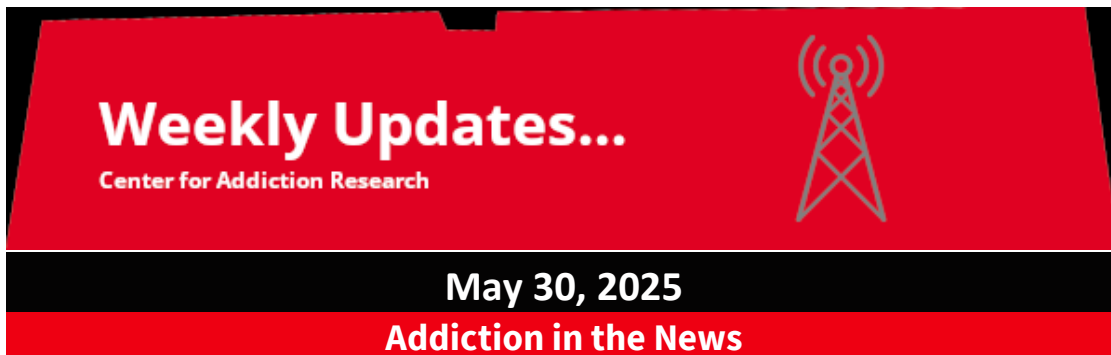


UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 5.30.2025

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 First 2025 Summer Speaker Series Event**

Back by popular demand, the Center for Addiction Research will hold its first virtual Summer Speaker Series event, Wednesday, June 11 at 12pm on “Forming an Interprofessional Workforce to Address Opioid Use Disorder Among At-Risk Youth” with presenter, **CAR member, Dr. Michael D. Brubaker**. All presentations will be held virtually and are free and open to the public. [\(PDF event flyer attached\)](#)

**[>> Register for any of the presentations](#)**

### **I'm a police chief. Law enforcement can't tackle Ohio's addiction crisis alone. | Opinion**

I am the chief of the Newtown Police Department and a Marine Corps veteran. I dedicated my career to serving the public because I believed I could make a difference in the lives of others. My belief was shattered when an entire family, a whole generation — a mother and all three of her sons — died one by one from addiction. This heartbreaking experience opened my eyes to the reality that, despite all the resources available to law enforcement, we simply cannot tackle these challenges alone. That’s why the Department of Justice’s recent decision to eliminate over \$88 million in addiction and mental health services recently — and 82 grants worth over \$138 million for victims’ services — deeply alarms me. These...

### **The debate over spending opioid settlement funds on Ohio police**

Kathryn Whittington decided to run for a seat on Northeast Ohio’s Ashtabula County Commission after an incident in 2013, when her home was burglarized by

people in active drug addiction. “I went around to the jewelry store and to the insurance company getting these receipts for everything that was taken and I found that I wasn't unique to this situation,” she said. “I was finding that many people out there working were affected by this. That led me down the path to: we need to get our community healthy.” Whittington helped establish the Crime Enforcement Agency of Ashtabula County in 2019, a task force that used raids to take illegal drugs off the street and lock up drug traffickers. It partnered with a...

### **Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department issues warning after spike in overdoses**

PARKERSBURG — The Mid-Ohio Valley Health Department issued an overdose alert for Wood County on Tuesday. “In the past 24 hours, four suspected overdoses have been reported in Wood County, according to law enforcement and EMS via ODMAP (Overdose Detection Mapping Application Program),” the health department’s post on its Facebook page said Tuesday. “Substances involved include heroin, fentanyl, prescription drugs and one unknown. “We urge anyone using illicit substances to use extreme caution.” Malcolm Lanham, Community Health and Threat Preparedness Director for the MOVHD, said they issue these alerts as an information sharing effort to let the community know there is something...

### **We have money to fight Kentucky's opioid crisis. Let's not waste it. | Opinion**

For decades, Kentucky has been on the front lines of the opioid crisis, suffering deeply as addiction, overdose and despair ripped through our communities. But today, for the first time in a generation, we have the tools — and the funding — to finally fight back. Thanks to landmark settlements with pharmaceutical manufacturers and distributors, states and municipalities across the country will receive over \$50 billion in opioid abatement funding over the next 18 years. Kentucky alone is poised to receive more than \$800 million. These funds represent an unprecedented opportunity to reverse the damage done and build a recovery system that works — not only for those battling substance use disorder (SUD)...

