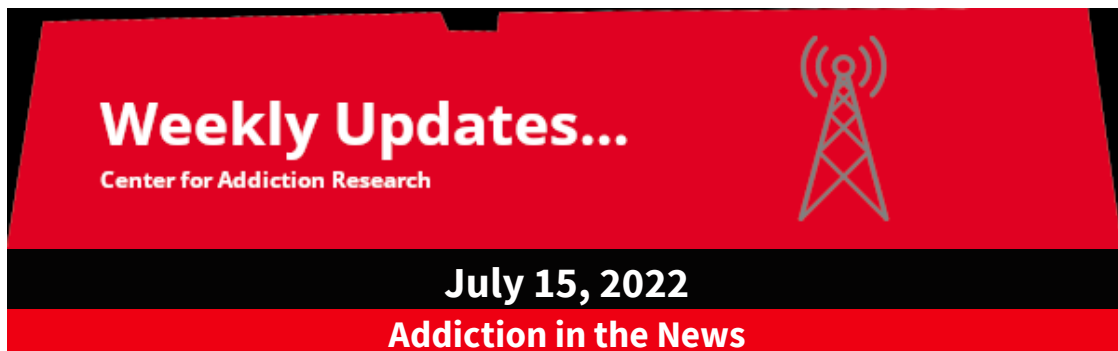


UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 7.15.2022

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 Upcoming Summer Speaker Series

Back by popular demand, the Center for Addiction Research will hold its second of three 2022 virtual Summer Speaker Series events, Wednesday, July 20 at 12pm on “Development of a Recombinant Humanized Anti-Cocaine Monoclonal Antibody”, with presenter, CAR member, and CAR Addiction treatment development and testing Core Leader, Dr. Andrew Norman”. The series is hosted by the Urban Health Pathway of Next Lives Here. **Featured CAR presenter in August will be Dr. LaTrice Montgomery.** (pdf invitation attached)

>> Register for any of the presentations

College of Medicine's Research Innovation/Pilot Grant Recipient

Congratulations to Jason T. Blackard, PhD, Professor, Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Digestive Diseases for being awarded a COM Research Innovation/Pilot Grant for the project below. **(CAR member, Dr. Blackard)**

Project Title: “Chemokine Antagonism During HCV and Opioid Use”

Project Abstract: Drug overdose deaths reached an all-time high in 2021. In Ohio, ~90% of all opioid overdose deaths are due to fentanyl. The opioid pandemic has led to a significant increase in hepatitis C virus (HCV) cases. Commonly misused substances often suppress immune responses and can directly stimulate viral replication.

Chemokines and chemokine receptors play an important role in liver disease. Researchers previously reported that blocking CCR5 limits HCV replication in hepatocytes and reduces hepatic fibrosis. As part of a NIDA R61/R33 to explore the role of the fentanyl in viral pathogenesis, researchers observed robust mu opioid receptor expression in multiple hepatocyte, lymphocyte, and macrophage cell lines, and that fentanyl increased HCV replication and altered chemokine-related genes. Understanding the interactions between opioids, HCV, and the chemokine system can facilitate the optimization of treatment options for patients with opioid use disorder and lead to the development of novel therapeutic strategies. Thus, researchers will investigate several novel approaches that antagonize chemokine-related genes in the liver to provide critical preliminary data for the submission of at least one new grant.

UK's HEALing Study Begins WAVE 2 Intervention.

The [Ashland \(KY\) Daily Independent](#) (7/7, Chapin, 38K) reports, "The University of Kentucky's \$87 million HEALing Communities Study (HCS) to address the opioid epidemic in Kentucky is expanding to more communities across the Commonwealth." The second wave of this study "was launched in Bourbon, Campbell, Carter, Greenup, Jefferson, Jessamine, Knox and Mason counties July 1. Through the HCS intervention, communities will implement new recovery, treatment and prevention strategies proven to reduce opioid overdose deaths."

Additional Source. [Spectrum News 1 Louisville \(KY\)](#) (7/7, Forcade) also reports.

Kentucky Woman Advocates For Harm Reduction Strategy To Fight Overdose Crisis.

