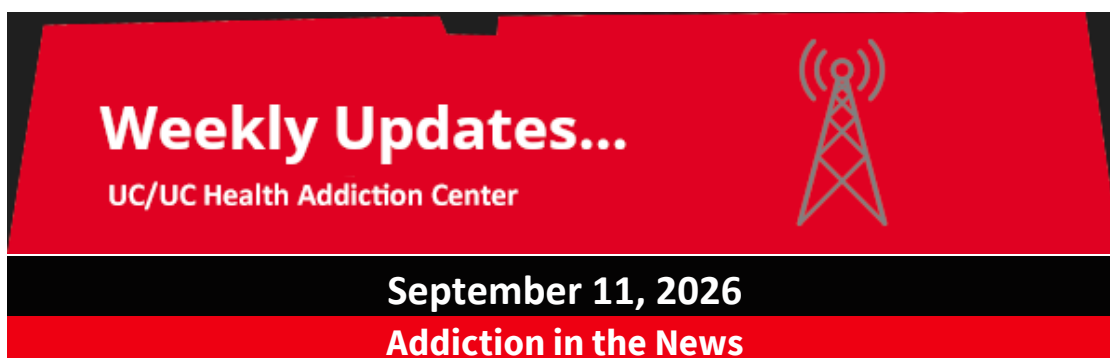


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu) to change your communication preferences. Thank you.

Thank you for your interest in the UC/UC Health Addiction Center - our mission is to generate new knowledge through innovative research, disseminate that knowledge through education and training, and provide high-quality, evidence-based treatment for individuals affected by addiction and related conditions. We are committed to supporting lifelong recovery and promoting dignity and respect for all individuals on their recovery journey.



UC/ Regional News

UC-UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC) Pilot Research Program

Deadlines:

Full Applications Due: November 2, 2026 (before 8 am)

Notification of Awards Made: February 2027 (date TBD)

Award Dates: March 1, 2027 – February 29, 2028

Dr. T. John Winhusen, Donald C. Harrison Endowed Chair in Medicine, Director, UC/UC Health Addiction Center, and Professor; Vice Chair of Addiction

Sciences, is pleased to announce this year's pilot research program. Applications will be accepted from any full-time faculty member, resident, clinical fellow, or post-doctoral scholar whose appointment is at the University of Cincinnati College of Medicine (or by permission of the UCAC director) and the project must be conducted in a UC CoM laboratory. Any resulting application for funding to an outside agency must be made through UC. Co-investigators can be from other UC Colleges or affiliated entities, such as Cincinnati Children's or the Cincinnati Veterans Affairs Medical Center. The UCAC pilot program encourages applications that include interactions between basic scientists and clinicians to foster the development of translational investigations for addiction. In addition, interdisciplinary studies and studies that include participation of basic scientists or clinical researchers from other UC colleges and affiliates are encouraged.

Review full details and submission guidelines on the attached PDF.

Hamilton prepares for marijuana dispensaries as advocates warn of high-potency THC's impact on youth

FAIRFIELD TWP, Ohio — As Hamilton prepares for recreational marijuana dispensaries, a community conversation in Fairfield Township focused on a different side of cannabis legalization: what happens when young people encounter today's high-potency THC products. The Sept. 8 event at Walden Ponds Community Nazarene brought parents, prevention advocates, mental health and recovery organizations and other community members together for a resource fair, presentation and question-and-answer session. The event was part of the #THCFreeAmerica U.S. Tour organized by Johnny's Ambassadors...

THC drinks are slowly coming back to Ohio breweries and shelves: Why now, and how long will it last?

MARIEMONT, Ohio — For almost half a year, THC drinks were illegal in Ohio. But now, consumers are slowly seeing them back on shelves. "Obviously, it's been a rollercoaster," said Bobby Slattery, owner of Fifty West Brewing, which makes the popular THC seltzer "Sunflower." The state ban on THC drinks and seltzers lasted around five months, starting in March 2026. But after much legislative back-and-forth and multiple lawsuits, breweries and storefronts are once again allowed to sell the beverages. "Our retail partners have been amazing, sales have been great and we're happy; we're happy to have it back there. The...

Northern Kentucky health department using wellness kiosks to prevent overdoses

CINCINNATI (WKRC) - People in Northern Kentucky can now pick up overdose-prevention and other health supplies at any hour of the day, without having to walk into a clinic. The Northern Kentucky Health Department has seven wellness kiosks in various neighborhoods stocked with health care supplies. The program is designed to prevent drug overdoses in the community, with kiosks placed in public locations so people can access items any time, day or night. "The level of comfort somebody has going into a facility trying to access supplies like these can be very minimal due to stigma," said Ashley Withers, a health educator at the...

