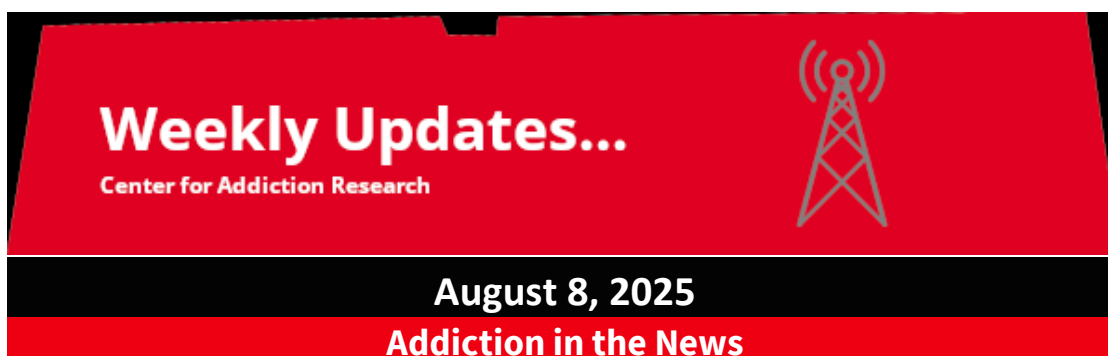


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) 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 2025 Summer Speaker Series Event

Back by popular demand, the Center for Addiction Research will hold its final virtual Summer Speaker Series event, Wednesday, August 13 at 12pm on “**Psychedelics as Therapeutics for Substances Use Disorder: A Perspective on Their Neurobiology and Future Clinical Applications**” with presenter, **CAR member, Dr. Davide Amato**. This presentation will be held virtually and is free and open to the public. (PDF event flyer attached)

>> [Register for the presentation](#)

Study finds rising cannabis use among Black and Hispanic men with chronic illness

Cannabis use is gaining popularity in the United States, driven by growing legalization, public acceptance and diverse methods of consumption. More people than ever before support its legal medicinal and recreational use, and more adults—mainly men—are turning to cannabis for relief from physical and mental health symptoms. Now, health behavior experts from the Texas A&M University School of Public Health, along with collaborators from three other universities, have taken a closer look at this dual use among Hispanic and non-Hispanic Black men living with chronic health conditions. "We believe our study is the first to focus exclusively on these associations among non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic men with... (second author, Dr. Ashley Merianos, CAR member, see publication below in the newsletter)

'This program saved my life' | Meet the group of Dearborn County inmates overcoming addiction

LAWRENCEBURG, In. — Behind the doors of the Dearborn County Law Enforcement Center, there are two pods — one for a group of men and another for a group of women. This section of the jail is the home of Dearborn County's Jail Chemical Addiction Program (JCAP), led by director Tisha Linzy. The county's website describes JCAP's programming as "cognitive behavioral, evidence-based treatment groups for the chemically dependent incarcerated population." On July 30, I saw the program in action and sat in on a morning of treatment for the male inmates, sitting down with inmates Brian Offill and Steven Couch. "I've been battling with addiction for a long time in my life," Offill said. "I was like, 'I'll never get...

'We're taking the right steps' | Ohio's cannabis industry marks 1 year of recreational marijuana sales

CINCINNATI — Signifying another high point for Ohio's budding cannabis industry, Wednesday marked one year since the sale of recreational marijuana began in the Buckeye State. For those within the industry, like Bri Trent, business has been slowly but steadily climbing. "It's beautiful, like watching a plant blossom," said Trent, the general manager of Terrasana Dispensary in Middletown. "I think the community is really receptive to us being here, and I do believe it's moving. Everybody's excited to have these new opportunities to come in and get to ask questions." Since the dispensary opened in April, Trent said, the number of daily recreational customers has grown from about 20 per day to more than...