The [Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#) (7/7, Watkins, 554K) reports on Jennifer Twyman, a Kentucky woman who "sought help for her struggles with 'chaotic substance use'" and "learned about medication-assisted treatment and tried Suboxone, which is FDA-approved and is used to treat opioid dependence." She said, "Suboxone allowed me to continue to work," but that "the stigma and judgment that surrounded me" were a challenge. Her experience "led her to embrace an overall strategy called harm reduction, which aims to lessen the negative impacts associated with drug use." Twyman "wants harm reduction to become a more integral part of the services Louisville and communities across Kentucky provide."

IU Awarded \$2M For Marijuana Research.

[Inside INdiana Business](#) (7/7, Mills) reports, "Two neuroscientists from Indiana University have received a \$2 million grant to explore what impact cannabis use by young teenagers could have later in life." This "research is prompted by the growing number of states legalizing marijuana." The grant is from "the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse with a goal of developing therapies to treat adverse effects in humans."

Taking steps toward drug use prevention

WARREN — From the bleachers, families cheered for their 4- to 14-year-old track and field event participants with pride at the 2022 Summer Track Meet sponsored by the Alliance for Substance Abuse Prevention. More than 230 kids registered for the meet, which included 800-meter to 1,600-meter runs, 5- to 200-meter dashes, discus, shot put and softball throws, and long and high jumps. Student volunteers from Warren G. Harding and McDonald...

'A wake-up call': Ohio State doctor explains new study on opioids and chronic pain

COLUMBUS, Ohio — A new study that is the first of its kind reveals a critical connection between opioid addiction and the condition of chronic pain. It's a connection that's called central sensitization. Central sensitization happens when there is abnormal pain processing in the brain and spinal cord. The condition causes people to have spinal cords that are highly efficient at sending pain signals to the brain. But the problem is that the brain is challenged...

Ohio to receive more than \$2M in funding towards drug prevention programs

U.S. Senator Rob Portman announced Monday that the White House National Drug Control Policy has awarded more than \$2 million in grant funding for drug-free community programs (DFC) throughout Ohio. Portman wrote the Drug-Free Communities Act in 1997, which supports community-oriented drug prevention programs. "The Drug-Free Communities program is a proven, evidence-based, and community-oriented program..."

Federal jury holds pharmacy chains CVS, Walgreens and Walmart responsible for role in opioid crisis

A federal jury in Cleveland on Tuesday found that three of the nation's largest pharmacy chains, CVS, Walgreens and Walmart, were liable for contributing to the opioid epidemic in two Ohio counties. It marks the first time the retail segment of the drug industry has been held accountable in the decades long opioid epidemic. The case could set a precedent for other U.S. cities and counties looking to take legal action against corporations...

National News

Drinking Alone Foreshadows Future Alcohol Problems.

[Scienmag](#) (7/11) reports, "A new study from Carnegie Mellon University found that drinking alone during adolescence and young adulthood strongly increases risk for alcohol use disorder (AUD) later in life." The "risk is especially high for women." Researchers analyzed data from the Monitoring the Future study and "results showed that adolescents and young adults who reported drinking alone were at increased risk for developing AUD symptoms in adulthood compared to their peers who only drank in social settings." The study was published in the July issue of the journal Drug and Alcohol Dependence.

Booker Joins Other Democratic Senators Asking Biden To End Federal Ban On Cannabis.

[New Jersey Star-Ledger](#) (7/7, Salant, 1.47M) reports, “U.S. Sen. Cory Booker joined five of his Democratic colleagues Wednesday in asking President Joe Biden to end the federal ban on cannabis, allowing states to decide whether to legalize the drug.” In the “letter to Biden, Attorney General Merrick Garland, and Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra, the senators asked the administration to use its existing powers to remove cannabis from the list of Schedule I drugs...as well as pardon all individuals convicted of nonviolent marijuana crimes.”

Despite Congress’ Swift Action, FDA Appears To Hold Off On Crackdown On Synthetic Nicotine Products.

