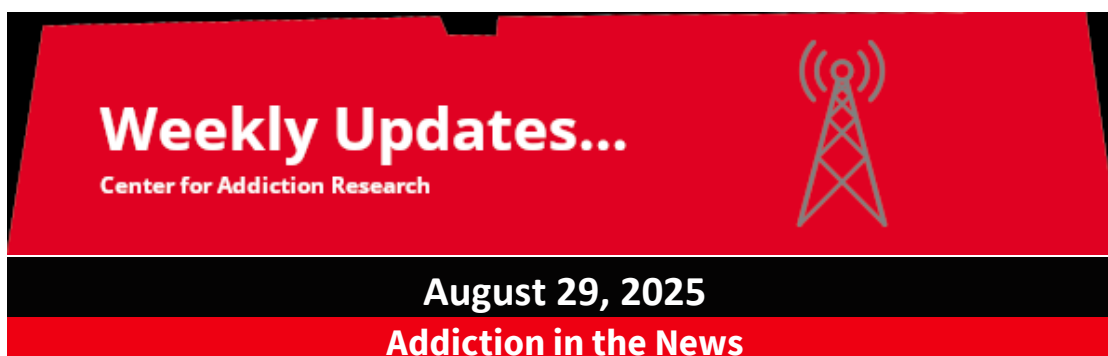


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

Ohio governor calls kratom an imminent public health risk, pushes for ban

COLUMBUS, Ohio — Ohio Gov. Mike DeWine is urging the Ohio Board of Pharmacy to classify kratom as a Schedule I drug, citing it as an "imminent public health risk" due to its potential dangers, particularly for teenagers and babies. Kratom, which is not approved by the Food and Drug Administration, is sold in products like the Feel Free drink at gas stations and stores in Ohio and Kentucky. The governor's proposal would make Ohio the first state to take such strong action against kratom. Doctors at Cincinnati Children's Hospital are raising alarms about its risks. Dr. Stephanie Merhar, a neonatologist, said, "Some of the moms who have taken this and not taken anything else, they have actually needed to go on buprenorphine..." **(Dr. Stephanie Merhar, CAR Member)**

Ohio calls for statewide ban on kratom amid overdose concerns; others argue against ban

CINCINNATI (WKRC) — Governor Mike DeWine is advocating for a statewide ban on kratom, a substance marketed as a natural stimulant and pain reliever, due to its links to hundreds of overdose deaths across Ohio. Kratom, which mimics the effects of opioids on brain chemistry without the regulatory oversight faced by pharmaceutical companies, remains legal to sell in Ohio. However, its addictive potential is highlighted by numerous cases nationwide. Ohio Health Department Director Bruce Vanderhoff expressed concerns with the substance being legal. "The bottom line for me is that kratom is a drug that can cause serious problems. Right now, there are much safer, better-studied treatment options available for..."

Millions in grant funding to support Ohio women grappling with substance use disorders

OHIO — More than \$10 million in grant awards are going toward pregnant women and mothers of young children living with substance use disorders across the state. The Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services said 45 providers in Ohio are receiving the funds. “All children deserve the chance to live up to their full, God-given potential,” said Gov. Mike DeWine, R-Ohio. “Supporting Ohio’s mothers, whether they are recovering from addiction or finding treatment, gives them an opportunity to start a new chapter in their lives and support their kids.” The providers are located in 31 counties and will use the funds to serve an estimated 8,500 families in Ohio with family-centered care, including: Behavioral...

Program aimed at helping Ohio employers support workers in recovery

Columbus, OH — The Ohio Bureau of Workers’ Compensation has launched a program that offers incentives and financial assistance to help employers support workers who are recovering from a substance use disorder. The Substance Use Prevention and Recovery Program, formerly known as the Drug-Free Safety Program, is intended to help Ohio employers more effectively prevent on-the-job injuries and illnesses by integrating drug-free efforts into their overall workplace safety program. The goal: to train, retain and better manage employees in recovery. Eligible employers can receive benefits such as: Reimbursement for drug-free workplace policy development, training, drug and alcohol...

