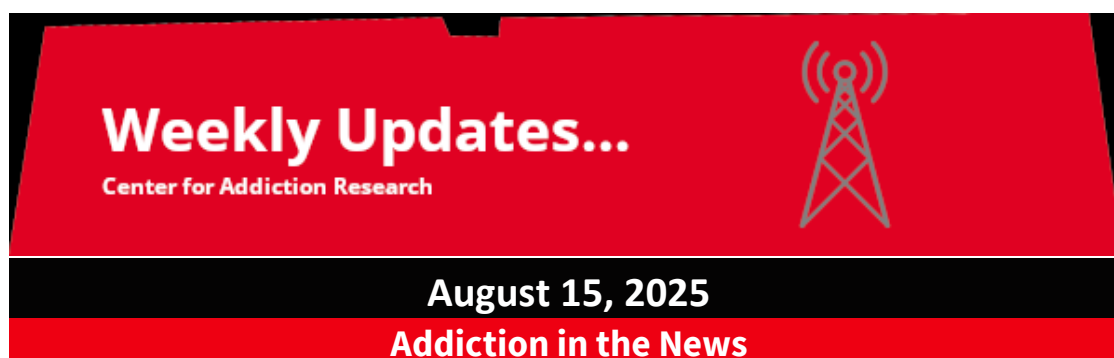


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) 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

UC research links childhood trauma, tobacco exposure

A new study reveals a troubling connection between adverse childhood experiences and children's exposure to tobacco smoke in their homes. The study is led by University of Cincinnati researcher Ashley Merianos who specializes in tobacco use and its effects. The research, funded by the National Institutes of Health and now published in Child Protection and Practice, highlights that in the United States school-aged children facing trauma such as parental divorce, community violence or financial hardship are significantly more likely to live in households where tobacco is used — putting their health at further risk. "Adverse childhood experiences [ACEs] and tobacco smoke exposure are two major independent..." **(first author, Dr. Ashley Merianos, CAR member, see publication below in the newsletter)**

Upcoming Overdose Awareness Events:

AAEW Overdose Awareness Day Event

hosted by the African American Engagement Workgroup

Friday, August 29, 3:00 PM – 8:00 PM

Washington Square Park

5th Annual Overdose Awareness Event

presented by Addiction Services Council

Friday, August 29, 4:00 PM – 7:00 PM

2828 Vernon Place, Cincinnati, OH 42199

'A benefit for the whole community' | Nonprofit installs harm reduction lockers in Northern Kentucky

COVINGTON, Ky — A Covington-based nonprofit is working to make life-saving supplies more accessible across Kentucky, particularly for LGBTQ+ communities that face barriers to care. Queer Kentucky has placed 12 special lockers at businesses throughout the state, with six located in Northern Kentucky, providing free access to harm reduction supplies such as HIV self-testing kits, pregnancy tests, naloxone, condoms, sunscreen and aloe. "We were able to get some funding about two years ago to do more stories around queer mental health and how that kind of ties to different issues, including substance use," said Missy Spears, executive director of Queer Kentucky. The lockers fill a need as resources for substance...

What Montgomery County is doing to erase the drug overdose stigma and promote recovery

More than 90 people have died this year due to a drug overdose in Montgomery County. Rapid reversal medications like naloxone, or Narcan have proven to be an effective strategy to reversing a drug overdose, however it is not preventing drug use. That's why the Montgomery County Community Overdose Action Team is hosting Overdose Awareness Day Tuesday [8/12] in downtown Dayton. The day is used to remember the lives lost to overdose and provide awareness, education and recovery to those struggling. The event will be held from 5-8 p.m. at Levitt Pavilion. Naloxone, also commonly known under the brand name Narcan, is a life-saving medication that can rapidly reverse an opioid overdose will be provided for free at the event. Those who attend can learn how to administer the medication. The...

