

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

Center for Addiction Research to hold upcoming 2025 Summer Speaker Series

Back by popular demand, the College of Medicine Center for Addiction Research will hold its fifth annual virtual Summer Speaker Series to highlight cutting-edge UC addiction research and UC community collaborations related to prevention and treatment. Monthly presentations will take place on June 11, July 9, and August 13 from noon – 1:00 PM. All presentations will be held virtually and are free and open to the public. **Featured CAR presenters will be Dr. Michael D. Brubaker, Dr.**

Jayme McReynolds, and Dr. Davide Amato. (PDF event flyer attached)

>> Register for any of the presentations

Toronto ambulance service involved with OD prevention efforts

TORONTO — The TEMS Joint Ambulance District has been recognized for the role it's played in helping to prevent fatal overdoses of opioids. Organizers of the HEALing Communities Study in Ohio acknowledged the Toronto-based ambulance service for its role in placing Naloxboxes in the men's and women's restrooms at a local rest stop and in educating other emergency agencies and the public about overdose prevention. "The TEMS Joint Ambulance District identified a very clear need for access to naloxone at rest areas and led the effort to make it a reality in their community. In doing so, this effort was replicated, making naloxone available across the state," said Bridget Freisthler of Ohio State University, one of several...

(Dr. T. John Winhusen, HEALing Communities Study Co-Principal Investigator for Ohio and CAR Director)

Scioto County was the ‘epicenter’ of the opioid epidemic. Some think it deserves more settlement funds

As Portsmouth resident Jay Hash drives through town, he’s quick to show off the city’s history and charm, from its famous floodwall murals to historic breweries. Between the attractions, he points out the abundance of treatment facilities — an indicator of how the city has transformed since the opioid epidemic first hit. “That used to be a car dealership,” he said. “And this used to be a regular, not-treatment-center-owned garage. There’s a hotel that you passed when you came in, that used to be a Holiday Inn [and] is now a counseling center.” Hash is the founder of HopeSource, a small mental health and substance use disorder treatment center in town. He and his team of 65 have been trying to do their part to help...

Trumbull County to get \$250K inmate drug addiction grant

Drug addiction in jails and prisons is a big problem, and to help mitigate that, money is being sent to Trumbull County for programs that will help inmates recover. Trumbull County is sharing in a \$1.2 million statewide grant, which will funnel about \$250,000 to the Trumbull County Sheriff’s Office to hire a full-time addiction services coordinator or a contractor providing similar services to treat opioid and other addictions. The goal is to help inmates through detox and recovery. There is also another \$50,000 in grant money available for medications and supplies used in recovery if counties wish to apply. “The opioid crisis thrust county jails into the role of de facto addiction-treatment facilities, placing an...

75 organizations receive grants to fight drug epidemic in Kentucky

Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman announced the latest grants awarded by the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission. Coleman announced that \$19.8 million was awarded to 75 Kentucky organizations to combat the opioid and drug epidemic in Kentucky. “Throughout this process, we’ve seen the inspirational work of dedicated Kentuckians in every corner of our Commonwealth. They all share one goal: to save lives,” said Opioid Abatement Commission Director Chris Evans. “I’m grateful to the Commission members and staff for the countless hours spent reviewing applications so we could invest in the programs that will change the trajectory of our Commonwealth.” The money comes...

Guide to Implementing the Communities That HEAL (CTH) Intervention

The Communities That HEAL (CTH) intervention is a multi-phased approach that uses data and leverages community partnerships to help inform decision-making and support the uptake of evidence-based strategies to reduce overdose deaths. The CTH was created by a team of opioid-overdose reduction experts from academic and medical institutions in the four states where the HEALing Communities Study (HCS) took place: Ohio, Kentucky, Massachusetts, and New York. As part of the CTH, researchers collaborated with community coalitions to develop the Opioid-Overdose Continuum of Care Approach (ORCCA)—a framework to help communities select and implement effective practices best suited... **(Dr. T.**

John Winhusen, HEALing Communities Study Co-Principal Investigator for Ohio and CAR Director)

National News

Alcohol's lasting impact: Study reveals how heavy drinking damages cognition

For the first time, researchers demonstrate in an animal how heavy alcohol use leads to long-term behavioral issues by damaging brain circuits critical for decision-making. Rats exposed to high amounts of alcohol exhibited poor decision-making during a complex task, even after a months-long withdrawal period. Key areas of their brains had undergone dramatic functional changes compared to healthy rats. The findings, published in *Science Advances*, provide a new explanation of alcohol's long-term effects on cognition. "We now have a new model for the unfortunate cognitive changes that humans with alcohol-use disorder..."