Novel Synthetic Opioid Cychlorphine: What Doctors Should Know

The emergence of the synthetic opioid cychlorphine (N-propionitrile chlorphine) in recent years has physicians and public health experts worried. The street drug has been linked to at least 55 deaths nationally from 2025 to 2026, according to a "drug threat notice" issued by the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) in April. Prevalence of the drug is highest in Ohio, Tennessee, and Texas. Cychlorphine belongs to a subclass of opioids known as orphines and is structurally similar to other benzimidazolones, such as brorphine and chlorphine. Jon E. Sprague, PhD, of Bowling Green State University in Ohio, told MedPage...

Ohio's mortality rate stagnates despite fewer overdose deaths

Mortality rates have declined drastically in some parts of the nation — but in Ohio, improvements have been minimal. Between 2015 and 2025, Ohio's mortality rate declined by just 0.4 percent, according to a Stateline analysis of CDC data. In the same time period, some states like New York, Rhode Island, New Jersey, and Massachusetts experienced declines between 7 percent and 8 percent. But the numbers don't tell the whole story. Declining drug overdose deaths have been a major contributor to the nation's recent mortality improvement — and Ohio and Lucas County have followed that trend. Much of the recent national...

Cleveland fatal overdoses fall to lowest quarterly total in more than a decade

CLEVELAND, Ohio — Fatal overdoses in Cleveland fell to their lowest quarterly total in more than a decade during the final three months of 2025, while suspected overdoses also reached their lowest level since early 2022, according to the Cleveland Department of Public Health. The department highlighted the improving trends Sunday in recognition of National Overdose Awareness Day, while also pointing residents to prevention and treatment resources. Health officials cautioned that overdose rates among children and teenagers remained above the five-year average for the second consecutive quarter. According to...

OneOhio award boosts services at Mansfield recovery center

Coleman Professional Services will receive \$250,000 to expand services at Danielle's Lighthouse in Mansfield as part of a broader \$3 million investment in addiction prevention, treatment and recovery efforts across north-central Ohio. The funding was announced by the OneOhio Recovery Foundation, which approved 18 projects in Ashland, Erie, Huron, Lorain, Medina, Richland and Wayne counties, according to a community announcement. The grants are part of the foundation's second regional funding cycle using opioid settlement dollars to address substance use disorder and co-occurring mental health conditions. The grants...

National News

Marshall University research identifies lasting brain changes associated with adolescent binge alcohol exposure

HUNTINGTON, W.Va. — New research from the Marshall University Joan C. Edwards School of Medicine provides insight into how binge alcohol exposure during adolescence may cause lasting changes in brain function that persist into adulthood, potentially identifying a new target for future treatment approaches. The study, published August 15 in *Molecular Psychiatry*, found that intermittent ethanol exposure during adolescence disrupted communication between astrocytes—supportive brain cells increasingly recognized for their role in neural signaling—and synapses in the hippocampus, a region of the brain...

Alcohol-Linked Cancer Deaths Rising

While overall cancer mortality rates have declined steadily over the last few decades, cancer deaths attributed to alcohol have been rising, a population-based observational trend analysis showed. From 1990 to 2023, alcohol-attributable cancer deaths doubled from 11,361 (age-standardized mortality rate [ASMR] 3.8 per 100,000 population) to 23,126 (ASMR 4.1 per 100,000 population), reported Chinmay T. Jani, MD, of the Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center at the University of Miami, and colleagues. The percentage of deaths attributable to alcohol increased across most cancer types, age groups, and sexes. "The findings...

Caregivers for people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder report increased stress and relational strengths

Caregivers of people with fetal alcohol spectrum disorder (FASD) identified stress levels and emotional health as the factors most negatively affected by their caregiving role. Many experienced limited social support and financial and employment challenges because of their caregiver role. These findings, just published in *Alcohol: Clinical and Experimental Research*, highlight the need for policies and programs that support families and caregivers of children and adults with developmental disabilities in general, and FASD in particular. Fetal alcohol spectrum disorder, or FASD, is a lifelong developmental disability. Parents and...