Fentanyl overdose deaths down in Cuyahoga County, mirroring a national trend

CLEVELAND — The fentanyl epidemic has plagued American streets for more than a decade, taking thousands of lives. However, in recent years, fentanyl overdose deaths have been trending down, offering hope for the future. "We're seeing fewer fentanyl fatalities," Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner Dr. Thomas Gilson said. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), in 2023, U.S. fentanyl overdose deaths fell by 4%. In Cuyahoga County, the change was even more significant, with a 6.5% decrease in fentanyl overdose deaths. The downward trend continued into 2024, with 272 deaths, compared to 469 in 2023. "We're seeing less fentanyl," Gilson said. "That's true at the border, not just..."

Drug recovery centers seeing users of kratom looking for help

TOLEDO, Ohio (WTVG) - It's the substance you're hearing more and more about and the substance people who work in drug recovery facilities are seeing more and more. It's called kratom. The pitch is that it's a natural product that's supposed to help with pain and anxiety, but eventually it can act more like an addictive opioid. They are seeing more people looking for help with it and as much of the public is now just hearing about this stuff, it's been around for quite a while. The pressure is

on those who sell kratom, which can be found in places like gas stations or vape shops. It's an herbal extract of an evergreen tree, but its effects can mirror those of opioids, an epidemic that has devastated families. "I see people...

Millions of dollars of revenue brought to Ohio in first year of recreational marijuana sales

This month marks one year since the start of recreational marijuana sales in Ohio. In that time, the marijuana industry has brought in millions of dollars of revenue to the state. A new report from the Ohio Department of Commerce says, in the first year, recreational sales surpassed \$700 million. Medicinal sales have totaled more than \$2.2 billion since it started in January 2019. As of July 2025, Ohio has 156 dispensaries.

Ohio principals share perspectives, concerns about marijuana in schools after legalization

TOLEDO, Ohio (WTVG) - It's been just over a year since Ohio legalized recreational marijuana. Researchers at Ohio State University's Drug Enforcement and Policy Center surveyed Ohio's K-12 principals last August to see what concerns they had about marijuana legalization and how they anticipated it would impact their students. Ahead of this upcoming school year, the center surveyed principals again to see what they actually experienced in the last year and what concerns remain. Jana Hrdinová, the center's administrative director, said principals are important voices and observers in the conversation surrounding marijuana and children. "Principals have a pretty good worldview of their individual schools and how...

Trump orders signal shift away from well-subscribed addiction recovery strategy

Harm reduction is a model that's taken root in most addiction recovery programs across the nation, with the core concept being that those seeking treatment need the transitional support if they're to ultimately get clean. But the administration's argument is that harm reduction "facilitates illegal drug use" and could prolong addiction — a claim challenged by years of research. Over the last three years, overdose deaths declined in Kentucky with a more than 30% decrease in 2024 compared with the previous year. So news of the executive order had advocates such as Billy O'Brien, the Kentucky program manager for Young People in Recovery, worried. "When that executive order first came out, it was very vague. And...

National News

Novel neural pathway to treat alcohol use disorder identified

Researchers have identified a promising new strategy for treating alcohol use disorder (AUD). A novel study found that the dopamine-boosting drug tolcapone increases activity in the prefrontal cortex (PFC) during self-control tasks. Greater activation of the inferior frontal gyrus, part of the PFC, was associated with better behavioral control and reduced alcohol consumption. The findings from this new

study in Biological Psychiatry: Cognitive Neuroscience and Neuroimaging, indicate that medications with a similar mechanism could one day be used to treat AUD. AUD is a devastating disorder characterized by loss of...

Fewer Americans are drinking alcohol as health concerns rise

Fewer U.S. adults say they drink alcohol, and more now believe that even moderate drinking can harm their health, a new Gallup poll finds. The survey, conducted in July, found that 54% of Americans drink alcohol—the lowest rate Gallup has recorded in nearly 90 years of tracking. That's down from most of the past several decades, when at least 60% of Americans said they drank. The previous low was 55% in 1958, Gallup reported. The poll also found a record 53% of adults consider moderate drinking—one or two drinks a day—is bad for their health. That's up sharply from 28% in 2015, 39% in 2023, and 45% one year ago. Younger...