Killer drug 'Designer Xanax' not controlled in Kentucky yet. Local officials are working to change that

COVINGTON, Ky. — Kentucky Attorney General Russell Coleman wants the state's leaders to ban an illicit drug allegedly responsible for dozens of overdose deaths in the Commonwealth last year, and he credits Northern Kentucky law enforcement for bringing the "emerging crisis" to his attention. Bromazolam, also known as "designer Xanax," is being passed off as prescription pills, including benzodiazepines, which are commonly used to treat conditions such as anxiety disorders, insomnia and seizures. Sold illicitly on the streets and online, bromazolam has proven to be both highly potent and lethal, especially when combined with opioids or other central nervous system depressants, Coleman...

Northeast Ohio experts discuss homelessness and federal efforts to deter crime and drug use

Last month, President Donald Trump signed an executive order aimed at deterring crime by making it easier to remove unhoused individuals from public spaces and place them into mental health and addiction treatment facilities. The order calls for strict law enforcement against camping, loitering, and drug use, and discourages the "housing first" model that prioritizes providing stable housing rather than involuntary treatment. Supporters say it will restore public safety and help people

access necessary care, while critics warn it risks criminalizing poverty and pushing vulnerable people further into the shadows. Last year, the number of people experiencing homelessness reached a record high. According to the...

UofL research shows combined exposure to alcohol and “forever chemicals” increases liver damage

Have you ever wondered why some people who drink alcohol develop serious liver problems while others don't? A study from University of Louisville researchers published in May in Toxicological Sciences suggests that the answer might be hidden in everyday sources such as drinking water, food packaging or even non-stick cookware. Scientists at UofL, along with colleagues from Boston University and the University of Massachusetts Lowell, have identified perfluorooctane sulfonate (PFOS) as a potential environmental factor that worsens alcohol-associated liver disease. PFOS is a man-made chemical belonging to the group known as per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), often referred to as...

National News

Screen Every Adult for Unhealthy Alcohol Use, USPSTF Says

In updated draft guidance, the U.S. Preventive Services Task Force (USPSTF) said that all adults should be screened for unhealthy alcohol use in primary care settings, recommendations that align with those from 2018. For adults who screen positive for "risky or hazardous drinking," the task force recommended brief behavioral counseling interventions -- a grade B recommendation, based on moderate net benefit. "Unhealthy alcohol use is really a major cause of death and serious illness in this country, and we can reduce that risk by asking adults about their drinking and providing brief counseling," ...

Heart activity reveals early signs of problem alcohol use

Cardiovascular tests performed during primary care visits may give evidence of increasing alcohol use, which could help clinicians identify and treat risky drinking behaviors early. In a study published in Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research, researchers found that blood pressure and heart rate readings were higher in people who drank more heavily. The findings confirm the negative effects of alcohol on the heart and support the use of cost-effective cardiovascular tests during primary care visits for people who drink alcohol in order to prevent more serious alcohol use problems and related health consequences. The...

Women's hormonal stress system is less reactive to high-dose alcohol, potentially contributing to tolerance

Biological sex affects hormonal and involuntary nervous system responses to binge drinking, potentially influencing vulnerability to alcohol use disorder (AUD). That's according to a new laboratory study examining the role of biological sex in the endocrine stress response to high-dose alcohol. Women's alcohol use, traditionally lower than men's, has, by some measures, caught up. Heavy episodic (binge)

drinking, for example, has climbed steadily among college women over recent decades. Biological sex is known to affect how alcohol is absorbed and metabolized, and physiological responses to certain medicinal and psychological...

Among aging adults, especially women, problematic alcohol use has become more common

Hazardous and binge drinking are becoming more prevalent in older people, most notably women, according to a large study of alcohol use and aging in two Nordic countries that may illuminate similar trends in other Western populations. Alcohol use typically declines with age, partly because of physiological changes and accumulating health issues that amplify the risks. Nevertheless, drinking among older adults, especially women, has increased in recent decades and now commonly exceeds lower-risk drinking guidelines. This may in part reflect more liberal attitudes to drinking among baby boomers and people with greater social...