[STAT](#) (7/8, Florko, 262K) reported, “Congress gave the Food and Drug Administration a clear directive to crack down on vape companies skirting the agency’s rules.” However, “there are growing signs the agency is not ready to do as instructed,” and “now, advocates are apoplectic.” Back in “March, Congress acted remarkably swiftly to give the FDA the power to regulate so-called synthetic nicotine products – vaping products, often sold in fruity flavors like ‘watermelon berry,’ ‘banana ice,’ and ‘rainbow cloudz,’ that were only on the market because of a loophole in the agency’s tobacco regulation.” The “loophole allowed companies to sell their products so long as they made them using nicotine produced in a lab, rather than extracting it from a tobacco plant.” On Friday, “an FDA spokesperson told STAT...that the agency has not taken action to date against any company selling synthetic nicotine that hasn’t submitted an application.”

Study Links Exposure To Tobacco Content On Social Media With Higher Tobacco Use.

The [Times of San Diego](#) (7/11, Ireland, 12K) reports a new study suggests “people who have viewed tobacco content on social media are more than twice as likely than non-viewers to report using tobacco and, among those who have never used tobacco, more likely to be susceptible to use it in the future.” Researchers examined data from 139,624 participants in 29 other studies to discover a link. The [findings](#) were published in JAMA Pediatrics.

With New Campaign, Philly Recruits Former Smokers To Encourage Current Ones To Quit.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (7/12, Laughlin) reports Philadelphia has launched an anti-smoking campaign that highlights residents’ “stories about quitting to encourage others to do the same.” The first wave of ads, which run through September, “will feature pregnant women and new mothers, people in recovery, and food-service workers,” followed by a second wave that “will highlight people in the LGBTQ community and veterans.” The article adds that “Philadelphia’s high

rate of smoking contributes to it having the fifth-highest rate of lung cancer among Pennsylvania's counties, according to the National Cancer Institute.”

Additional Source. [WHYY-TV Philadelphia](#) (7/12, 19K) reports the campaign “cost of \$475,000 is mostly supported by the federal tobacco settlement, although just over \$100,000 in city general fund money will go towards the effort, which includes both traditional and non-traditional media.”

Percentage of overdose deaths involving methadone declined between January 2019 and August 2021

Researchers found that non-methadone-involved overdose deaths increased by an average of 78 more deaths each month before March 2020, increased by 1,078 deaths during March 2020, and then continued to increase by an average of 69 more deaths each month after March 2020. Methadone-involved overdose deaths experienced a similar increase in March 2020 (increased by 94 deaths). However, the trend in number of deaths per month before and after this initial uptick remained stable, and the percentage of overdose deaths involving methadone declined at similar rates before and after the take-home policy change, declining from 4.5% of overdose deaths in January of 2019 to 3.2% in August 2021.

<https://jamanetwork.com/journals/jamapsychiatry/fullarticle/2793744>

Schumer Will Push For \$3.2B In Federal Funding To Fight Opioid Crisis.

The [Staten Island \(NY\) Advance](#) (7/7, Dalton, 234K) reports, “At a time when the coronavirus (COVID-19) pandemic has exacerbated Staten Island’s drug crisis, Majority Leader Sen. Chuck Schumer wants to increase funding for opioid and substance misuse by \$3.2 billion.” Schumer (D-NY) “formally announced his push on Thursday” and “said he already told the Biden Administration about his \$3.2 billion federal budget push, which he said will receive bipartisan support.” Of this “\$3.2 billion, Schumer wants to increase the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) budget by \$1.489 billion, for a total of \$10.7 billion, for drug treatment-related funding.”

Addiction Medication In Pennsylvania’s Jails Is Often Inadequate Or Nonexistent, New Report Finds.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (7/11, Whelan) reports that the Pennsylvania Institutional Law Project (PILP) released “a new report that found access to opioid addiction medication in the state’s county jails is scattershot, often inadequate, and in many jails nonexistent – putting incarcerated people at risk for overdose when they’re released.” The article says “addiction is a health issue affecting many people in jails and prisons,” and a “2017 study that looked at data from 2007 to 2009 found that 58% of people serving time in state prisons and 63% of people serving sentences in jails had some kind of substance use disorder.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse says “just 5% of addicted people in state prisons receive medication to treat opioid use disorder while incarcerated.”