Hunger hormone found to be key in driving female binge drinking

Addiction researchers at The Florey have found a new pathway in the brain related to binge drinking in females, potentially opening a new way to help women with alcohol use disorder. Research led by Dr. Leigh Walker, published in *Nature Communications*, set out to discover whether hormone differences between males and females can explain sex differences in excessive alcohol consumption. The team focused on the "centrally projecting Edinger-Westphal" (EWcp), a part of the midbrain that scientists recently discovered receives information from gut hormones that may drive excessive alcohol consumption, but...

Smartwatch technology could help with future alcohol interventions, new study

Alcohol harm costs NHS England £3.5 billion annually, with 70 people dying every day from alcohol-related causes in the UK. According to new University of Bristol-led research, smartwatches could provide a more accurate picture of people's daily drinking habits than current methods. The technology could be a key element for future alcohol interventions. This study (AlcoWatch) is the first to use recently developed smartwatch-based methods (referred to as micro Ecological Momentary Assessment) to capture detailed, self-reported data about alcohol consumption over a long period of time. The results are published...

Awareness grows of cancer risk from alcohol consumption, survey finds

Public awareness of the link between drinking alcohol and an elevated risk of cancer has grown since last fall, with more than half of Americans now saying that regularly consuming alcohol increases your chances of later developing cancer, according to a survey by the Annenberg Public Policy Center (APPC) of the University of Pennsylvania. In the survey, conducted Jan. 30–Feb. 10, 2025, with over 1,700 U.S. adults, 56% say the regular consumption of alcohol increases your chances of later developing cancer, up from 40% in an Annenberg survey in September 2024. The percentage of those who say alcohol...

Teens find zero difference between zero-alcohol and alcohol drink adverts

Teenagers consider zero-alcohol beverages to be a type of alcoholic drink, leading Flinders University researchers to voice grave concerns about the impact of their exposure to zero-alcohol branding and advertising. "Our new study shows that teenagers classify zero-alcohol drinks as a type of alcoholic beverage, rather than as a soft drink," says lead author Dr. Ashlea Bartram from the Flinders Health and Medical Institute (FHMRI). It means that exposure to zero-alcohol drinks in advertising or retail spaces such as the local supermarket, may have the same type of negative effects that come from exposure to alcoholic beverages. "This...

Cannabis use disorder among insured pregnant women in the US between 2015–2020

Cannabis use has been increasing during pregnancy, according to researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health and the Columbia University Irving Medical Center. Previous research has observed that past-month cannabis use has more than tripled among pregnant women in the U.S. from 2002–2020, with self-reported cannabis use rising from 1.5% to 5.4% over the 18 years of tracking data. The findings are published in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. Medical guidelines recommend that pregnant women abstain from cannabis because of its link to an increased risk of adverse maternal...

No evidence quit smoking treatments increase risk of major birth defects

Pregnant women can be reassured that quit-smoking medicines such as nicotine patches and varenicline do not increase the risk of major birth defects in babies, according to new research from the National Drug and Alcohol Research Center (NDARC), UNSW Sydney. The real-world data, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, suggest there is no evidence that infants exposed to these medicines had higher rates of major congenital malformations. "Considering the devastating consequences of smoking on both mother and baby, our results should reassure pregnant women who need help quitting smoking," said Dr. Duong Tran...

Effective interventions and policies to reduce tobacco-caused harm

Earlier this year, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) proposed a new rule to limit nicotine in cigarettes and certain other tobacco products, like cigars and pipe tobacco, bringing nicotine down to minimal or nonaddictive levels. If finalized, this change would be a major step in addressing the public health concerns of smoking and tobacco use in the United States. "It could be the end of smoking-caused diseases such as lung cancer and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease as we know it, at least in the future," said Jonathan Foulds, professor of public health sciences and of psychiatry and behavioral health at the...

Older teens who start vaping post-high school risk rapid progress to frequent use

A new study has found that young vapers in the United States who begin using e-cigarettes after graduating from secondary/high school are likely to progress rapidly to frequent use. While US youths who start vaping during secondary/high school typically take about three years to progress to frequent use, this newly identified group of young adults who start vaping a bit later, after graduation (mean age = 20 years), tend to reach frequent use in about one year. 'Frequent use' is defined as using e-cigarettes on 20 or more of the past 30 days. These late initiators also reported the highest prevalence of JUUL use as their first...

US Supreme Court upholds ban on some e-cigarette flavors

The US Supreme Court ruled unanimously Wednesday that health authorities acted properly when they blocked e-cigarette companies from marketing fruit- and dessert-flavored flavors. The court's six conservative and three liberal judges upheld the Food and Drug Administration's argument that these products could be addictive for young people who like sweet flavors in vaping devices. Electronic cigarettes are battery-powered gadgets that produce an inhalable vapor by heating a nicotine-laden liquid. Unlike tobacco, they do not contain cancer-causing tar or carbon monoxide. But the World Health Organization and...