Kentucky addiction recovery efforts face challenges amid Medicaid cuts

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Isaiah House, Kentucky's largest non-profit provider for addiction recovery, has had to make some tough decisions in light of federal funding cuts. The 'big, beautiful bill' cuts over \$1 trillion in Medicaid and Medicare. Isaiah House has been hit by the Medicaid funding cuts, and started making changes in January 2025. About 10% of their staff have been laid off across the state, including their location in Louisville. “Isaiah House remains firmly committed to our mission of saving lives, restoring families, and improving communities for those suffering from substance use disorder,” said Isaiah House CEO, Nick Wren. “While these changes have been difficult, we are confident in our ability to...

National News

Alcohol use disorder is profoundly undertreated during and after pregnancy, leaving parents and infants at risk

In recent years, binge drinking and alcohol use disorder (AUD) rates during pregnancy have increased significantly in the United States, eclipsing even opioids. Evidence-based treatments for AUD include medications and counseling. Still, these are underused, including during pregnancy when both the health of the parent and the development of the fetus are at risk from alcohol consumption. This reflects, in part, the absence of clinical treatment guidelines, insufficient data on

the safety of AUD medicines for the fetus, and stigma around substance use during pregnancy. For a study published in Alcohol, Clinical and...

Cutting alcohol use linked to reduced hospital visits for mental health treatment among primary care patients

Changes in unhealthy alcohol use over time can be measured by a simple questionnaire at annual primary care visits. A study published in Alcohol, Clinical and Experimental Research found that in a primary care population that is regularly screened for alcohol use, decreased alcohol use scores are associated with reduced utilization of urgent care, emergency department, or inpatient treatments for mental health concerns. The findings may encourage clinicians to advise patients of the benefits of reducing their drinking and incentivize health care systems to invest in treatments for unhealthy alcohol use. Prior studies have shown...

Different impulsive traits carry different risks for harmful alcohol use, personalized treatment

The authors of a new study have identified distinct personality profiles of people with impulsivity, with different attributes that influence whether a person engages in, or avoids, high-risk drinking. The study suggests that the link between impulsivity and high-risk drinking is more nuanced than commonly understood. The profiles, described in Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research, may give health care providers a framework to personalize interventions more effectively to prevent harms related to alcohol use. People with impulsive personalities tend to be highly emotionally reactive or act without sufficiently considering...

Alcohol withdrawal therapy linked to healthy changes in the gut microbiome

Alcohol withdrawal is associated with positive changes in the composition and function of the gut microbiome, improving our understanding of the gut's influence on physiological and behavioral health, including alcohol craving, a new study suggests. The research may lead to new targets and probiotic treatments for alcohol use disorder (AUD). Dangerous drinking patterns are associated with negative changes in the gut microbiome, which are implicated in brain inflammation and unhealthy behaviors (such as impaired sociability in people with AUD, and depression and anxiety). Previous investigations suggest certain...

Study reveals beneficial effects of diet and exercise on alcohol-related adverse liver health

A novel study investigating how physical activity and diet quality interact with different levels and patterns of alcohol consumption shows that healthy eating and increased levels of physical activity significantly lower the risk of alcohol-attributable liver-related mortality. The findings from this comprehensive study in the Journal of Hepatology, use data from a large multi-ethnic US cohort and highlight the importance of considering other lifestyle behaviors when estimating

the risk of death from alcohol-related liver disease at a population level. In the US, more than half (53%) of adults over 18 years of age regularly consume alcohol...

Parental liver disease death more than doubles risk of alcohol-associated hepatitis in next generation

Research scientists from the Indiana University School of Medicine and Regenstrief Institute have found that individuals with a parent who died from liver disease face more than double the risk of developing alcohol-associated hepatitis, one of the deadliest forms of alcohol-related liver disease, compared with similar heavy drinkers without that family history. The study is published in the journal *Hepatology Communications*. Researchers investigated the impact of parental liver disease mortality on both the development and outcomes of alcohol-associated hepatitis in adult children. In the U.S., nearly 20,000 people die from alcoholic...

College drinking linked to poor academics and mental health for those around the drinker

It's well known that alcohol misuse can harm not only drinkers themselves but also those around them. Now, a new report in the *Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs* shows that, among college students, harms such as lower grades, mental distress and even suicidal thoughts are linked to being exposed to a drinker's poor behavior. "We often think of alcohol's harms as physical or social, but this was the first study to assess academic harms from others' drinking, like having to drop a class or take on extra work," says lead researcher Pamela J. Trangenstein, of the Alcohol Research Group in Emeryville, CA. "These harms..."

