, new substances and evolving treatments in Philly's opioid epidemic: Four essential reads

In Philadelphia, fatal overdoses are the No. 3 cause of death after heart disease and cancer. That's been the case each year since 2016, except in 2020 and 2021 when COVID-19 deaths outpaced overdose deaths. The vast majority of fatal overdoses in Philly involve the synthetic opioid fentanyl. Data on overdose deaths in Philly in 2024 is not yet available. However, new research shows that drug deaths are dropping in all 50 states and the District of Columbia. Still, opioid overdose deaths in Philadelphia remain what public health researchers call a "wicked problem." These are complex, multifaceted challenges that are constantly...

Purdue Pharma submits opioid lawsuit settlement plan, including up to \$7 billion cash from Sacklers

Purdue Pharma asked a bankruptcy judge late Tuesday to consider the latest version of its plan to settle thousands of lawsuits over the toll of the powerful prescription painkiller OxyContin, a deal that would have members of the Sackler family who own the company pay up to \$7 billion. The filing is a milestone in a tumultuous legal saga that has gone on for more than five years. Under the deal the family members — estimated in documents from 2020 and 2021 to be worth about \$11 billion — would give up ownership of the company in addition to contributing money over 15 years with the biggest payment up front. Family members...

Optimizing public placement of naloxone kits to save lives

Making it easy to access naloxone kits to reverse the effects of opioid poisoning will help save lives, according to research published in the Canadian Medical Association Journal) that looks at the best placements for these kits. Researchers wanted to understand the best placement for public-access naloxone kits in Vancouver, British Columbia, to help prevent deaths from opioid poisoning. They compared public access strategies for more than 14 000 opioid poisonings over six years. They looked at placement at existing locations of take-home naloxone, at public locations like chain businesses, and at public transit locations. They...

Trump administration extends opioid emergency as fentanyl deaths drop

The Trump administration is extending through mid-June an emergency declaration linked to the opioid overdose crisis that was set to expire on Friday. In a statement, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. acknowledged drug deaths in the U.S. "are starting to decline" but said the Trump administration will continue treating the opioid crisis as "the national security emergency that it is." President Trump has linked fentanyl smuggling to his tariffs against Canada, China and Mexico. In doing so, Trump has often made factually inaccurate claims about the number of drug deaths in the U.S. He's...

Xylazine Detected in U.S.-Mexico Border Drug Supply, Study Finds

Researchers at University of California San Diego School of Medicine, in collaboration with the Prevensa free clinic in Tijuana, Mexico, have confirmed the presence of xylazine in the illicit drug supply at the U.S.-Mexico border. While xylazine remains less common in the Western U.S., border cities serve as key trafficking hubs and may have higher rates of emerging substances. The findings, published on March 20, 2025 in the Journal of Addiction Medicine, highlight the urgent need for public health intervention. “Xylazine is a veterinary anesthetic that is not approved for human use and is increasingly detected alongside...

Advancing reduction of drug use as an endpoint in addiction treatment trials

For many people trying to recover from a substance use disorder, perhaps for the majority, abstinence may be the most appropriate treatment objective. But complete abstinence is sometimes not achievable, even in the long-term, and there is a need for new treatment approaches that recognize the clinical value of reduced use. According to a recently published analysis of data from the 2022 National Survey on Drug Use and Health, two thirds (65.2 percent) of adults in self-identified recovery used alcohol or other drugs in the past month. There is increasing scientific evidence to support the clinical benefits of reduced...

Journavx: What to Know About the New Nonopioid Painkiller

After you've had surgery or experienced a serious physical injury, you are more than likely going to be in a lot of pain. No matter what your pain tolerance is, recovering from surgery or any physical trauma to the body can be an extremely painful experience. To manage this pain, many Americans are often prescribed opioids, most commonly oxycodone (such as OxyContin and Percocet) and hydrocodone (such as Vicodin). However, these prescription painkillers, which stimulate the brain's reward centers and produce a euphoric feeling, are highly addictive. In fact, an estimated 3% to 19% of people who take prescription pain...

Online games may be an effective intervention to help adolescents reduce substance abuse

For adolescents struggling with substance abuse, traditional in-person interventions such as counseling are not always effective, and rural areas often lack access to these services. A researcher at the University of Missouri is thinking outside the box, aiming to help game designers develop fun, digital games that make ditching bad habits easier by meeting adolescents where they already are: online. Mansoo Yu, a professor in the College of Health Sciences, looked at 26 studies involving digital interventions, including online games, virtual reality games, mobile app games and video games, to identify the key elements that...

WHO issues starkest warning yet on fallout from U.S. withdrawal of aid for global health

The World Health Organization on Monday issued its starkest warning yet on the consequences of the abrupt cessation of U.S. global health funding, saying it is threatening to reverse years of progress in the fight against diseases like HIV, tuberculosis, and measles. Director-General Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus called on the Trump administration to reconsider its withdrawal of funding for international aid programs. Barring that possibility, Tedros said the United States has a responsibility to manage the pullback in ways that do not endanger the lives of people who rely on the programs it funds. "The U.S. administration...

Without Federal Action, States Wrestle With Kratom Regulation

HELENA, Mont. -- Montana lawmakers are grappling with how -- if at all -- the state should rein in kratom, an unregulated plant-derived substance with addictive properties sold mainly as a mood and energy booster at gas stations, vape shops, and elsewhere. Kratom, which originates from the leaves of a tree native to Southeast Asia, is also touted for helping relieve pain and opioid withdrawal symptoms. But it can have wide-ranging mental and bodily effects, according to the federal Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), addiction medicine experts, and kratom researchers. Reports of deadly kratom overdoses have surfaced in...

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.

UC Foundation Funding Opportunity

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or 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.

Early-Career Researchers Can Apply for American Psychological Foundation Grants

Deadline: April 3, 2025

The American Psychological Foundation invites applications from graduates or early-career researchers to apply for seed funding for psychology studies. The Foundation's Visionary Grants Program provides awards of up to \$20,000 each, with preference given to pilot projects that, if successful, would be strong candidates for

support from major federal and foundation funding agencies and “demonstration projects” that promise to generalize broadly to similar settings in other geographical areas and/or to different settings. The program aims to seed innovation in the field through supporting research, education, and intervention projects and programs that use psychology to solve social problems in the following priority areas: Applying psychology to vulnerable, at-risk populations (e.g., serious mental illness, returning military, those who are incarcerated or economically disadvantaged); preventing violence; understanding the connection between behavior and health (e.g., wellness, diabetes, obesity); and understanding and eliminating stigma and prejudice (e.g., race, gender, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, and socioeconomic status). Also, the Foundation has requested funds from their fund at the Tides Foundation to support a Visionary Grant focused on furthering racial equity. Applicants must be graduate students or early-career researchers (no more than 10 years postdoctoral) and an educational or scientific institution, a nonprofit charitable, organization, or a governmental entity operating exclusively for charitable and educational purposes.

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