

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**

#### **Center for Addiction Research to hold upcoming 2024 Summer Speaker Series**

Back by popular demand, the College of Medicine Center for Addiction Research will hold its fourth annual virtual Summer Speaker Series to highlight cutting-edge UC addiction research and UC community collaborations related to prevention and treatment. The series is funded by CCTST. Monthly presentations will take place on June 12, July 10, and August 14 from noon – 1:00 PM. **Featured CAR presenters will be CAR Population Health and Health Services research core Co-Leader, Dr. Caroline Freiermuth, and CAR members, Dr. Aaron Murnan, and Dr. Kathy Burlew.** (PDF event flyer attached)

**>> Register for any of the presentations**

#### **Congratulations to Dr. Aaron Murnan (CAR member), who received a 2024 Collaborative Research Advancement Program Pilot Grant**

The Collaborative Research Advancement Program Pilot Grants, as part of the Office of Research's goal to seed interdisciplinary collaborative research, provide support for high-potential team research and creative activities. The program aims to help teams develop their research and increase their competitiveness and capacity for major external awards and funding opportunities.

#### **Aaron Murnan, Assistant Professor, Population Health, College of Nursing**

*Assessing the impact of sex work decriminalization on the health of women in the sex trade and victims of sex trafficking: A multi-disciplinary, international collaboration between New Zealand officials and UC faculty.*

We will seek to assess the effects of New Zealand’s legalization of sex work on the health and well-being of individuals who sell and trade sex, with specific emphasis on healthcare and social service access and utilization; health outcomes; exposure to violence; and overall well-being. Findings from this study stand to directly inform discussions within Ohio regarding potential legislation reform.

### **Global News Canada: Harm reduction vending machine now in Winnipeg’s north end**

The University of Cincinnati's Daniel Arendt spoke with Global News Canada about the benefits of free harm reduction vending machines being implemented in Hamilton County, Ohio, as a similar machine has been launched in Winnipeg, Manitoba, Canada. “There’s actually really good evidence to suggest participants who engage with programs like this end up being much more likely to enter substance use treatment, they’re much more likely to cease injecting and putting themselves at risk for blood borne pathogens, as well as reach out to us and connect with other harm reduction services,” said Arendt, assistant professor in UC’s James L. Winkle College of Pharmacy and co-chair of the pain stewardship...

### **Communities can use opioid settlement funding to help lower overdose rates**

Communities around the state can begin applying for a share of the opioid settlement money held by OneOhio Recovery Foundation. On Tuesday, the OneOhio Grant Portal opens for funds through the foundation, a private nonprofit at the direction of Ohio’s state and local leaders charged with distributing more than half of the funds Ohio will receive from the pharmaceutical industry as a consequence of its role in the national opioid epidemic. The OneOhio Grant Portal is set to make \$7.1 million in opioid recovery funds available for Region 14. There are 19 OneOhio regions, and the 2024 regional grant cycle totals nearly \$51.2 million. Region 14 includes Butler, Clark, Clermont, Clinton, Greene, Madison...

### **Study aims to destigmatize overdose loss**

LEXINGTON, Ky. (LEX 18) — According to a recent RAND study, more than 40% of Americans know someone who has died of a drug overdose. Rates of exposure to drug overdose deaths were significantly higher in New England and the East South Central region, which includes Kentucky. Dr. Julie Cerel, a professor and licensed psychologist at UK is known for her expertise in suicide prevention and bereavement. Recently, her line of work led her to the RAND study on drug overdose exposure, which can be found here. “There was really no good work at all that helped us understand how many people are impacted by an overdose death, and we found that so surprising because we hear about overdoses all...

### **Kentucky win approval with tobacco industry backing**

FRANKFORT — A bill to curb underage vaping, which opponents say will hurt small businesses and encourage a “monopoly,” got in under the wire Thursday night, winning approval in the final hours before lawmakers broke until mid-April.

Changes to House Bill 11 made earlier in the day by the Senate Judiciary Committee — including lessening the proposed penalties for selling vaping products to those under 21 — disappointed some advocates for children who had pushed for stronger compliance checks. The bill, which would take effect next year, limits vaping products that can be sold in Kentucky to those that have approval from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration, have applied for FDA approval or are challenging...

### **Ohio's highest court will decide if pharmacies distributing opioids created a public nuisance**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Statehouse News Bureau) — The Ohio Supreme Court will decide in the near future whether big chain pharmacies created a public nuisance—contributing to the opioid crisis through how they sell legal prescription drugs—and can be sued and held liable on that claim. The question of whether state law permits this particular public nuisance claim stems from a lawsuit filed by Trumbull and Lake counties over the opioid epidemic. It is one of thousands of similar lawsuits against drugmakers, distributors and retailers, arguing that their processes are partly to blame for soaring addiction and overdoses nationwide. A federal trial court in November 2021 sided with the counties, ordering the...

