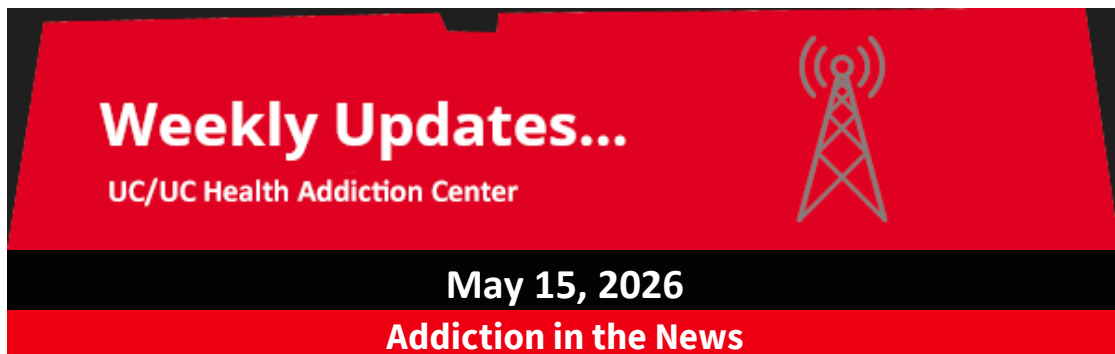


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email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

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



### **UC/ Regional News**

#### **Proposed Hamilton rules target where marijuana, vape shops can operate**

HAMILTON, Ohio — Hamilton City Council will soon consider proposed changes to the city's zoning laws involving marijuana, cannabis, tobacco, nicotine and vape retailers. The changes, which Hamilton's Planning Commission recently voted to recommend to Hamilton City Council for its approval, are aimed at creating consistent rules for new marijuana-related businesses and updating existing regulations for similar products based on public safety concerns, according to staff comments on the proposed changes. In December 2023, Hamilton approved a temporary ban on all marijuana-related activities, including...

#### **Louisville recovery program helps mothers stay with children while battling addiction**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — A woman stepped up to raise a baby whose mother died of a drug overdose. Later, she found herself fighting the same battle and came to Louisville for a kind of help only offered in one place in Kentucky. Despite her infectious laugh, life has not been easy for 2-year-old Milani. Her "Mimi," Tanith Wilson, met Milani's mother through her job as vice president at an addiction treatment program in central Kentucky. "She knew she was not in a place to provide for her or care for her," Wilson said. Wilson understood that struggle herself. Twenty years earlier, she battled addiction. But she got sober and...

## **‘I hope it’s not a slush fund’: Communities struggle to spend opioid settlement funds**

INDIANAPOLIS — Alisha Ladyga was 16 when she first tried and became addicted to OxyContin in the early 2000s, years before the opioid crisis swept the nation. During the peak of the epidemic in her hometown of Huntington, Indiana, she said nearly everyone she knew was using drugs. “People were overdosing left and right,” Ladyga said. “Most of the people that I had grew up with have either passed away from opiates during that time, from overdose, or they're in prison.” Ladyga, 39, has been in recovery for 11 years. She began the process at 26, when she was given a 25-year prison sentence with 18 years to serve...

## **National News**

### **GLP-1 plus therapy can reduce heavy drinking**

Alcohol use disorder (AUD) is a medical condition marked by the inability to stop or control alcohol use. Behavioral health treatments like cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) can help treat AUD. But only three medications have been approved for AUD despite decades of research. Newer and more effective treatments are needed. GLP-1 receptor agonists (GLP-1s) are a class of drugs approved for treating diabetes and obesity. These drugs act on brain pathways involved in appetite regulation and reward. This suggests that they may also help control alcohol consumption. Some GLP-1s have shown promise for reducing alcohol...

### **Alcohol is wreaking havoc on U.S. public health. American society looks the other way**

It is a drug that kills nearly 500 Americans every day, and causes more deaths in a typical year than every infectious disease combined. It is manufactured abroad and domestically, then sold by powerful multinational organizations with a vast network of distributors. Its promoters can appear indifferent to its addictive and ruinous properties. For decades — for centuries, really — it has destroyed lives, torn apart families, stunted the economy, and caused millions of deaths. Yet alcohol, by far the most popular and most harmful mind-altering substance in the U.S., is not seen as a public health emergency. Alcohol is...

### **New review confirms alcohol causes dozens of health harms, some reversible**

A new review published in the journal *Addiction* confirms drinking causes substantial harm to health. Some of those harms may be reversible if the person reduces or stops drinking. Over 60 diseases and injuries are 100% attributable to alcohol consumption: The World Health Organization's current (11th) edition of the International Classification of Diseases lists over 60 diseases and injuries that are 100% attributable to alcohol, including alcoholic cardiomyopathy (heart disease), alcoholic liver diseases such as cirrhosis, and fetal alcohol syndrome. Most of these are a result of heavy drinking. Several infectious diseases are...