Opioid Overdoses In Grand Island Have Increased Since Last Year.

The [Grand Island \(NE\) Independent](#) (7/8, Bahr, 52K) reported, “The danger of opioids was made apparent in Grand Island,” Nebraska “the last weekend of March, when police responded to three opioid pill overdose incidents.” A speaker “at a gathering Thursday pointed to one indication that opioid overdoses began increasing in Grand Island in 2021.” These overdoses “involved black market pills that were being sold as Percocet.” The article said, “According to the National Institutes of Health’s National Institute on Drug Abuse, 21% to 29% of patients who are prescribed opioids for chronic pain misuse them.”

Opinion: Distribution Of Naloxone May Help Community Combat Overdose Rate Among People Experiencing Homelessness.

Florida resident William White writes in the [Tallahassee \(FL\) Democrat](#) (7/10, 188K), “Homelessness in the Big Bend area is on the decrease, according to a recent report from the Big Bend Continuum of Care (BBCOC) organization.” But, “there was a sharp upswing in the rate of homelessness due to drug abuse.” According to White, the data suggest “there is a relationship between the increase in drug abuse and unsheltered homelessness.” Recommendations “to deal effectively with the drug issue” include “the distribution of naloxone to individuals at risk of experiencing an overdose.” White supports this measure

OC Firm Fighting Addiction Seeks Volunteers For Clinical Trial.

The [Orange County \(CA\) Register](#) (7/7, 854K) reports, “After years of work on bringing a medical implant that can blunt the effects of opioids on the brain to the U.S., the Anaheim company BioCorRx has dosed the first patient in its Phase I clinical trial of BICX104 – and is looking for another 20+ healthy volunteers in the O.C. area to participate.” The company “has received grants totaling \$9.3 million from the National Institute on Drug Abuse – part of the National Institutes of Health – for this research.”

Florida Community Authorities Working To Combat Fentanyl Distribution After String Of Overdose Deaths.

[WUSF-FM](#) Tampa, FL (7/7, 10K) reports, “State and local authorities are working ‘feverishly’ to fight the distribution of fentanyl in Florida after a string of overdose deaths over the weekend rocked the rural community of Gadsden County.” In the county, nine deaths “are suspected to have been caused by fentanyl, likely involving people using other drugs that were laced with the potent synthetic opioid.” Furthermore, “Gadsden County Sheriff Morris Young said emergency responders were called to 19 overdoses over a four-day span.”

National Leaders Tout Maine’s Opioid Response Despite Rising Overdose Deaths.

The [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (7/11, Andrews, 178K) reports, “National leaders cited Maine as a leader in responding to the opioid crisis during a state summit dedicated

to the topic Monday, an accolade that came against the grim backdrop of rising overdose deaths.” The state “saw a 9 percent increase in overdose deaths in the first five months of 2022 compared with the same period last year, according to the state’s monthly overdose report, which showed three-quarters of those deaths involved fentanyl.”

Teva, Allergan Reach \$54M Settlement In San Francisco Opioid Lawsuit.

The [AP](#) (7/12, Neergaard) reports, “Opioid makers Allergan and Teva have agreed to pay \$54 million in cash and overdose reversal drugs to settle a federal lawsuit brought by San Francisco alleging the drug industry fueled an overdose and addiction surge that created a public nuisance.” According to the AP, “City Attorney David Chiu made the announcement Tuesday before closing arguments against the sole remaining defendant, Walgreens, started later in the morning.”

[Reuters](#) (7/12, Knauth) also reports.

DEA Seizes 32K Fake Pills In Omaha In Two Days, Many Laced With Fentanyl.

The [Omaha \(NE\) World-Herald](#) (7/12, Cole, 509K) reports, “Investigators with the Drug Enforcement Administration seized 32,000 fake pills in over two days last week,” in Omaha, Nebraska “including many laced with lethal doses of fentanyl.” According to the article, “During the first six months of 2022, DEA investigators seized 151,500 pills in Nebraska, marking an 83% increase over the 82,775 pills seized in all of 2021.”

People’s Reasons For Using Kratom Are Rapidly Diversifying.