Vaping cannabinoid mixtures produces a chemical that destroys human tissue, research reveals

In addition to being used recreationally, marijuana and cannabidiol, or CBD, one of the cannabinoids produced by the marijuana plant, are thought to have medical benefits, such as helping with chemotherapy-induced nausea, treating epilepsy, relieving pain and helping with a variety of mental health issues. But how people get cannabinoids into their bodies can make the difference between helping and hurting. A new study by Department of Chemistry and Biochemistry Chair and Professor Ryan Baxter and colleagues shows that conditions common to vaping marijuana or CBD oxidizes the CBD to create cannabidiol...

Trump 'looking at' reclassifying marijuana as less dangerous drug

President Trump said Monday his administration is “looking at” reclassifying marijuana as a less dangerous drug. Such a move would continue efforts begun by the Biden administration, which started the process to make marijuana a Schedule III drug in 2024 but did not finish it before former President Biden left office. A Schedule III designation wouldn't legalize marijuana, but criminal penalties would be lessened. It would open new research opportunities and allow pharmaceutical companies to get involved in the sale and distribution of marijuana where it is legal. It would also allow for tax breaks for some...

Quitting smoking is associated with recovery from other addictions

Adults who smoke cigarettes and are addicted to alcohol or other drugs were more likely to achieve sustained remission of their substance use disorder symptoms if they also quit smoking, according to scientists at the National Institutes of Health (NIH). Based on their analysis of data from a large U.S. study of smoking and health, researchers believe the results clearly show the benefit of pairing smoking cessation with addiction recovery efforts. “We now have strong evidence from a national sample that quitting cigarette smoking predicts improved recovery from other substance use disorders,” explained Nora Volkow, M.D....

'Clear' Vapes May Have Even Worse Health Effects

E-cigarettes marketed as "clear" may get around flavor bans, but they appear to have a greater health impact than other types of vapes, according to findings from an observational cohort study. Among participants in the Cardiovascular Injury due to Tobacco Products 2.0 study, smokers of "clear" e-cigarettes had modestly but significantly greater increases in blood pressure, heart rate, and mean arterial pressure (MAP) compared with non-users and peers using menthol and other flavored vapes. Compared with non-users, the "clear" vapers had acute increases approaching 10 mm Hg in systolic and diastolic blood pressure and...

Fentanyl and other high-potency synthetic opioids are changing how doctors initiate medications for opioid use

Fentanyl and other high-potency synthetic opioids (HPSOs) are the leading cause of opioid overdose deaths in the United States. These substances have changed the way that hospitals start medication to treat opioid use disorder (OUD), but no standards exist. A new study published in JAMA Network Open on August 7, 2025, assessed new initiation approaches used by hospital-based addiction consult services (ACS) to treat OUD around the country. FDA-approved medications, including methadone and buprenorphine, have been demonstrated to reduce opioid-related mortality and overdoses by as much as 50%. Yet, clinical...

FDA Grants Type C Meeting for Aversa Fentanyl Abuse Deterrent Patch

The US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has granted a Type C Meeting for Nutriband's lead product, Aversa fentanyl, or the abuse deterrent fentanyl transdermal system. In the meeting, the FDA will specifically provide feedback on the chemistry, manufacturing, and controls plans for Aversa fentanyl from the submission of an Investigational New Drug Application through approval of a 505(b)(2) New Drug Application and subsequent commercialization. Aversa fentanyl has the potential to be the world's first abuse-deterrent opioid patch designed to deter the abuse and misuse, and reduce the risk of accidental...

Trump administration cuts McGruff the Crime Dog's fentanyl campaign

Adults of a certain age may remember McGruff the Crime Dog best. The animated bloodhound in a trench coat warned children about the dangers of using drugs in a series of both gritty and cheery public service announcements on TV in the 1980s and 1990s. McGruff was as frank about stranger danger and child abductions, once portraying the near-kidnapping of a little girl in pigtails in an ad: "If she gets into that car, you may be looking at Jenny for the last time." But perhaps most memorable is McGruff's persistent calls to "Take A Bite Out Of Crime." Now, the Trump administration has ended federal funding for a...