Chess as a therapeutic tool: Two studies show potential for improved quality of life

For several years, researchers at the Central Institute of Mental Health (CIMH) have been investigating whether chess-based cognitive training can also have therapeutic benefits. Two recent studies involving people with alcohol dependence, as well as children and adolescents with mental health conditions, now show that such training can improve quality of life and enhance cognitive abilities. Chess simultaneously requires attention, working memory, planning, impulse control and problem-solving. For this reason, the CIMH, under the leadership of Dr. Sabine Vollstädt-Klein, has been investigating for several...

The higher costs of a healthier option: New study lifts the lid on why no/lo alcohol beer drinkers feel out of pocket

Research from the University of Sheffield's Addictions Research Group reveals how marketing practices mean people get fewer savings on so-called no/lo drinks compared with their regular-strength counterparts. It found that while no/lo drinks are cheaper, customers pay more for no/lo beer because of smaller pack sizes, while their full-strength counterparts are more often sold in large multipacks that represent better value for money. For no/lo cider, the same issue means prices are on par with regular-strength counterparts rather than being cheaper. The study, published in the journal *Addiction*, and funded by the National...

NIH Research Shows Increasing Prevalence & Severity of Cannabis Use Disorder in US Adults, While Alcohol Use Disorder Steadies or Declines a Bit

New findings from the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) show that the prevalence of cannabis use disorder (CUD) among American adults, both male and female and across multiple age groups, has increased significantly in recent years, while the prevalence of alcohol use disorder (AUD) has remained stable and even declined a bit in some subgroups over the same period. One of the most important take-home messages of the study, published in JAMA Psychiatry, is that the increase in CUD prevalence and severity among U.S. adults who use cannabis directly "challenges the notion that cannabis has...

How cannabis legalization affects substance use

The legalization of cannabis affects substance use, with the potential for both negative and positive effects on public health, a new McGill-led study found. The researchers conducted a systematic review of evidence from 176 studies spanning 30 years in Canada, the United States, Europe, Uruguay and Australia. Published in The Milbank Quarterly, the review is one of the most comprehensive assessments to date of how cannabis policy reforms affect substance use and public health. "We found evidence that cannabis legalization can have ripple effects on the use of other substances, sometimes in ways that may reduce harm...

Mimicry connects smokers and can make quitting difficult

Going out for a smoke together and mimicking behaviors associated with smoking can double tobacco consumption and make quitting more difficult. Researchers from SWPS University examined mimicry as a "social glue" in interactions between smokers and published the results in the International Journal of Psychology. The research findings could revolutionize the design of smoking areas and anti-smoking campaigns. Tobacco addiction is one of the major factors leading to preventable adult deaths worldwide. That is why researchers from SWPS University decided to investigate whether mimicry, a...

Tobacco use can undermine fertility, UN health agency warns

"For all people who plan pregnancies, our message is, 'Stop smoking, improve your health, improve your reproductive health as well,'" said Dr Kerstin Schotte, Medical Officer with WHO's Tobacco Free Initiative. WHO defines infertility as failing to achieve pregnancy after 12 months or more of regular unprotected sexual intercourse – a condition that affects one in six people globally. In a new report summarizing all the evidence on a link between tobacco smoking and infertility, the agency cited decades of evidence that shows tobacco use is associated with infertility in women while also being harmful to sperm quality and sexual...

Walmart Agrees to Pay \$50 Million for Illegally Filling Unlawful Opioid Prescriptions

The Justice Department, together with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), today announced a \$50 million settlement with Walmart Inc. (Walmart) to resolve allegations that Walmart pharmacies illegally filled thousands of invalid prescriptions for opioids and other controlled substances in violation of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA). “Today’s settlement proves this Department is committed to putting Americans’ flourishing first,” said Associate Attorney General Stanley Woodward. “Congress enacted laws to promote responsibility and accountability for companies who dispense controlled substances...

Distinct characteristics identified for patients with rheumatoid conditions, opioid use disorder

Patients with rheumatic conditions and opioid use disorder (OUD) have distinct demographic and clinical characteristics, including lower use of disease-modifying antirheumatic drugs (DMARDs) and higher acute care use, according to a study published online July 13 in Arthritis Care & Research. Jacob S. Riegler, MD, from the Cambridge Health Alliance in Massachusetts, and colleagues identified individuals with at least two billing codes for systemic lupus erythematosus, rheumatoid arthritis, spondyloarthritis or osteoarthritis using the national All of Us Research Program. Demographics, psychiatric disorders, prescription medications...