[Filter \(NY\)](#) (7/11) reports, “Since kratom began growing in popularity in North America, researchers have tried to understand how and why people are using it.” The article says, “The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), which funds something like 80 percent of the world’s drug research, has sometimes been criticized for its overwhelming focus on ‘drug abuse and addiction’ at the expense of pleasure and benefits.” But, “new research out of the US federal institute suggests that people’s reasons for using kratom have changed and expanded.” Dr. Kirsten Smith, “a NIDA researcher and one of the paper’s authors,” said their survey research was “essentially a convenience sample, but it had greater diversity in terms of use experiences compared to a lot of the other online kratom surveys.”

Federal Agents Seize Over 5K Pounds Of Meth In Record-Breaking Southern California Bust.

[USA Today](#) (7/10, Mendoza, 12.7M) reports, “Four men were arrested in a record-breaking drug bust after authorities seized over two and a half tons of methamphetamine in Southern California, officials said.” The article says, “In March, the National Institute on Drug Abuse said the seizure of meth and marijuana have risen since the start of the pandemic, suggesting pandemic restrictions may have impacted the availability and demand of the drugs.”

Better Outcomes Tied To More HCV Treatment For People Who Inject Drugs.

[MedPage Today](#) (7/11, Hamza, 183K) reports, “A greater uptake in hepatitis C virus (HCV) treatment for people who inject drugs (PWID) at a community center led to decreases in liver disease and mortality,” researchers concluded in a study that included “1,323 PWID with chronic HCV at a Baltimore community-based center.” The study “was supported by the NIH, the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, National Cancer Institute, National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute, the Eunice Kennedy Shriver National Institute of Child Health and Human Development, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), National Institute of Diabetes and Digestive and Kidney Diseases, National Institute on Aging, National Institute of General Medical Sciences,” and others.

Commentary Says Concept Of Codependency Is “Harmful Treatment” For Individuals With Addiction.

In a [New York Times](#) (7/8, Szalavitz, 20.6M) guest essay, Maia Szalavitz, a contributing opinion writer who covers addiction and public policy writes about “codependence,” which supposedly causes parents and partners of addicts “to act as ‘enablers,’ contributing to their loved ones’ continued use of substances.” The word, codependence, “frequently appears in media and pop culture. ... And therapists and rehabs teach about it, as if it is a genuine psychological phenomenon.” However, “there is little evidence...that codependence actually exists.” Szalavitz writes that “the diagnosis was rejected by psychiatry’s diagnostic manual...And unfortunately, what the concept actually enables is harmful treatment.” She concludes, “Psychologists now recognize that needing others is normal: Human brains and bodies rely on social contact to soothe stress and we become dysfunctional without warm relationships. Basically, everyone is codependent. And the last thing atomized America needs is more reinforcement of the idea that individuals alone determine their happiness.”

Columnist Lauds Administration’s Support Of Harm Reduction Policies In Drug Control Strategy.

Columnist Leana S. Wen writes in the [Washington Post](#) (7/12, 10.52M) that the Administration has made harm reduction policies “the centerpiece of its national drug control strategy.” Wen says, “That bold move deserves recognition. By explicitly emphasizing the term and providing funding for programs once regarded as too controversial, the administration is normalizing harm reduction and paving the way for its widespread adoption across the United States.” She praises this initiative, saying it will save lives. HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra is mentioned.

Leading Experts Unravel The Role Of The Gut Microbiome In Addiction At The FENS Forum 2022.

[Scienmag](#) (7/11) reports that recent research has “clarified that the gut and brain are in constant bidirectional communication, and that gut microbes also influence these interactions. As a result, the term ‘microbiota-gut-brain axis’ was coined.” The

article says, “In addition to keeping our guts balanced and healthy, microbes also influence nervous system activity and are important in training our immune system during development. Alterations in gut microbiota are associated with many psychiatric disorders, including addiction.” In the 2022 FENS Forum, “some of Europe’s top neuroscientists will gather to discuss new findings and clues that look at the connection between the gut microbiome and addiction.” At the forum, “Dr Lorenzo Leggio, from the NIH Intramural Research Program will outline differences in the gut microbiome and chemicals involved in metabolism (metabolomics) in a non-human primate model of binge drinking and novel results on alcohol-dependent patients.”