CDC to Clinicians: Look Out for Medetomidine in Opioid Overdose

Clinicians should be on alert for signs of medetomidine exposure and withdrawal in suspected overdose cases, public health experts said Thursday during a CDC webinar. Hosted by the agency's Division of Overdose Prevention, the webinar highlighted growing concerns about medetomidine's increasing presence in the U.S. illicit drug supply -- often mixed with fentanyl -- and the clinical challenges of treating patients exposed to it. Experts also outlined management strategies for treating withdrawal and emphasized the difficulty of predicting which patients will require hospitalization or admission to the intensive care unit...

Study identifies potential therapeutic strategy for treating cocaine use disorder

A research team led by Virginia Commonwealth University has gained new insights into the molecular mechanisms that cause cocaine use disorder, identifying a potential therapeutic strategy to inhibit the drug's addictive effect. By tweaking one specific component that helps control the brain's dopamine levels, the researchers were able to block the biological process that reinforces cocaine-seeking behaviors. Their preclinical findings, published in *The Journal of Neuroscience*, could open new avenues for developing a medication to help people overcome cocaine abuse. Stimulant drugs, such as cocaine and methamphetamine, are...

CU Denver opens applications for psychedelic training program

The University of Colorado Denver is stepping into uncharted educational territory this fall, offering a program teaching people to administer psychedelic therapy. Why it matters: It's the first public university-affiliated program for licensure in the country in a nascent field providing an alternative to traditional medical practices. State of play: Led by Vivian Shyu, a teaching professor in CU Denver's psychology department, the program will train 25 state-licensed facilitators to administer psychedelic treatments. The 16-week program falls under CU Denver's Center for Psychedelic Research, which launched last year to enhance...

Trump Order Gives Political Appointees Review of Scientific Grants

A Trump administration executive order requiring political appointee oversight of federal grant-making is raising concerns among some policy experts. The order, issued on Thursday, states that "each agency head shall promptly designate a senior appointee who shall be responsible for creating a process to review new funding opportunity announcements and to review discretionary grants to ensure that they are consistent with agency priorities and the national interest." At a minimum, the grant review process "shall incorporate ... review and approval of agency funding opportunity announcements by one or more senior appointees..."

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

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

CAR Member New Publications

Adverse childhood experiences and tobacco smoke exposure among U.S. school-aged children

Ashley L. Merianos, Madelyn J. Hill, Kayleigh A. Gregory, Sinem Toraman Turk, Matthew Lee Smith, E. Melinda Mahabee-Gittens

Child Protection and Practice

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.chipro.2025.100210>

ABSTRACT

Background: Adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) are traumatic events linked to poor health outcomes in childhood. While children are vulnerable to ACEs and tobacco smoke exposure (TSE), little is known about the association between ACEs and home TSE.

Objective: This study aimed to assess the association between ACEs and home TSE status among U.S. school-aged children.

Participants and Setting: A secondary analysis of the 2020–2021 National Survey of Children's Health data, including 26,422 children 6–11 years old, was conducted.

Methods: ACEs were assessed cumulatively and based on type, including household-, community-, and financial-based ACEs. Home TSE status included no home TSE, defined as the child not living with smokers; home thirdhand smoke (THS) exposure only, defined as the child living with smokers who did not smoke indoors; and home secondhand smoke (SHS) and THS exposure, defined as the child living with smokers who smoked indoors. Weighted adjusted multinomial logistic regression analysis was performed.

Findings: Concerning the number of ACEs, 22.4 % of children experienced one ACE, 12.2 % experienced 2–3 ACEs, and 4.9 % experienced 4–10 ACEs. Children with one ACE (AOR = 1.59, 95 %CI = [1.26, 1.99]; AOR = 2.00, 95 %CI = [1.17, 3.41]), 2–3 ACEs (AOR = 2.62, 95 %CI = [1.98, 3.45]; AOR = 4.36, 95 %CI = [2.52, 7.56]), and 4–10 ACEs (AOR = 5.16, 95 %CI = [3.48, 7.65]; AOR = 9.71, 95 %CI = [4.74, 19.88]) had increased odds of home THS exposure only and home SHS + THS exposure, respectively, compared to children with zero ACEs. Household-, community-, and financial-based ACEs increased the odds of home THS exposure only and home SHS + THS exposure.

Conclusion: ACEs were associated with home TSE status in school-aged children.

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