White snus: Why 'tobacco free' doesn't mean risk free

A habit that is worrying health authorities in Sweden where increasing numbers of teenagers are taking what's known as "snus" is also concerning football authorities in England where one-fifth of professional players are regularly indulging because they say it improves their game. White snus consists of small, tobacco-free pouches containing nicotine, plant-based fibers and flavorings. These pouches look a like a cross between a tea bag and a tablet of chewing gum, and they're put between the lip and the gum to give users a burst of nicotine without some of the drawbacks of tobacco. Nicotine strength varies widely between...

Unintentional Drug Overdoses Take a Toll Across the U.S. Unequally, Study Finds

A new study from Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health reveals significant racial and sex disparities in drug overdose mortality rates. The research found that both Black men and Black women have been disproportionately impacted by overdose deaths, with their mortality rates rising sharply compared to their White counterparts. This study expands scientific understanding of how race, sex, and regional factors intersect to affect overdose outcomes. The study's findings are published in JAMA Network Open. "Efforts to reduce drug-related mortality must address the specific needs of marginalized communities..."

Evidence supports continuing buprenorphine for acute pain in those with opioid use disorder

For patients with opioid use disorder (OUD), evidence supports continuation of buprenorphine during episodes of acute pain, but overall evidence for pain outcomes in these patients is low, according to a review published online March 18 in the *Annals of Internal Medicine*. Michele J. Buonora, M.D., from the Yale School of Medicine in New Haven, Connecticut, and colleagues conducted a systematic review to examine the benefits and harms of acute pain interventions among patients with OUD. A total of 17 trials, 20 controlled observational studies, and 78 uncontrolled observational studies met the criteria for...

Empowering nurse practitioners to improve care for opioid use disorder

Zhanette Coffee, Ph.D., MSN, APRN, spent years working as an advanced practice nurse with certifications in family practice and addictions nursing and saw firsthand the challenges faced not only by patients with opioid use disorder, but also by the health care professionals providing treatment to those patients. "I grew up with a parent who struggled with substance use, chronic pain and mental health," said Coffee, who is now a member of the Comprehensive Center for Pain & Addiction at the University of Arizona Health Sciences. "When I started working specifically in the substance use field, I quickly realized my..."

Every Hospital Should Offer Addiction Treatment

Two people are wheeled into a hospital at the same time: one for a heart attack and one for an opioid overdose. You might expect that both individuals will be offered standard of care treatment for their respective conditions -- but unfortunately that is not the case. The person with the heart attack will likely be met by a specialty cardiology team who will employ best practice medical evidence to treat the heart attack within 90 minutes. Meanwhile, the person with the opioid overdose will most likely neither receive standard-of-care treatment for their addiction, nor be evaluated by a specialty addiction medicine physician or team. The...

Use DOGE to deregulate methadone as addiction medicine, coalition urges Trump

A coalition of advocacy groups including a leading addiction medicine society and a center-right think tank is pressing the Trump administration with an unlikely request: Use the U.S. DOGE Service to make methadone more widely available. In a new letter to key Trump officials, the groups argue that the Department of Government Efficiency's goal of deregulation should embolden federal agencies to relax many of the existing rules that have led patients to dub methadone "liquid handcuffs." Methadone is a common medication that has been used for over a half-century to treat opioid addiction. But it is an opioid itself...

Stimulant involvement in opioid OD death higher for those in physically demanding jobs

A higher percentage of individuals who have psychostimulant involvement in synthetic opioid overdose deaths tend to work in physically demanding occupations and industries, according to research published in the March 27 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Eric W. Lundstrom, Ph.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues conducted an exploratory study to characterize patterns of stimulant co-involvement among U.S. residents aged 15 to 64 years, stratified by decedents' usual occupation and industry using data on overdose deaths involving...

A failed fragile X syndrome drug can reduce cocaine use, clinical trial finds

A team of pharmaceutical researchers at Novartis Biomedical Research, working with an international team of associates, has found that the drug mavoglurant can reduce use in people with cocaine use disorder. In their study, published in the journal Science Translational Medicine, the group conducted a Phase II clinical trial with 68 people with a diagnosed cocaine use disorder. Mavoglurant was first developed by a team at Novartis as a treatment for fragile X syndrome, which is a genetic neurodevelopmental condition that usually leads to some degree of intellectual disability. Trials for the drug were...

Study finds one in five US adults use multiple drugs, revealing new patterns in substance use

A study from researchers at the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus reveals that nearly 1 in 5 U.S. adults have used multiple drugs in the past year, showing that substance use is fairly common and more complex than just using one drug at a time. The study was published last week in the American Journal of Public Health. The survey, which included 30,000 participants, found that adults who use prescription drugs, recreational drugs such as cannabis, or illegal drugs like cocaine fit into four distinct patterns of drug use. "Our findings reveal a more nuanced picture of substance use in the U.S. It's essential we shift toward..."