Brief, low-cost education may discourage alcohol use during pregnancy

A simple information sheet may help prevent harms caused by prenatal alcohol exposure. A study just published in *Alcohol, Clinical and Experimental Research* found that women who reviewed a flyer with clear, concise information about alcohol use during pregnancy changed their attitudes and increased their understanding of the risks of, and health recommendations about, drinking during pregnancy. The authors of the study have recommended that health care providers and communities make similar information available to people of childbearing age to reduce the risk of harms related to prenatal...

Single dose of CBD reduces alcohol craving and brain reactivity in alcoholics

A recent study of individuals with alcohol use disorder found that a single 800 mg dose of cannabidiol reduced alcohol cravings and dampened activity in a key brain region involved in addiction. Specifically, cannabidiol lowered activation in the nucleus accumbens in response to alcohol cues, such as the sight or handling of a participant's preferred alcoholic drink. The findings were published in *Molecular Psychiatry*. Cannabidiol (CBD) is a non-intoxicating compound found in the cannabis plant. Unlike tetrahydrocannabinol (THC)—the primary psychoactive ingredient in cannabis—CBD does not produce a high and is generally...

Many smokers have misperceptions about nicotine. Researchers harness curiosity to correct them

Misperceptions about nicotine abound. Nicotine is not the main cancer-causing component in cigarettes; still, many believe it is. Nicotine makes cigarettes addictive; many people believe it does not. Researchers from Penn's Annenberg School for Communication and the Institute for Nicotine & Tobacco Studies at Rutgers University want to make sure consumers understand the effects of nicotine in advance of a proposed nicotine-level mandate by the U.S. Food and Drug

Administration that would cap nicotine levels in cigarettes at 0.7 milligrams per gram of tobacco, significantly lower than the average level of 10–12...

Harm reduction techniques being phased out under Trump

The Trump administration is escalating its push against what has become a key part of the way states, localities and communities respond to the overdose epidemic: harm reduction. A public health approach aimed at mitigating the negative health effects associated with drug use, harm reduction aims to prevent overdoses and infectious disease transmission. Methods can involve the use of opioid overdose reversal medications such as naloxone, providing sterile needles to limit the transmission of infectious diseases, test strips that detect fentanyl in drugs, and "safe consumption sites," where people can use drugs under...

FDA Slaps Stronger Warnings on Opioids

Opioid medications will be required to have their labeling updated to highlight the safety risks of long-term use, the FDA announced on Thursday. The agency is requiring opioid manufacturers to add to the prescribing information that higher doses are associated with increased risk of serious harm, and that the risks of serious harms persist over the course of therapy, among other changes. Based on results of two postmarketing observational studies -- and the FDA advisory committee meeting discussing them this May -- new quantitative estimates of the risks of addiction, abuse, misuse, and fatal and non-fatal overdose in...

CDC to disburse delayed funds for fighting fentanyl and more, staffers say

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention will be able to fully fund the Overdose Data to Action, or OD2A, program ahead of a key budget deadline, according to a CDC senior leader. A second CDC staff member confirmed that "there have been developments and we are likely to have full funding," although they did not have details on when the funding would become available. Both spoke to NPR on the condition of anonymity because they fear retribution for speaking to the press without authorization. Some staffers at CDC expressed to NPR that this appeared to be good news, although the funding situation was still fluid and...

Discovery of a new analgesic promises pain relief with fewer downsides

Opioids like morphine are widely used in medical practice due to their powerful pain-relieving effects, yet they carry the risk of serious adverse effects such as respiratory depression and drug dependence. For this reason, Japan has strict regulations in place to ensure that these medications are prescribed only by authorized physicians. In the United States, the opioid OxyContin was once frequently prescribed, triggering a surge in the misuse of synthetic opioids such as fentanyl. As a result, the number of deaths caused by opioid overdose surpassed 80,000 in 2023, escalating into a national public health crisis now...