Potent Cannabis Products Linked to Psychosis, Mental Health Risks

Cannabis products containing high concentrations of delta-9-tetrahydrocannabinol (THC) -- the main psychoactive compound in marijuana -- were linked to psychosis, schizophrenia, and addiction, a systematic review found. Across 99 studies examining the effects of high-concentration THC products on mental health outcomes, 70% of the nontherapeutic studies (i.e., those not attempting to treat a medical condition or symptom) showed an unfavorable association with psychosis or schizophrenia and 75% found a relationship to cannabis use disorder (CUD). Anxiety and depression appeared to be worsened in 53% and 41% of such...

Q&A: What would reclassifying marijuana mean for medical research?

There may be a major change in national drug policy coming soon. The Trump administration is considering reclassifying marijuana from a Schedule I to a Schedule III substance. The change in classification was proposed in 2024 under the Biden administration, following a recommendation from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and was still under review by the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) when the new administration took office in January. While the change in classification doesn't legalize marijuana for recreational use, it would remove restrictions that have hindered medical research on...

Largest ever study into cannabis use investigates risk of paranoia, poor mental health in the general population

New research from the Institute of Psychiatry, Psychology & Neuroscience (IoPPN) at King's College London, in partnership with the University of Bath, has found that the reasons why a person chooses to use cannabis can increase their risk of developing paranoia. The use and potency of cannabis is increasing worldwide, and dependence and cannabis-induced psychosis are also greatly increasing as a result, especially in North America. Two new research papers, both using data from Cannabis & Me—the largest survey of its kind—have identified key risk factors associated with the more severe forms of paranoia in cannabis...

Nicotine, cannabis, vaping, psychedelics surge in US

The percentage of young and midlife adults using nicotine pouches significantly increased last year, while cannabis use, vaping and the use of psychedelic drugs are at or near all-time highs, according to the latest data from the University of Michigan's Monitoring the Future Panel survey. "Alcohol continues to be the most commonly used substance across age groups, followed by cannabis and nicotine," said Megan Patrick, research professor at the Institute for Social Research and principal investigator of the MTF Panel Study. "The patterns of substance use are changing over time, with cannabis use, vaping of both nicotine and...

The quit-smoking ads that helped millions are ending. A former smoker and experts fear what comes next.

The Center for Disease Control and Prevention's "Tips From Former Smokers" ads are set to stop at the end of September. For 13 years, these tough and honest commercials told real stories about the harm of smoking and pointed people to free help at 1-800-QUIT-NOW. When the ads ran, calls to the quitline jumped, according to independent scientific research institute RTI International. Many people tried to quit and some stuck with it. One of them is Leslie Allison-Seei. She says she's alive today because she called. Leslie started coughing up blood in 2014 after smoking for over 40 years. She'd been having bleeding fits for two...

New guideline offers menu of options to help people quit smoking tobacco

Tobacco smoking is the number one cause of preventable disease and death in Canada; it is highly addictive and hard to stop. Recognizing these challenges, a new guideline from the Canadian Task Force on Preventive Health Care provides a menu of effective options to help people quit smoking, with behavioral and medication options and a natural health product that can be tailored and combined for personal choice. The guideline is published in CMAJ (Canadian Medical Association Journal) "Quitting smoking can be hard, and people may need to try to quit many times with a variety of options, like counseling, medication or in...

Designed to deceive: A call for urgent action on vape device design

A University of Otago–Ōtākou Whakaihu Waka researcher is calling for urgent and targeted regulatory action towards vaping, as her recent research shows the discreet design of vaping devices has fostered vaping normalization and uptake among young Māori. Dr. Robin Quigg of the Department of Preventive and Social Medicine investigated the context of vaping use among young Māori in what is believed to be the first kaupapa Māori study (using group interviews within a kaupapa Māori framework) published in the peer-reviewed journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*. Participants, most of whom were aged between 18 and 26...