Psilocybin study explores new treatment for cocaine use disorder

Albert Arias, MD, chief of addiction psychiatry at Carilion Clinic, has received an award from the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) to research how psilocybin, a psychedelic compound being studied for several psychiatric and substance use disorders, can offer a new approach for people with cocaine use disorder. The initial \$623,000 award is part of a phased project to evaluate whether psilocybin can help reduce cocaine use when administered in a carefully controlled clinical research setting combined with structured psychotherapy. Subsequent funding to support the larger clinical phase of the research could bring the...

SAMHSA Awards \$77 Million to Strengthen Substance Use Prevention, Treatment, Crisis Services, and Mental Health Services

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a division of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), today announced on Overdose Awareness Day that it has awarded \$77 million in new grant funding to strengthen substance use prevention, treatment and recovery, community mental health, suicide prevention, and crisis services. The announcement comes as National Substance Use Primary Prevention Month draws to a close, with more than \$22 million of the funding supporting critical substance use prevention efforts in communities. “Every American deserves the chance...

CDC launches new channel to track US overdose deaths and provide resources

Federal health officials have launched a web page that gathers the nation's drug overdose numbers, prevention tips and treatment resources into a single place. The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) opened the Overdose Prevention Data Channel on Monday, timing it to International Overdose Awareness Day. The site's latest figures estimate 67,798 drug overdose deaths in the United States during the 12 months that ended in March. That is a 12.3% drop from the same stretch a year earlier. Those death counts are provisional, meaning they are early estimates that can shift later. Investigations into an overdose...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-27-053](#)

Exploratory Clinical Neuroscience Research on Substance Use Disorders (R61/R33 Clinical Trial Optional)

[PAR-27-051](#)

NIH Brain Development Cohorts (NBDC) and Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health (PATH) Study Biospecimen Access (X01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed)

Other Funding Opportunities:

UC-UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC) Pilot Research Program

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Notification of Awards Made: February 2027 (date TBD)

Award Dates: March 1, 2027 – February 29, 2028

Read the story above in the UC/Regional section of the newsletter or review full details and submission guidelines on the attached PDF.

2027 BBRF Distinguished Investigator Grant

Deadline: Wednesday, September 23, 2026, at 11:59 PM Eastern

The Foundation's Distinguished Investigator Grant Program offers up to \$100,000 for a one-year period and are provided for established scientists pursuing particularly innovative project ideas. BBRF Distinguished Investigator Grants fund talented, established scientists with a record of outstanding research accomplishments. These research projects might provide new approaches to understanding or treating severe mental illness. If successful, the grants could result in later funding from other sources. These grants are among the

most competitive in mental health research and demonstrate the power of investigator-initiated research to bring out new and creative ideas.

New Publications from UCAC Faculty

Evaluation of Tirzepatide as an Adjunct to Buprenorphine for the treatment of opioid use disorder (TAB) trial: study design and rationale

T John Winhusen, Michelle R Lofwall, Edward V Nunes, Frankie Kropp, Michael Otterstatter, Laura C Fanucchi, Ashley Vena, Udi E Ghitza

Contemporary Clinical Trials

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.cct.2026.108437>

ABSTRACT

Buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder (OUD) is highly effective in decreasing opioid use, risk of opioid overdose, and death, but retention is challenging. Buprenorphine does not always eliminate illicit opioid use and craving and does not treat stimulant or other substance co-use, nor common comorbid sleep problems. Tirzepatide, a glucagon-like peptide-1 (GLP-1) and glucose-dependent insulintropic polypeptide (GIP) receptor agonist, may help address substance use and sleep problems. The National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN) is conducting a 9-site outpatient, intent-to-treat, two-arm, double-blind, randomized controlled trial: Evaluation of Tirzepatide as an Adjunct to Buprenorphine for the treatment of OUD (TAB). The primary objective is to evaluate the effect of tirzepatide, relative to placebo, as an adjunct to buprenorphine on retention and on substance-related and sleep outcomes in adults with OUD. The primary outcome is 6-month buprenorphine treatment retention. The key secondary outcome is proportion of illicit opioid-negative urine samples over the 6-month treatment period. Approximately 310 adults with moderate-severe OUD who recently started buprenorphine will be recruited and randomized 1:1 to tirzepatide or placebo, balancing on site and buprenorphine formulation (transmucosal vs extended-release). Participants will be administered study medication, receive Fitbits to track sleep, and attend weekly research visits through 6 months post-randomization with longer research visits occurring at 1, 3, and 6 months. A follow-up visit at week 30 will collect final safety measures. This paper describes the rationale and study design for TAB, the first randomized trial to test tirzepatide for the treatment of OUD.

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