What Ethnographers Have Learned From People Who Use Drugs.

[Undark](#) (7/11, Magazine) reports that in the past, there was a “need for a fine-grained understanding of the forces that drive risk and harm.” An ethnographer talks with and observes people, which “can yield precisely this kind of information.” Due to ethnographic studies, “old views are shifting” as “the experiences of people who use drugs” are brought “to the forefront, and as more public health officials and policymakers have come to consider substance use a matter of public health rather than criminal deviance.” Director of NIDA’s Division on Epidemiology, Services and Prevention Research Carlos Blanco “has been on grant teams pursuing both ethnographic and epidemiological research. In an interview with Undark, he said that work centered on the lived experience of people who use drugs has been part of NIDA’s approach since the agency’s inception but agreed that there is now a recognition of the need for a more holistic research strategy.” The NIH is mentioned.

Supreme Court’s EPA Ruling May Cause Uncertainty In Health Regulations, Experts Warn.

[Modern Healthcare](#) (7/12, Goldman, Subscription Publication, 215K) reports the Supreme Court’s ruling limiting the EPA’s authority to interpret laws “could have ramifications for the Health and Human Services Department and the entities it regulates.” As a result of the rulings, experts say that healthcare companies “should prepare for uncertainty about regulations,” warning that it could take up to a decade to “figure out the decision’s consequences for healthcare regulation.”

Survey Finds Patients More Likely To Enroll In Clinical Trials Using Remote Technology.

[STAT](#) (7/7, Aguilar, Ravindranath, 262K) reports, “A survey of more than 1100 patients found that most – between 60 and 85% – would be more likely to enroll in clinical trials if the burdens on their time and travel were reduced, including through remote technology and other tools to decentralize data gathering.” It also found patients’ “willingness varied depending on the type of decentralization: 60% said they’d be more likely to enroll if offered IV trial medications administered by

trial staff, while 82% said they'd be more likely to sign up if offered wearables to gather trial data." [\[Article attached\]](#)

Night Shifts In ED Linked To Fewer Pain Scripts At Discharge.

[Medscape](#) (7/11, Dotinga, Subscription Publication, 219K) reports, "Patients who visit American and Israeli hospital emergency departments at night pay a price, a new study suggests: Physicians were less likely to prescribe painkillers at discharge, possibly because exhaustion sapped their empathy." The study was supported by the NIH.

Growth Of Sports Betting Leading To More Gambling Problems In High Schoolers.

The [Stateline](#) (7/12, Mercer, 2K) reports high school students are emerging as the "new problem gambler" as more states legalize sports betting. In states that have legalized sports betting "between 60% and 80% of high school students report having gambled for money in the past year, according to the National Council on Problem Gambling," and 4% to 6% are considered addicted. The group warns that "the risks for gambling addiction overall have grown 30% from 2018 to 2021, with the risk concentrated among young males 18 to 24 who are sports bettors."

Proposed FDA Rule Would Ease Prescription-To-OTC Switches, Attorney Says.

Attorney Martha Rumore writes for [STAT](#) (7/12, Rumore, 262K) that a proposed FDA rule would "make it easier for pharmaceutical companies to switch products from prescription-only to over-the-counter status while still retaining a prescription version." The rule "has important ramifications as it will decrease the number of prescriptions written and dispensed. The public comment period on the proposed rule is set to expire on October 26, 2022. Given the many questions the rule raises and the need for further details, especially with regard to the potential impact to the pharmaceutical industry and pharmacy profession, I encourage stakeholders to make their voices heard."

Genetic Testing Could Help Match Patients With Antidepressants, Study Suggests.

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (7/12, Gutman) reports genetic testing "could help to minimize the trial-and-error approach to prescribing antidepressants," according to a new study by the Crescenz VA Medical Center in Philadelphia. Researchers "explored using genetic testing as a solution in a research trial involving nearly 2,000 patients from 22 VA primary care and mental health clinics throughout the county," and they found "about 1-in-5 patients with depression were prescribed an antidepressant that they were less likely to respond to" without genetic testing. The [findings](#) were published on Tuesday in the Journal of the American Medical Association.