### **Going for broke: Gambling addiction isn't a long shot as sufferers seek help**

The dice has been thrown, and the odds of developing a gambling addiction in Ohio have increased. The rate for problem gambling in Ohio has tripled since 2012, reported Ohio for Responsible Gambling following a recent survey. “It has exploded, said Steven Kapela, senior director of outpatient and recovery support services at the Zepf Center in Toledo. “You can almost buy Keno tickets at McDonald's.” Mr. Kapela said gambling addiction is rising with the ease of access to all manner of gambling games. With the legalization of sports betting in Ohio in 2022, there are more entryways for placing an easy bet. As a result, many are overextending themselves and know they need help. Calls to Ohio's...

## **National News**

### **Starting Treatment at Discharge for Alcohol-Related Hospital Stays Shows Benefits**

Starting medication for alcohol use disorder (MAUD) at hospital discharge reduced readmission risk, a cohort study suggested. Of nearly 10,000 alcohol-related hospitalizations of Medicare beneficiaries, only 2% (192) involved initiation of MAUD at the time of discharge, Eden Bernstein, MD, of Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and colleagues found. In this small number, MAUD initiation at discharge was linked with a 42% decreased incidence of returning to the hospital within 30 days (incident rate ratio [IRR] 0.58, 95% CI 0.45-0.76, the researchers reported in JAMA Network Open. The absolute risk difference...

### **Telehealth May Help People Stick With Alcoholism Treatment**

MONDAY, April 1, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- Telehealth might be a more effective way of treating alcoholism than in-person therapy sessions, a new study reports. Alcoholics who receive treatment through telehealth were more likely to engage in more therapy visits and stick to anti-alcohol medication longer than those who venture out for alcohol use disorder therapy, researchers found. These results are "particularly important in the current context, as the United States debates whether to sustain or revoke pandemic-era policies that decreased barriers to telehealth," concluded the research team led by...

### **Mouse Study Finds Brain Target to Block Alcohol Cravings**

MONDAY, April 1, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- For folks who have battled alcohol dependency for years, any treatment that could curb or block alcohol cravings would be a huge advance. Now, research in mice is giving a glimmer of hope that just such a therapy might be possible. A compound -- so far dubbed LY2444296 -- appears to block a key brain cell receptor called the kappa opioid receptor (KOP), a team at the Scripps Research Institute in California reports. "Compounds designed to selectively block the KOP are very promising because this receptor is involved in a lot of mental illnesses, such as anxiety and..."

### **Even moderate alcohol usage during pregnancy linked to birth abnormalities**

In a new paper published in the journal Alcohol Clinical & Experimental Research, a team led by Ludmila Bakhireva, MD, PhD, MPH, professor and assistant dean for Clinical and Translational Research in the UNM College of Pharmacy, also reported some sex-related differences in the effects of drinking during pregnancy on the developing baby. "In exploratory analyses, the effect on gestational age was more pronounced in male infants, and for birth length it actually was stronger in females," Bakhireva said. She cautioned that these effects should be interpreted with caution because of the study's limited..."

### **Insomnia symptoms may predict subsequent drinking in adults**

People with symptoms of insomnia may be likely to increase their drinking over time, according to a study published in Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research. In the study of adult drinkers, people who had worse insomnia symptoms at the outset of the study tended to increase the amount they drank and the number of times they binge drank during the subsequent year. The researchers found that, even at subclinical levels, insomnia symptoms were a significant predictor of future drinking in adults, suggesting that insomnia symptoms should be addressed to help reduce the risk of problem drinking. Researchers..."

### **Reducing late-night alcohol sales curbed all violent crimes by 23% annually in a Baltimore neighborhood: Study**

Simply reducing the hours during which alcohol may be purchased can significantly reduce violent crime, according to a new study led by Boston University School of

Public Health (BUSPH) and the Alcohol Research Group of Emeryville, Calif. The findings were published in JAMA Internal Medicine on Monday, April 1. Substantial research has linked alcohol sales at liquor stores and other establishments to increased neighborhood crime, but this is the first study to look at the impact of changing the hours of sale in a low-income neighborhood on crime in that neighborhood. The study found that shortening overnight...

### **Sports Gambling, Binge Drinking a Dangerous Duo for Health**

WEDNESDAY, April 3, 2024 (HealthDay News) -- People who gamble on sports are more likely to be binge drinkers as well, a new report finds. Both women and men who bet on sports were at least twice as likely to binge drink compared to non-gamblers, results showed. Further, the odds of binge drinking increased with the frequency of gambling. "With past research showing that sports gamblers are more likely to report symptoms of alcohol use disorder, our results suggest that individuals who wager on sports use alcohol in particularly risky ways," the research team said in an American Psychiatric Association news...