## **National News**

### **Alcohol-related cancer deaths in the US nearly double over 30 years**

Alcohol-fueled cancer deaths nearly doubled in the United States during the past three decades, with cases among men driving this surge, a new study says. Between 1990 and 2021, deaths from alcohol-related cancers leaped from just under 12,000 deaths per year to just over 23,000, researchers report at a meeting of the American Society of Clinical Oncology in Chicago. Men accounted for about 70% of the alcohol-related cancer deaths in 2021, with more than 16,500 such deaths, results show. "That's a big and concerning rise," said lead researcher Dr. Chinmay Jani, a hematology and oncology fellow at the University of...

### **Study finds regular cannabis use, smoked or eaten, harms cardiovascular health**

A new study led by UC San Francisco researchers finds that chronic cannabis use—whether it's smoked or consumed in edible form—is associated with significant cardiovascular risks. The report, published May 28 in *JAMA Cardiology*, found that people who regularly used marijuana in either form had reduced blood vessel function that was comparable to tobacco smokers. Vascular function in those who used cannabis by either means was reduced roughly by half compared to those who did not use it. Decreased vascular function is associated with a greater risk of heart attack, hypertension, and other cardiovascular conditions. The...

### **Harmful metals in ultrasonic cigarettes may pose significant health risks**

A study by scientists at the University of California, Riverside shows that ultrasonic cigarettes, or u-cigarettes, marketed as a less harmful alternative to traditional e-cigarettes, may pose significant health risks due to the presence of harmful metals in their liquids and aerosols. U-cigarettes have a "sonicator" that vibrates a liquid solution, usually containing nicotine, flavorings, and propylene glycol or vegetable glycerin, to produce microscopic droplets (aerosol). The technology uses high-frequency ultrasonic vibrations instead of heating coils used in traditional electronic cigarettes, or e-cigarettes. The study, published in...

### **Lack of gender lens in tobacco control research could stymie efforts to help smokers quit, researchers say**

Ahead of World No Tobacco Day on May 31, York University researchers with Global Strategy Lab (GSL) have published a paper that finds a lack of gender analysis in tobacco control research. The researchers say this means that we could be missing out on important strategies accounting for gendered behaviors that could help smokers quit. The paper, published today in *BMJ Tobacco Control*, is the first in a series of papers coming out of York University and GSL on gender and smoking. "In the tobacco control research community, we're not looking at gender, even though we all know that gender is a hugely important..."

### **With aura readings and a Lauryn Hill concert, Philip Morris rolls out a new tobacco product in the U.S.**

Strolling past the sleek, blue-lit pop-up stores and lounges that began peppering the city of Austin, Texas, this spring, passersby might pause to wonder about what trendy new tech product goes by the name of "IQOS." Perhaps a smartwatch or a set of noise-canceling wireless earbuds? The chicly futuristic branding of IQOS, a heated tobacco product owned by Philip Morris International, is one of several things worrying researchers and anti-tobacco advocates. The company is rolling out pilots of the device in Austin and Fort Lauderdale, peddling IQOS (pronounced "eye-koss") as "the next step in tobacco harm reduction." In...

## **For opioid addiction, treatment underdosing can lead to fentanyl overdosing: A physician explains**

Imagine a patient named Rosa tells you she wakes up night after night in a drenching sweat after having very realistic dreams of smoking fentanyl. The dreams seem crazy to her. Three months ago, newly pregnant, Rosa began visualizing being a good parent. She realized it was finally time to give up her self-destructive use of street fentanyl. With tremendous effort, she started treatment with buprenorphine for her opioid use disorder. As hoped, she was intensely relieved to be free from the distressing withdrawal symptoms—restless legs, anxiety, bone pain, nausea and chills—and from the guilt, shame and hardship of living...

## **Potent new opioid carries high risk of overdose**

A potent opioid detected in Canberra for the first time in September 2024 carries a high risk of overdose, warn chemists from the Australian National University (ANU) and drug checking service CanTEST. ANU expert Professor Malcolm McLeod, co-author of a new paper about the detection published in *Drug Testing and Analysis*, said the illicit drug belongs to a group of synthetic opioids known as nitazenes. "This is one of the most potent drugs of its class ever detected. It is 1,000 times stronger than morphine and 90 times stronger than fentanyl," he said. "This high level of potency significantly increases the risk of a fatal overdose." The...