### **Magnetic brain stimulation cuts alcohol cravings in 200-person addiction trial**

A storyteller with a passion for popular education. Head of one of Linköping University's strongest research environments. And a physician. Markus Heilig researches the biology of the brain in addiction, and always considers the whole person. In recent years, Markus Heilig, professor of psychiatry, has devoted a lot of energy to understanding how our lives are shaped by the stories we create to understand them. "Half of my patients have life stories that, even if you are quite hardened, get to you and stay with you even after work." It has long been thought that a difficult upbringing involving traumatic experiences can in itself...

### **Teen depression linked with higher substance use rates**

Nearly 1 in 5 U.S. adolescents experienced depression between 2021 and 2023, and those teens were significantly more likely to use substances such as alcohol, marijuana and opioids, according to a new national study. Andrew Yockey, a University of Mississippi assistant professor of public health, and graduate student Aminul Apu found that adolescents struggling with depression are more likely to use substances. Their study, published in the Journal of Medicine, Surgery and Public Health, underscores the need to treat mental health and substance use together, rather than as separate issues. "Research shows that..."

### **Cannabis and tobacco co-use increases psychosis chances in high-risk cohorts, study shows**

A new multisite study published in Nature Mental Health found that using cannabis and tobacco together increases the risk of developing psychotic disorders like schizophrenia among those considered high risk. Researchers led by Heather Ward, MD, assistant professor of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences and director of Neuromodulation Research at Vanderbilt Health, analyzed data from more than 1,000 participants in the North American Prodrome Longitudinal Study, which tracks individuals at "clinical high risk" for psychosis. These individuals often experience mild or early symptoms but have not yet developed...

### **Rewiring the urge to smoke: How targeted brain stimulation may help people to quit**

For many people who smoke, quitting is not just a matter of willpower. It is a tug-of-war in the brain—between the pull of reward and the ability to resist. A study published in the Journal of Psychiatric Research suggests that shifting that balance may be possible. Using a noninvasive brain stimulation technique called repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation, or rTMS, researchers at MUSC Hollings Cancer Center found that stimulating a specific brain region that regulates self-control significantly reduced how much people smoked. Cigarette smoking remains one of the leading causes of preventable death, yet quitting is...

### **Rural–urban divide: Neighborhood conditions shape teen smoking**

A new University of Michigan study highlights a distinct rural–urban gap in adolescent health. It reports that the link between neighborhood disadvantage and cigarette use appears only in rural areas. Teens in poor rural neighborhoods are more likely to smoke cigarettes than their peers in less disadvantaged rural areas. These results suggest that urban areas may offer different social influences. "In rural areas, adults smoke at higher rates and quit at lower rates," said Joy Jang, assistant research scientist at U-M's Institute for Social Research. "That environment may lower the perceived risk of smoking for adolescents..."

### **Addiction experts develop best practices for treating opioid use disorder in the hospital**

A new study published in JAMA Network Open on May 7, 2026, engaged 42 national experts in hospital-based addiction treatment in a consensus-building process to develop best practices for hospital-initiated medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD). Hospitalization offers a critical opportunity for individuals with opioid use disorder (OUD) to begin treatment with evidence-based medications, such as buprenorphine and methadone. However, clinicians have faced challenges initiating treatment with these medications in patients who are using fentanyl and other high-potency synthetic opioids (HPSOs). "Fentanyl and other..."

### **Overdose Deaths Fell Again in 2025, but Some Worry About Policy, Drug Supply Changes**

About 70,000 Americans died of drug overdoses last year -- about 14% fewer than the previous year, according to preliminary government data. It was the third straight annual drop, making it the longest decline in decades, according to federal data released Wednesday. The 2025 total is about the same as the tally in 2019, before the COVID-19 pandemic. Declines were seen across a number of drug types, including fentanyl, cocaine, and methamphetamine. Overdose deaths fell in the vast majority of states, although seven saw at least slight increases, including jumps of 10% or more in Arizona, Colorado...

### **ONDCP releases 2026 National Drug Control Strategy**

The Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) released the 2026 National Drug Control Strategy. The main point: The Strategy has a major focus on supply-side efforts, but it also includes several laudable public health goals and strategies, including expanding access to treatment, preventing substance use and addiction among youth, and supporting recovery. But these messages are at odds with some of the administration's actions. The details: Supply-side efforts: The Strategy places heavy emphasis on law enforcement efforts to reduce the supply of illicit drugs, including by expanding detection capacity using AI...