Nonmedical use of prescription ADHD drugs among teens has dropped

Despite concerns about increased stimulant prescribing, nonmedical use of ADHD drugs among adolescents has declined in the last 20 years, a University of Michigan study shows. While medical use of prescription stimulants for ADHD among adolescents increased slightly between 2005 and 2023, nonmedical use declined more. "Lifetime medical use was 2% lower in 2005 when compared to nonmedical use, and is now 2% higher," said study co-author Philip Veliz, U-M research associate professor at the U-M School of Nursing and Center for the Study of Drugs, Alcohol, Smoking, and Health. This reversal is important and "is what all...

Study finds affordable trial programs prevent youth substance misuse

While overdose deaths in the U.S. sharply declined in 2024, they remain high. Almost 90,000 Americans died from drug overdoses between October 2023 and September 2024. Overdose death rates are particularly high in American Indian and Alaska Native (AI/AN) people. The earlier someone starts substance use, the more likely they are to have substance use problems later in life. So, it is important to work with young people to prevent substance use early in life. Researchers at Emory's Rollins School of Public Health recently partnered with Cherokee Nation Behavioral Health to design and implement programs to help prevent...

The ancient origins of the addiction-prone mind—and what it means for us today

Why do so many people struggle to stop drinking, quit smoking, or resist endless scrolling on their phones? Addiction touches millions of lives, yet it's often misunderstood as a personal weakness or moral failing. In reality, addiction is rooted in the ancient architecture of the human brain. Stanford Medicine researchers are exploring how our evolutionarily designed reward-seeking brain can be hijacked by addiction. "We've got an old brain in a new environment," said Keith Humphreys, Ph.D., a professor of psychiatry and an addiction researcher at Stanford Medicine. "That vulnerability didn't matter much for 99.9% of..."

CDC Launches New Campaign to Address Youth Substance Use and Mental Health

The back-to-school season is a great time to engage with youth about mental health and substance use to promote their well-being throughout the academic year. To support these conversations, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) has launched Free Mind, a new national campaign that provides youth ages 12-17 and their parents and caregivers with resources and information about substance use, mental health, and the connection between the two. The drug overdose crisis is constantly evolving and remains an important public health issue. In 2024, more than 80,000 Americans died from a drug overdose. From...

Senate panel rejects Trump cuts to NIH, other health agencies

The Senate Appropriations Committee rejected the Trump administration's massive proposed funding cut to the National Institutes of Health (NIH), advancing a measure that would increase the agency's budget by \$400 million. The White House budget called for slashing NIH funding by \$18 billion, a decrease of 40 percent. Instead, the committee advanced the bill on a 26-3 vote, delivering a bipartisan rebuke of the administration's efforts to defund medical research. "This committee has had multiple hearings over the last several months and heard from patients, families and researchers about the importance of NIH..."

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 russeccg@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.

Hoosier Lottery, ICRG Urge Research to Address Gambling Disorder

Deadline: August 29, 2025

The International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG) and the Hoosier Lottery have announced an initiative to encourage research on responsible gambling and gambling disorder as it relates to lottery gambling. The aim is to generate actionable insights to inform responsible gambling practices, policy, or initiatives. Research projects may include stand-alone research or a pilot project; preliminary research in preparation for a large research project such as a comprehensive literature review, or instrument development and testing; and research tasks subsequent to a full research project, such as follow-up testing. The total amount that may be requested is \$40,000. Applicants may request up to \$35,000 in direct costs and up to \$5,000 in facilities and administration costs for a period not to exceed 12 months. Research must clearly connect to the State of Indiana, the Hoosier Lottery, or the lottery industry. This may include, but is not limited to, using Hoosier Lottery data, tools, or publications; including Indiana residents in sampling; and using statistics, data, or demographic studies specific to Indiana's population. Research must relate to problem gambling, disordered gambling, or responsible gambling subjects. Domestic or international, public or private, nonprofit or for-profit organizations are eligible to apply for ICRG funding. The principal investigator must have a PhD, MD,

or other terminal degree. Investigators who are not active PIs or co-PIs on existing ICRG grants are strongly encouraged to apply. Founded in 1996, ICRG is a global leader in scientific research on gambling disorder and responsible gambling.