### **More women are drinking themselves sick: The Biden administration is concerned**

When Karla Adkins looked in the rear-view mirror of her car one morning nearly 10 years ago, she noticed the whites of her eyes had turned yellow. She was 36 at the time and working as a physician liaison for a hospital system on the South Carolina coast, where she helped build relationships among doctors. Privately, she had struggled with heavy drinking since her early 20s, long believing that alcohol helped calm her anxieties. She understood that the yellowing of her eyes was evidence of jaundice. Even so, the prospect of being diagnosed with alcohol-related liver disease wasn't her first concern. "Honestly, the No. 1 fear for..."

### **Biden faces menthol ban lawsuit after missing deadline**

The White House has missed its deadline to publish a rule banning menthol cigarettes, raising ire among public health advocates that the policy will be indefinitely delayed by election year politics. In an effort to force the administration to act, three anti-tobacco public health groups on Tuesday sued the Food and Drug Administration and its parent agency, the Department of Health and Human Services. "Because of Defendants' inaction, tobacco companies have continued to use menthol cigarettes to target youth, women, and the Black community — all to the detriment of public health," the groups said in...

### **Study finds e-cigarette users now more likely to quit traditional cigarettes**

A new paper in Nicotine & Tobacco Research finds that smokers who switch to electronic cigarettes are now more likely to stop smoking regular cigarettes. In the past, smokers who began using electronic cigarettes mostly continued smoking. The paper is titled, "Divergence in cigarette discontinuation rates by use of electronic nicotine delivery systems (ENDS): Longitudinal findings from the U.S."

PATH Study Waves 1-6." Electronic nicotine delivery systems first emerged on the U.S. market in 2007. The first e-cigarettes resembled conventional cigarettes (in appearance) and used fixed low-voltage...

### **Study suggests lung cancer does not decrease in line with reduced smoking**

Despite the fact that the number of people who smoke has decreased very sharply in Sweden, the number of cases of lung cancer in the population is not decreasing as much as expected. Among women, lung cancer has, in fact, increased. This is shown in a new study published in European Journal of Public Health from Umeå University, Sweden. The study means that the view of how long smoking affects health may change. "Smoking is undoubtedly the most important risk factor for lung cancer. It is therefore surprising that the decline in smoking is not yet more visible in the statistics. More research is needed to find out..."

### **Study links e-cigarette use with higher risk of heart failure**

People who use e-cigarettes are significantly more likely to develop heart failure compared with those who have never used them, according to one of the largest prospective studies to date investigating possible links between vaping and heart failure. The findings are being presented at the American College of Cardiology's Annual Scientific Session. Heart failure is a condition affecting more than 6 million U.S. adults in which the heart becomes too stiff or too weak to pump blood as effectively as it should. It can often lead to debilitating symptoms and frequent hospitalizations as people age. Electronic nicotine products...

### **In people with opioid use disorder, telemedicine for HCV was more than twice as successful as off-site referral**

People with opioid use disorder who have hepatitis C virus (HCV) were twice as likely to be successfully treated and cured from HCV if they received facilitated telemedicine treatment at their opioid treatment program (OTPs) than if they were referred off-site to another provider. Those are the findings published today by a University at Buffalo team of researchers in the Journal of the American Medical Association (JAMA). The study is one of only a few randomized controlled trials that have been conducted to determine the effectiveness of using telemedicine to improve health care access for vulnerable...

### **Track Opioid Settlement Payouts — To the Cent — In Your Community**

State and local governments are receiving billions of dollars in settlements from companies that made, sold, or distributed prescription painkillers and were accused of fueling the opioid crisis. More than a dozen companies will pay the money over nearly two decades. As of late February 2024, more than \$4.3 billion had landed in government coffers. KFF Health News has been tracking how that money is used — or misused — nationwide. But determining how much of that windfall arrived in a specific county or city — and how much will follow in the future — can be challenging. Most localities are not required to make the...

### **Oregon governor signs sweeping drug addiction proposal into law**

Gov. Tina Kotek on Monday signed into law the sweeping measure the Oregon Legislature passed to combat the state's fentanyl drug addiction and overdose crisis. Kotek previously had said she would sign House Bill 4002, which was a centerpiece proposal of the short session. The law puts in place a new misdemeanor penalty for possession of small amounts of hard drugs, with opportunities for defendants to avoid jail if they enroll in programs that aid in their recovery and potential treatment. In a letter to legislative leaders, Kotek said the state needs to have a carefully coordinated implementation to work as...