Study proposes new, more personalized methadone restart approach for opioid use disorder

A new study by University of Colorado Anschutz and Denver Health researchers, published in *JAMA Network Open*, introduces a more individualized approach to restarting methadone treatment for people with opioid use disorder. The findings suggest that tailoring methadone doses to each patient's unique circumstances can improve care without compromising safety. Methadone is a proven medication that can cut the risk of death from opioid use disorder by about 50%. The researchers considered that current treatment protocols often overlook individual patient needs, especially when restarting methadone after missed...

FDA's Opioid Labeling Initiative Is Smoke and Mirrors

The FDA recently announced new requirements for opioid medications to be labeled to emphasize "the safety risks of long-term use." The labeling updates are based on two required postmarketing observational studies on all new opioid analgesics for chronic noncancer pain. While the labeling changes are intended for patients, FDA also cautioned prescribers and stated that patients should undergo periodic checks for signs of addiction, abuse, or misuse of opioid prescriptions. FDA also requires an additional prospective, randomized, controlled clinical trial to directly examine the benefits and risks of...

Polysubstance involvement in youth opioid overdoses increases with age

Most research suggests that opioid overdoses involving multiple substances in the United States typically occur among people aged 25–54. However, a new study led by Boston University School of Public Health (BUSPH) and Mass General Brigham for Children indicates that polysubstance-involved opioid overdoses are also prevalent among youth. Published in the journal *Pediatrics*, the study examined trends in overdose mortality and found that among youth, opioid overdoses more commonly involved multiple substances than opioids alone, starting at age 21. Polysubstance-involved overdose deaths occurred among...

Top Democratic senator launches inquiry into for-profit methadone clinics

A top Democratic senator is launching an investigation into privately owned methadone clinics' business practices and treatment of patients. In letters to three separate for-profit methadone clinic chains, Sen. Maggie Hassan (D-N.H.) is

demanding information about revenue, patient volumes, and employee numbers from three major methadone clinic chains: BayMark, New Season, and Acadia. The investigation, Hassan wrote, seeks to “better understand the impact of the OTP model on patient access to methadone; patient treatment outcomes; and potential waste, fraud, and abuse in federal health care programs.”

SAMHSA Announces \$43M in Supplemental Funding to Support Youth Recovery Housing Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) today announced \$43 million in new supplemental funding available to State Opioid Response (SOR) program grantees to expand recovery housing services for young adults, ages 18-24. This investment advances President Trump’s Executive Order, Ending Crime and Disorder on America’s Streets. “We are confronting the root causes of homelessness, including addiction, with urgency and resolve,” said U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. “This funding expands recovery housing for young adults, strengthens...

New treatment with designer proteins could disrupt cycle of addiction without stifling natural pleasure

A new biochemical approach to combat addiction, developed by researchers at the University of California San Diego and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), has shown promising results in reducing drug-seeking behavior. By custom engineering proteins in the brain, called ion channels, to be activated by cocaine, the new approach is able to reverse the rewarding effect of cocaine, but only when cocaine is actually present in the body. This effectively breaks the positive feedback loop of addiction. While addiction is driven by positive feedback loops in the brain, these same neural responses are also involved in the enjoyment of...

Stimulant Marketing Payments to Clinicians Surged in Recent Years

Total marketing payments for stimulants to physicians and advanced practice clinicians (APCs) sharply increased in recent years, researchers found. From 2021 to 2023, stimulant marketing payments to physicians doubled from \$1.8 million to \$3.6 million, and tripled from \$0.5 million to \$1.6 million for APCs, reported J. Travis Donahoe, PhD, MPH, of the University of Pittsburgh, and colleagues. The increases were driven in large part by growth in marketing to psychiatrists (by \$1.2 million from 2021 to 2023, representing a 250% increase) and nurse practitioners (by \$0.8 million, representing a 300% increase), they noted in JAMA...

How the brain's immune system drives drug relapse and a potential new way to stop it

A new study at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill has discovered a surprising new mechanism in the brain that may explain why people recovering from drug addiction often relapse. Repeated drug use changes the brain in lasting ways. Using a rodent model of cocaine use, UNC researchers found that during

abstinence, the brain's immune cells, called microglia, begin actively pruning parts of other support cells known as astrocytes. This damage increased drug-seeking behavior, but when scientists blocked microglia from removing astrocyte pieces, relapse behaviors were reduced. The findings are published...