## **Novel Non-Opioid Analgesic Shows Promise in Refractory Cancer Pain**

Use of the investigational non-opioid analgesic resiniferatoxin appeared to improve pain control in patients with advanced cancer who had intractable pain, though all patients experienced adverse events (AEs), according to an interim analysis of a first-in-human phase I trial. Among 19 patients with refractory cancer pain localized to the abdomen and/or lower extremities, a total of 213 treatment-emergent AEs were reported with a single intrathecal injection of resiniferatoxin, including 37 serious AEs in 14 patients, and at least one AE in all patients, reported Andrew J. Mannes, MD, of the NIH, and colleagues. As for efficacy...

## **Australia faces rising threats from synthetic opioids**

Reports of synthetic opioids contaminating Australia's drug supply highlight the concerning pace at which they are entering the country. The Australian Federal Police recently raised concerns after detecting nitazenes in counterfeit pharmaceutical products seized at Australian borders. Nitazenes are synthetic opioids that are similar to the drug fentanyl, which is a major contributor to overdose deaths in the United States. Some nitazene compounds can be up to 50 times more potent than fentanyl. Nitazenes have a much faster onset of action (within 2 minutes) than opioids like heroin, reducing the time available...

## **Half of youth-serving clinicians screen for substance use disorder at every well visit**

Just over half of youth-serving clinicians report that they routinely screen adolescents for substance-use disorders (SUDs) at every well visit, according to a study published online May 20 in JAMA Network Open. Kathleen Ragan-Burnett, M.S.P.H., from the National Center for Injury Prevention and Control at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention in Atlanta, and colleagues assessed youth-serving clinicians' screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment practices for SUDs among adolescents. The analysis included survey responses from 1,047 youth-serving clinicians. The researchers found that most clinicians (60.6%) ...

## **RFK Jr. threatens to bar government scientists from publishing in leading medical journals**

HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. threatened to stop government scientists from publishing their work in major medical journals on a podcast Tuesday as part of his escalating war on institutions he says are influenced by pharmaceutical companies. Speaking on the “Ultimate Human” podcast, Kennedy said the New England Journal of Medicine, the Journal of the American Medical Association and The Lancet, three of the most influential medical journals in the world, were “corrupt” and publish studies funded and approved by pharmaceutical companies. “Unless those journals change dramatically, we are going...

## **Scientists search for underlying psychological processes behind internet addiction**

What happens in the minds of people who use the internet addictively? Prof. Dr. Matthias Brand from the University of Duisburg-Essen and his team want to find out. Since 2020, the scientists have searched for underlying psychological and neurobiological processes. They are now publishing their initial findings on self-control functions in the American Journal of Psychiatry. The scientists write that people with addictive internet use take longer on average to block out distractions and make risky and impulsive decisions more often than people without addictive symptoms. The group with pathological use also makes more mistakes...

### **Funding Opportunities**



## **GRANTS & FUNDING**

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

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

## **UC Foundation Funding Opportunities**

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or [russecg@foundation.uc.edu](mailto:russecg@foundation.uc.edu) at **least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunities, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

### **AmfAR Funds Biomedical Studies with Promise to Accelerate HIV Cures**

**Deadline: June 18, 2025 (Synopses)**

AmfAR, The Foundation for AIDS Research, has issued a request for proposals for its Target Grants program aimed at finding a cure for HIV that will be useful to the 40 million people living with HIV (PLWH). Grants of up to \$480,000 total costs, including up to 20 percent indirect costs for up to two years, will be awarded. According to amfAR, persistent reservoirs of virus not cleared by antiretroviral therapy represent the main barrier to a cure, thus the foundation's seeks projects that focus on pushing the boundaries of biomedical research to achieve sustained HIV remission or complete viral eradication. Priority will be given to clinical or pre-clinical applications studying pragmatic and scalable interventions that can be implemented globally, including in the communities most affected by the epidemic. The proposed research must be conducted and validated either in vivo (in PLWH, non-human primates, or humanized mice), or ex vivo (in cells isolated from PLWH or infected animals). Interventions tested exclusively in cell lines or in primary cells from HIV-negative individuals will not be considered responsive to this RFP. Submissions that propose only describing the reservoir (i.e., without pre-clinical or clinical interventions) will not be forwarded for review, unless they provide new and critical insights that will meaningfully accelerate HIV cure strategies. Applicants should be able to describe the clinical or pre-clinical intervention they are working toward, articulate the current stage of development of the proposed approach, and in pre-clinical settings, describe the steps needed to progress to clinical testing. AmfAR is one of the world's leading nonprofit organizations dedicated to the support of AIDS research, HIV prevention, treatment education, and advocacy.