Trump team revokes \$11 billion in funding for addiction, mental health care

State and county public health departments and nonprofit groups are reeling after the Trump administration announced abrupt cancellation and revocation of roughly \$11.4 billion in COVID-era funding for grants linked to addiction, mental health and other programs. "This is chopping things off in the middle while people are actually doing the work," said Keith Humphreys, an addiction policy researcher at Stanford University, who also volunteers doing harm reduction work with people in addiction. He warned the move could trigger layoffs and treatment disruptions. "Services will be dropped in the middle. Bang, the clinic is..."

Health department layoffs mean that data on drug use and mental health could sit unused

Most teenagers don't use drugs. There's data to show that because of a 50-year-old government survey that may now be in jeopardy. The entire 17-member U.S. government team responsible for the National Survey on Drug Use and Health received layoff notices Tuesday, as part of the overhaul of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services. It's not clear whether there is an alternative plan to analyze the data, which local and state governments use to develop prevention measures and treatment services. The federal government distributes grant money to fight the opioid addiction crisis based...

NIH Cuts Will Devastate Disease Research, Say Senators and Scientists

The Trump administration's cancellation of NIH funding for clinical trials in cancer and other diseases could have disastrous consequences for patients, according to clinicians and lawmakers who spoke at a Capitol Hill event organized by senators Tammy Baldwin (D-Wisc.) and Peter Welch (D-Vt.). "This administration is seeking to dismantle the NIH and destroy the hopes of millions of Americans who are counting on life-saving treatments and cures," Baldwin said. "The NIH is the global leader in biomedical research. NIH-funded research contributed to 354 out of the 356 drugs approved by the [FDA] between 2010 and..."

Trump officials will screen NIH funding opportunities

After a 2-month hiatus, the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) plans to resume posting notices of new solicitations for grant proposals. But there's a catch: NIH's parent federal agency, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and a more recent White House creation, the Department of Government Efficiency (DOGE), will review each draft notice to ensure the research that will be funded aligns with the priorities of President Donald Trump's administration. Science has learned from multiple sources within NIH. A senior NIH official told Science that staff were informed yesterday that each notice will be approved by...

Funding Opportunities



There are no new NIH Grants Funding Opportunities to post this week.

CAR Member New Publications

Approaches, Barriers, and Facilitators in Statewide Initiative to Combat Opioid Overdose: A Narrative Review of Ohio's Experiences During the HEALing Communities Study

Jason McMullan, Will Mueller, Jennifer L Brown, Irene Ewing, Michael S Lyons, Joel Sprunger, John Winhusen, Thomas Collins

Prehospital Emergency Care

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1080/10903127.2025.2451214>

ABSTRACT

Objectives: Opioid-associated fatal and non-fatal overdose rates continue to rise. Prehospital overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) programs are attractive harm-reduction strategies, as patients who are not transported by EMS after receiving naloxone have limited access to other interventions. This narrative summary describes our experiences with prehospital implementation of evidence-based OEND practices across Ohio as part of the HEALing Communities Study (HCS).

Methods: HCS was a parallel-group, cluster randomized, unblinded, wait-list controlled trial of 67 communities highly impacted by opioid-related overdose fatalities in four states, including Ohio. An EMS Intervention Design Team (IDT), consisting of EMS physicians, paramedics, and an EMS department Chief with an established OEND program, supported participating EMS agencies. Services of the IDT included protocol development, program training, and stigma-reduction education. HCS funding supported implementation costs and varied by county/agency.

Results: In 12 Ohio counties, 29 agencies implemented an OEND program; agencies served rural, suburban, and urban communities. While leaving naloxone kits with patients and/or families at an EMS call was universally adopted, additional OEND approaches were undertaken. Seven EMS agencies registered with the Ohio Department of Health's Project DAWN program, allowing hub-and-spoke distribution of state-provided naloxone to smaller OEND programs. An urban EMS agency targeted mass gatherings for OEND efforts; bicycle teams providing crowd medical response distributed leave-behind naloxone kits in a process mirroring traditional 9-1-1 calls while static first aid stations offered overdose educational materials, information on local resources, and take-home naloxone kits. A rural EMS agency allowed community members to request naloxone kits from agency headquarters. To address an overdose hotspot at an interstate rest area, a rural joint ambulance district partnered with the county health department to install and maintain a public-access naloxone station. Observed facilitators included Ohio's legal and regulatory environment, creating local definitions of success, identifying and empowering local champions, and operational solutions to ease OEND for practitioners. Stigma represents the biggest barrier, with ongoing education as the best solution. Incremental program implementation was most successful.

Conclusions: Our OEND implementation experiences across multiple Ohio EMS agencies identified several barriers, facilitators, and creative solutions that may inform future prehospital harm-reduction programs.

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