Supreme Court Allows Trump Administration to Cut DEI Research at NIH

The Trump administration can slash hundreds of millions of dollars' worth of research funding in its push to cut federal diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) efforts, the Supreme Court decided Thursday. The split court lifted a judge's order blocking \$783 million worth of cuts made by the NIH to align with Republican President Donald Trump's priorities. The court split 5-4 on the decision. Chief Justice John Roberts was among those who wouldn't have allowed the cuts, along with the court's three liberals. The high court did keep the Trump administration's anti-DEI directive blocked for future funding with a key vote from Justice...

Study finds both video game loot boxes and physical card packs are linked to problem gambling

Buying packs of trading cards like Pokémon or Magic: The Gathering may be more similar to gambling than many realize, according to a new international study. Researchers found that spending money on both video game "loot boxes" and physical card packs is linked to problem gambling behaviors. The study was conducted by researchers from City University of Hong Kong, University of York, University of Lincoln, IT University of Copenhagen, and University of Bristol, and published in Psychology of Addictive Behaviors. The study, which surveyed nearly 2,000 players across the U.S., U.K., Canada, Australia, New Zealand...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-25-322](#)

[Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project Grant \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-25-323](#)

[Stephen I. Katz Early Stage Investigator Research Project Grant \(R01 Basic Experimental Studies with Human Required\)](#)

CAR Member New Publications

Overdose education and naloxone distribution in jails: Examining the impact of the Communities That HEAL intervention in 4 states

Timothy Hunt, Carrie B. Oser, Peter D. Friedmann, Nicole Mack, Peter Balvanz, Bridget Freisthler, Redonna K Chandler, Karli Hochstatter, Daniel R. Harris, LaShawn Glasgow, Lauren D'Costa, Mary R. Russo, Barry Eggleston, Arnie Aldridge, Paul Bellair, Allyson G. Cogan, James L. David, Nabila El-Bassel, Dawn Goddard-Eckrich, Steve Gomori, Holly Hagan, Steve Hanson, JaNae Holloway, Elizabeth N. Kinnard, Charlie Knott, Michael W. Konstan, Sharon L. Walsh, Patricia A. LeBaron, Michael S. Lyons, Margaret McGladrey, Joan Papp, Sean M. Murphy, Sandra Springer, Emmanuel Oga, Michele Staton, Elizabeth Schady, Fernando Montero, Hilary L. Surratt, Danelle Stevens-Watkins, John Winhusen, Gary A. Zarkin, Greer A. Hamilton & Joel G. Sprunger

Health & Justice

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1186/s40352-025-00353-5>

ABSTRACT

Background: Opioid-related overdose is the leading cause of mortality among individuals recently released from incarceration in the U.S. Naloxone is an FDA-approved opioid antagonist medication designed to rapidly reverse opioid overdose. Despite evidence of its acceptability and effectiveness at reducing the risk of opioid overdose death after release from incarceration, only an estimated 25% of US jails provide naloxone upon release. This study examines the effectiveness of the HEALing Communities Study (HCS) Communities That HEAL (CTH) intervention on enhancing access to overdose education and naloxone distribution (OEND) in participating jails in Kentucky, New York, Massachusetts, and Ohio.

Methods: Communities were randomized to intervention ($n = 34$) or wait-list control ($n = 33$) arms stratified by state. Jail-based surveys ($n = 59$) were implemented at three time points during 2019 to 2022. Generalized linear mixed models (GLMM) with imputation captured intervention effects during the evaluation period (July 1, 2021-June 30, 2022). Interpretation of results was informed by the Practical, Robust Implementation and Sustainability Model framework.

Results: The CTH intervention was significantly associated with the hypothesized outcome, resulting in a greater number of jails providing overdose education (H1, relative riskAdj = 1.51 [95% CI: 1.09, 2.08], $p = 0.013$) and the number of jails providing naloxone upon release (H2, relative riskAdj = 1.49 [95% CI: 1.05, 2.13], $p = 0.027$). External factors related to OEND implementation, such as correctional health care models, available resources, and state COVID restrictions, varied across communities.

Conclusions: The CTH intervention engaging community coalitions to deploy evidence-based practices was effective in increasing OEND implementation in jails, helping address elevated overdose risks for individuals during and post-release from incarceration. Partnerships between state, community, and jail-based stakeholders are needed to assure expanded access to this lifesaving, evidence-based approach.

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