### **Greenwall Foundation Launches Bioethics Grants for Real World Impact**

**Deadline: June 23, 2025**

The Greenwall Foundation invites letters of intent for its Making a Difference in Real-World Bioethics Dilemmas grants program. The Foundation's Making a Difference Grants provide up to \$250,000. Projects with smaller budgets and short timelines will be given priority. The program supports innovative bioethics research that addresses urgent or unresolved ethical challenges arising in clinical care, biomedical research, and public health practice or policy. The Foundation seeks proposals that will have real-world impact by helping to resolve practical bioethical issues through empirical, conceptual, or normative approaches. The Foundation is especially interested in addressing trust in science and medicine, bias and discrimination in healthcare, ethical issues arising from public health crises (e.g., climate change, the opioid epidemic, emerging diseases), healthcare access and

costs, and recent shifts in the federal health policy landscape. Proposals should demonstrate meaningful stakeholder engagement and the capacity for impact beyond academic circles. Applicants are encouraged to form teams that combine bioethics expertise with on-the-ground experience in clinical care, research, or public service. The Foundation places strong emphasis on dissemination and implementation plans. Proposals should outline strategies for sharing results not only through academic journals, but also with community members, institutional leaders, and policymakers who can influence clinical or research practice. The Foundation will not fund projects where bioethics is not the central focus. Principal investigators must hold a doctoral-level degree (PhD, JD, MD, or equivalent). All funded institutions must have U.S. tax-exempt status.

## CAR Member New Publications

### **The effectiveness of the communities that HEAL intervention on reducing non-fatal opioid overdoses: A prespecified secondary analysis of a waitlist cluster control randomized controlled trial**

Louisa Gilbert, Rouba Chahine, Redonna Chandler, Daniel J. Feaster, Erin Kim, Arnie Aldridge, Sarah Bagley, Peter Balvanz, Soledad Fernandez, Peter Rock, Rachel A. Vickers-Smith, Jennifer Villani, Tracy Battaglia, Jennifer Brown, Heather Bush, Rachel P. Chase, Thomas Collins, Lauren D'Costa, Carolyn Damato-MacPherson, James L. David, Jolene Defiore-Hyrmer, Patricia R. Freeman, LaShawn Glasgow, Lindsey R. Hammerslag, Juanita Hotchkiss, Timothy Hunt, Shazia Hussain, Vivian Kamanu, Charlie Knott, Hannah K. Knudsen, Marc LaRochelle, Andrew Laudate, Michael Lyons, Jason McMullan, Julie Nakayima, Bruce R. Schackman, Svetla Slavova, Sylvia Tan, Nathan Vandergrift, Scott T. Walters, Philip M. Westgate, Elwin Wu, April M. Young, Gary A. Zarkin, Bridget Freisthler, Emmanuel Oga, Jeffrey H. Samet, Sharon L. Walsh, John Winhusen, Rebecca Jackson, Nabila El-Bassel

*International Journal of Drug Policy*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugpo.2025.104798>

### **ABSTRACT**

**Introduction:** Along with a surge of opioid overdose deaths in the United States, the rates of nonfatal opioid overdose (NFOO) emergency department (ED) visits and hospitalizations have been sharply increasing.

**Methods:** In the HEALing Communities Study (HCS), we conducted a pre-specified secondary analyses to evaluate the effectiveness of the Community that HEALS (CTH) intervention on reducing the count of NFOO ED visits and hospitalizations in a multi-site cluster randomized multi-site, two-arm, parallel, community-level, open, wait list-controlled trial study, Sixty-seven communities in Kentucky, Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio were randomized to the intervention (N = 34) or waitlist control condition (N = 33) stratified by state and balanced by urban/rural classification, fatal opioid overdose rate and population size of communities. We compared the rate of NFOO per 100,000 adults aged

≥18 years between intervention and control communities from July 1, 2021, to June 30, 2022. Rates were calculated in per 100,000 or per 100 adult population measured by inpatient and ED records for intervention community residents with an ICD-10-CM code for opioid poisoning.

**Results:** Compared to control communities, intervention communities had 15 % fewer NFOO per capita (aRR = 0.85; 95 % CI = [0.74,0.96]; p-value=0.013). Effect modifications by state, urban/rural status, sex, age, race and ethnicity were not significant.

**Discussion:** These findings suggest the intervention reduced NFOO ED visits and hospitalizations. The lack of effect modifications suggests that the intervention may be effective in a wide range of communities in the U.S. Further research is needed to identify the mechanisms through which the intervention reduces NFOO.

**Trial Registration:** ClinicalTrials.gov Identifier: NCT04111939

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