### **What addiction medicine can teach us about depending on AI**

I'm used to hearing from people who disagree with me about addiction. I wasn't expecting to hear from them about artificial intelligence. I host a podcast about addiction, where disagreement is part of the job. When I interview someone in recovery, listeners tell me I was too sympathetic to 12-step programs — or not sympathetic enough. When we discuss medications, some argue they save lives; others insist recovery should be “drug-free.” But the reaction to a recent episode about artificial intelligence was different. I had interviewed Tim Requarth, a neuroscientist at New York University who studies how AI affects cognition...

### **Using AI in addiction medicine could be particularly risky**

Recently, I saw one version of the AI-enabled future of medicine. It was compelling in its simplicity, thrilling in its potential as a force multiplier, and all wrong. The product misunderstood the needs of the patient, the role of the doctor, and the nuanced dance between them. The AI was technically adept, perhaps even marvelous. But it failed at an essential element of a physician's job: the art of medicine. What troubled me most was the possibility that patients might mistake simulated empathy for genuine human connection. For me, the art of medicine requires the ability to connect authentically with my...

### **Not just an energy drink: National study finds kratom use is rising**

A national study of kratom use in the U.S. found rising popularity among young adults, and it is linked to addiction and mental health issues, according to new research from the University of Michigan and Texas State University. This is the first known national study to examine the use patterns of kratom and its association with mental health and addiction, researchers say. Kratom is a plant from southeast Asia that's sold online and in some stores in powders, liquid shots, pills and teas. Opponents of kratom argue that it is addictive and widely available to children, while proponents say it is a safe, natural alternative for managing...

### **Why weight gain fears matter in recovery: 10-week program helps women build healthier habits**

A recent study in the Journal of Nutrition Education and Behavior examined the impact of the Healthy Steps to Freedom (HSF-10) program on nutrition, body image, and health-related behaviors among 607 women undergoing treatment for substance use. Findings demonstrated that participation in the 10-week intervention program was associated with significant improvements in nutrition behaviors, physical activity, and intuitive eating, alongside reductions in body dissatisfaction, thin-ideal internalization, and disordered eating behaviors. Participants reported healthier eating habits and increased physical activity...

### **Why Americans die sooner: Disease and drugs widen US mortality gap**

Between 1999 and 2022, the US had substantially higher death rates than other wealthy nations, largely due to cardiovascular disease, metabolic diseases

(including diabetes), Alzheimer's disease and related dementias, and drug and alcohol complications. Policies are needed to address the underlying health, social, and economic conditions that increase Americans' risk of developing these diseases. Despite having similar access to advanced medical technology, the United States has substantially higher death rates than other high-income countries (HICs), and the gap has been growing for decades. Cardiovascular...

### **‘Highly problematic for a thousand reasons’: NIH employees criticize Trump-era requirement to scrutinize grants with words related to diversity**

As the Trump administration continues its effort to root out federal funding for diversity initiatives, the National Institutes of Health has modified its grant review process to identify research that contains words associated with race or gender, which has held up some grant disbursements and forced scientists to rewrite proposals. “I feel that this kind of censorship is making the path forward to support narrower and narrower research only to include, for example, white, straight, cisgender men,” said a program director at one of NIH’s institutes. “Any other population is being scrutinized, which is highly, highly, highly problematic...”

## **Funding Opportunities**



### **Other Funding Opportunity:**

#### **Reducing Problem Gambling Harm on College Campuses**

Applications Due: June 5 by 3:00pm (submitted to [OCFRGRANTS@dbh.ohio.gov](mailto:OCFRGRANTS@dbh.ohio.gov))

Tara H. Scarborough, Psy.D., MHSA, is seeking a collaborator with expertise in gambling research. Interested individuals are encouraged to contact her at [scarboth@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:scarboth@ucmail.uc.edu) to discuss potential collaboration on an application.

The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, Office of Community and Family Resiliency, is pleased to announce a [new funding opportunity](#) to support a statewide initiative to reduce problem gambling harm among college students. This project will fund one Institution of Higher Education (IHE) that will partner with other colleges and universities and community organizations to expand prevention, early intervention, and campus capacity to address gambling-related risk, particularly among young adults and student athletes. Questions must be submitted electronically to [OCFRGRANTS@dbh.ohio.gov](mailto:OCFRGRANTS@dbh.ohio.gov) by May 29. Responses to frequently asked questions will be posted to the DBH Funding Opportunities web page.

© [2026 UC/UC Health Addiction Center]

 University of  
CINCINNATI  Health.

**ADDICTION  
CENTER**