### **In Pennsylvania, she wants to hand out new syringes to save lives. But is it legal?**

Kim Botteicher hardly thinks of herself as a criminal. On the main floor of a former Catholic church in Bolivar, Pennsylvania, Botteicher runs a flower shop and cafe. In the church's basement, she also operates a nonprofit focused on helping people caught up in the ongoing drug epidemic get back on their feet. Botteicher founded the nonprofit, FAVOR ~ Western PA, in this rural pocket of the Allegheny Mountains, east of Pittsburgh. For each of the past several years, the nonprofit's home county of Westmoreland has seen more than 100 drug overdose deaths, the majority involving fentanyl. Thousands more in the...

### **A paramedic was skeptical about this treatment for stopping repeat opioid overdoses. Then he saw it help**

Fire Capt. Jesse Blaire steered his SUV through the mobile home park until he spotted the little beige house with white trim and radioed to let dispatchers know he'd arrived. There, Shawnice Slaughter waited on the steps, wiping sleep from her eyes. "Good morning, Shawnice," Blaire said. "How are you feeling today?" "I've been good, I've been good," Slaughter said. "Much better." Three days earlier, Blaire—a paramedic who leads the fire department's emergency medical team—met Slaughter at a nearby hospital. She had overdosed on opioids. It took four vials of an overdose reversal medication...

### **Team moves forward in developing a vaccine for the 'zombie drug' xylazine**

Xylazine is an FDA-approved sedative and pain reliever for use in animals, but it has severe adverse effects when used in humans. It is now illicitly being added to opioids, like fentanyl and heroin, as well as cocaine—leading to a sharp rise in overdose deaths. Now, Scripps Research chemical biologists have developed a vaccine to block the effects of xylazine's toxicity. The vaccine works by training the immune system to attack the drug. This work is described in a paper published in *Chemical Communications*. "We demonstrated that a vaccine can reverse the symptoms of a xylazine overdose in rodents," says...

## **Massachusetts population survey shows no increase in problem gambling following introduction of casinos**

The prevalence of problem and at-risk gambling has not significantly changed since casinos were introduced in Massachusetts beginning in 2015, according to the first statewide population survey that compares gambling behavior and attitudes before and after the opening of three casinos in the commonwealth. That key finding, from the groundbreaking Social and Economic Impacts of Gambling in Massachusetts (SEIGMA) research team at the University of Massachusetts Amherst, does not come as a surprise to longtime gambling behavior expert Rachel Volberg, SEIGMA's principal investigator, even...

## **Funding Opportunities**



[RFA-AI-24-018](#)

[Interaction between ARVs and Hormones in HIV and Coinfections \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-DA-24-020](#)

[Notice of NIDA Participation in RFA-OD-24-014, "Botanical Dietary Supplements Translational Research Teams \(RM1 Clinical Trial Required\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-24-013](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\) regarding the Availability of Urgent Competitive Revisions for Coordinating Center Infrastructure to Support Research on Opioid Overdose and HIV Risk in the Context of Justice Systems](#)

### **Other Funding Opportunities:**

#### **PCORI Funding Announcements**

LOIs are due on June 4, 2024

Several Patient-Centered Outcomes Research Institute (PCORI) Funding Announcements focused on patient-centered comparative clinical effectiveness research are set to open May 7. Explore the PFA preannouncements which cover a range of topics and health conditions.

#### **ARPA-H Sprint for Women's Health initiative**

Deadline: April 15, 2024, 12:00 p.m. ET

The Advanced Research Projects Agency for Health (ARPA-H) Sprint for Women's Health aims to address critical unmet challenges in women's health across all

demographics, geographies, and socioeconomic statuses, championing transformative innovations and tackling health conditions that uniquely or disproportionately affect women from every walk of life. The ARPA-H Sprint for Women's Health's new request for solutions (RFS) funding opportunity (Solicitation # ARPA-H-ICHUB-24-101) will use two funding tracks to foster transformative research and development efforts: one for early-stage research, or "Spark" solutions, and the other for later-stage development, or "Launchpad" solutions. The Spark and Launchpad tracks are available for all [six women's health topics](#). General information on ARPA-H can be found at <https://arpa-h.gov/>.

ARPA-H Sprint for Women's Health Highlights:

- \$3 million for 2 years (direct + indirect) ... funding by September 2024.
- Two stage submission... first is 3-page LOI due April 15th, followed by a "pitch" if chosen.
- While not required, there seems to be an emphasis on collaborative, interdisciplinary teams.
- Focus on "big, transformative ideas" that will "revolutionize health care delivery for women".

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