Arnold Ventures Funded-Causal Research: The Household Impact of Sports Betting

Deadline: September 15, 2025 (Letters of Interest)

Since the U.S. Supreme Court 2018 *Murphy v. NCAA* decision, 38 states have legalized sports betting, rapidly reshaping the consumer finance, behavioral health, and regulatory landscape. Participating states also have benefited from a significant new source of tax revenue. Yet little is known about the individual- and household-level financial, social, and behavioral impacts of legalized sports betting. Also, little is known about how regulation, enforcement, and consumer protections influence these outcomes. Arnold Ventures (AV) will fund rigorous, causal research to address this gap. No dollar amount is posted for this opportunity, however past awards have ranged from \$10,000 to \$1 million. Applicants should specify the amount of funding requested, reflecting the project timeline and the study scope, and include an approximate project budget. An AV RFP seeks to deepen understanding of the financial, social, and behavioral impacts of legalized sports betting. The funder is interested in studies that produce actionable insights for policymakers, regulators, and advocates—particularly at the state level—where betting frameworks are rapidly evolving and evidence needs are acute. This RFP will support both Randomized Controlled Trials (RCTs) and rigorous Quasi-Experimental Designs (QEDs). Studies that can inform policy might examine betting-related outcomes, compare regulatory approaches, or test interventions aimed at changing behavior. Please visit the website to review all areas of particular interest for this RFP. AV is a philanthropy dedicated to improving the lives of all Americans through evidence-based policy solutions that maximize opportunity and minimize injustice. The funder focuses on improving systems where outcomes are falling short, incentives are misaligned, and the time is right for change. By funding rigorous research, AV strives to better understand root causes of problems and build the evidence about what works to solve them. AV uses this research to advocate for policy reforms at all levels of government and build durable, bipartisan coalitions to drive lasting change and impact. Please visit the website to obtain full RFP details.

CAR Member New Publications

Correlates of Recreational and Medicinal Cannabis Use Among Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic Men with Chronic Condition

Benjamin N. Montemayor, Ashley L. Merianos, Caroline D. Bergeron, Ledric D. Sherman, Wura Jacobs, Sunghyun Chung, Arham Hassan & Matthew Lee Smith

Journal of Community Health

DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.1007/s10900-025-01500-7>

ABSTRACT

Non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic men experience disproportionately high rates of chronic conditions and may use cannabis to manage symptoms. However, cannabis use patterns and correlates in these populations remain underexplored. This study assessed individual and health-related correlates of current (past 30-day) cannabis use among non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic men with chronic illness. Data were drawn from a national sample of 1,982 non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic men aged ≥ 40 with at least one chronic condition. Participants completed measures of cannabis use, health perceptions, and diagnoses of conditions commonly associated with medicinal cannabis use: chronic pain, depression/anxiety, arthritis/rheumatic disease, and cancer. Logistic regression analyses examined associations between cannabis use, chronic conditions, pain, and stress, adjusting for sociodemographics. Participants had a mean age of 56.6 (± 10) years; 58.2% were non-Hispanic Black, and 21.3% reported current cannabis use. Use was significantly more common among those with chronic pain, depression/anxiety, and arthritis ($p < 0.001$ for all). In adjusted models, greater pain (AOR = 1.11, 95% CI: 1.07–1.16, $p < 0.001$), higher stress (AOR = 1.06, 1.01–1.10, $p < 0.05$), and more chronic conditions (AOR = 1.23, 1.10–1.38, $p < 0.001$) were associated with increased odds of use. Among current users, those reporting both medicinal and recreational use used cannabis more frequently ($p < 0.001$). Cannabis use was higher among non-Hispanic Black and Hispanic men with chronic conditions who reported greater pain, stress, and poorer physical and mental health. Dual medicinal and recreational use may signal increased cannabis-related health risks. Routine communication and monitoring of cannabis use are recommended to mitigate potential harms.

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