New Three-Digit Suicide Prevention Lifeline To Launch This Week.

The [Fayetteville \(NC\) Observer](#) (7/12, Riley, 157K) reports, “This week, a new three-digit number will launch for those wanting to reach the National Suicide Prevention Lifeline.” Beginning Saturday, “those needing help can dial or text 988.” HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said, “We know that remembering a three-digit number beats a ten-digit number any day, particularly in times of crisis, and I encourage every state to rev up planning to implement 988 for the sake of saving lives.” SAMHSA is mentioned.

The [Las Vegas Review-Journal](#) (7/12, Hynes, 372K) reports on Nevada’s preparations for launching the hotline within the state. The article says, “In April, U.S. Health and Human Services Secretary Xavier Becerra pledged \$1 million to Nevada to assist the state in making the transition to the easy-to-remember, three-digit number.”

Staffing Issues Persist At Mental Health Call Centers.

[NPR](#) (7/11, Barrett, 3.69M) reports that a job listing compilation by the US Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration shows mental health call centers “still have many openings available.” The “rollout of a new national mental health crisis number” is providing federal funding for call centers but “call centers are scrambling to hire people by mid-July.”

Prescriptions For ADHD, Depression, Anxiety Rose During Pandemic.

The [New York Times](#) (7/9, Schwartz, 20.6M) reported “millions of Americans...started or restarted psychiatric medication during Covid’s long and dreary run.” While “tracking exactly which pills Americans are swallowing these days is difficult because much of this information is privately held,” the Times attempts to quantify the increase in prescriptions for mental health conditions based on data provided by some companies and “other existing research.” Overall, “data from the past two years indicate a rise – some of it sharp – in prescription drugs for conditions like A.D.H.D. and depression,” and anxiety. Now, “Almost a quarter of Americans over the age of 18 are now medicated for one or more of these conditions.” Antidepressants remain “the most commonly prescribed of these medications in the United States...with an 8.7 percent rate of increase from 2019 to 2021, compared with 7.9 percent from 2017 to 2019, according to Express Scripts,” with sharper increases among teenagers in particular.

Mental Health Professionals Question Efficacy Of Digital Mental Health Companies.

[Kaiser Health News](#) (7/8, Meyer) reported, “Many U.S. adults aren’t able to find help because of a shortage of therapists.” Nearly 40% “are struggling with mental health or substance abuse issues, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.” So millions of people “are turning to online companies like BetterHelp that have sprung up in the past several years, advertising quick access to therapy.” But veteran therapists and officials “from leading mental health professional

associations say there's limited evidence of the new online providers' effectiveness.”

Physicians Push For Access To Psychedelic Therapies In New Mexico.

The [AP](#) (7/12) reports, “Physicians and researchers are urging New Mexico legislators to allow the use of psychedelic mushrooms in mental health therapy aimed at overcoming depression, anxiety, psychological trauma and alcoholism.” On Tuesday, a legislative panel “listened to advocates who hope to broaden the scope of medical treatment and research assisted by psilocybin, the psychedelic active ingredient in certain mushrooms.”

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[RFA-DA-23-051](#)

[HEAL Initiative: Preventing Opioid Misuse and Co-Occurring Conditions by Intervening on Social Determinants \(R01 - Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

[NOT-NR-22-015](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for HEAL Initiative: Prevention and Management of Chronic Pain in Rural Populations \(UG3/UH3, Clinical Trials Required\)](#)

[NOT-NS-22-095](#)

[HEAL Initiative Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Development and Validation of Pain-Related Models and Endpoints to Facilitate Non-Addictive Analgesic Discovery](#)

[PAR-22-203](#)

[Point-of-Care Technologies Research Network: Technology Research and Development Centers \(TRDC\) \(U54 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-EB-22-001](#)

[BRAIN Initiative: Transformative Brain Non-invasive Imaging Technology Development \(UG3/UH3 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[NOT-MD-22-012](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Research on the Health of Sexual and Gender Minority \(SGM\) Populations](#)

[NOT-OD-22-167](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Research on Addressing Violence to Improve Health Outcomes](#)

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