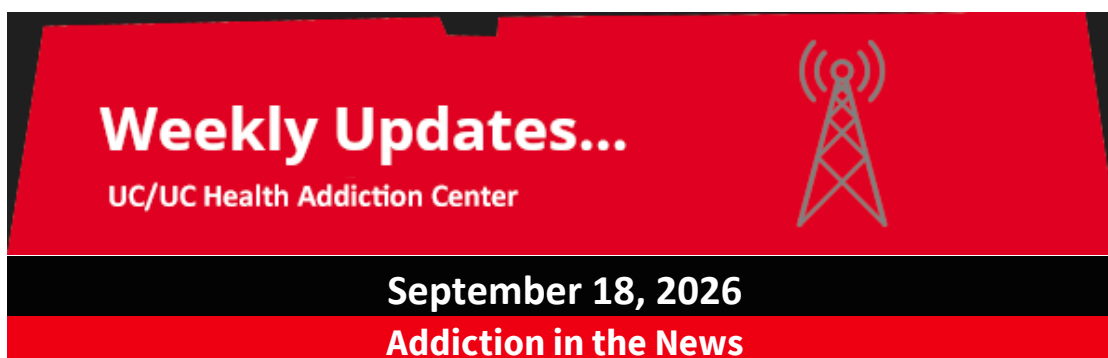


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the University of Cincinnati/UC Health Addiction Center (UCAC)! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from UCAC researchers. Please email 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

CoM Office of Research Gallery of Awardees

Recognizing the challenges of competing for funding to support faculty research programs, the College of Medicine Office of Research celebrates researchers in the Gallery of Awardees. The gallery honors those faculty members who have been awarded external grants of \$100,000 per year or more direct costs.

Congratulations to the recently featured UCAC Director!

T. John Winhusen, PhD, Vice Chair of Addiction Sciences, Donald C. Harrison Endowed Chair in Medicine, Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience.

Award: National Institute of Drug Abuse CTN-0150 TOME

Project Title: "Personally-Tailored Opioid-overdose and MOUD Education for Pregnant and Postpartum Persons in MOUD"

Project Period: 3/1/2024–2/28/2026

Summary: A pilot randomized study testing the ability of a tailored education intervention to improve medication for opioid use disorder (MOUD) and opioid-overdose knowledge in pregnant and postpartum individuals receiving MOUD.

Cincinnati expands access to Narcan, fentanyl test strips at overdose hotspots

CINCINNATI — The University of Cincinnati and Hamilton County are expanding efforts to prevent fatal opioid overdoses by putting free Narcan and fentanyl test strips in neighborhoods where overdoses happen most often. Researchers

identified 24 overdose hotspots using data from emergency medical calls, overdose response teams and coroner records. Those locations will now receive NaloxBoxes stocked with naloxone, which can reverse an opioid overdose, along with fentanyl test strips. "The goal is having these boxes in locations where people are having the most overdoses," said Ben Feldmeyer, a UC...

UC part of \$18 million statewide initiative to expand behavioral health workforce

The University of Cincinnati is part of a new statewide effort to address critical shortages in mental health and substance use treatment providers by increasing the number of licensed behavioral health professionals serving children, youth and underserved communities across Ohio. The goal is to keep committed students in the state after graduation to serve in high-need behavioral health settings. The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health and the Ohio Department of Higher Education have launched the Ohio Behavioral Health Scholarship (OBHS) Program, awarding \$18 million in scholarships to graduate students pursuing...

It's legal. But is it safe? Northeast Ohio addiction specialists report more patients addicted to kratom

CLEVELAND — Northeast Ohio addiction specialists said they are seeing an increasing number of patients addicted to kratom, a substance some describe as "gas station heroin." "I cannot imagine a person saying that it's not a dangerous drug that is addictive," said Dr. Theodore Parran. Parran is the medical director at Rosary Hall St. Vincent Charity Medical Center, an addiction treatment center in Cleveland. He and another addiction specialist News 5 Investigators interviewed said Ohio should ban kratom in every form. Parran said a few patients a week come in hooked on 7-OH, a synthetic form of kratom. It could be found...

National News

Nearly one-third of college-age 'BORG' drinkers report blacking out

A newly popular college drinking trend, the blackout rage gallon (BORG), fosters binge drinking and can lead to a host of alcohol-related harms, according to a new study published in the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, published by Rutgers University. Prevalent in the drinking culture at many U.S. colleges and universities since around 2020, BORGs are 1-gallon plastic jugs filled with alcohol and a choice of mixers and flavorings. Preparation for a BORG event, which is often a daytime gathering such as a tailgate or festival, typically involves decorating one's personal BORG with a clever phrase or social media-ready pun...

Analysis identifies sharply different health risks among medicinal, recreational and dual cannabis users

With recreational cannabis now legal in 24 states, including Delaware, the number of users is rising. But not all cannabis users look alike or face the same health concerns. Most published research compares cannabis users with nonusers. Tarang

Parekh, assistant professor of epidemiology at the University of Delaware College of Health Sciences, took a different approach, comparing medicinal cannabis users with recreational users. In a cross-sectional study using 2018–2021 data from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's Behavioral Risk Factor Surveillance System (BRFSS), Parekh and collaborators, including Daniel...

New Study Finds E-Cigarette Directory Laws Did Not Lead to Sustained Reductions in Sales of Flavored E-Cigarettes, Which Are Known to Appeal to Youth

In a study published today in JAMA Network Open, researchers from the CDC Foundation found that e-cigarette directory laws, also known as e-cigarette registries, in Alabama, Oklahoma and Louisiana were not associated with sustained reductions in sales of flavored e-cigarettes. This is the first known study to rigorously evaluate the impact of e-cigarette directory laws on e-cigarette sales and product availability. Researchers used retail scanner data* from January 2021 through April 2025 to examine changes in e-cigarette sales, measured by the total amount of nicotine sold per-capita and changes in the number of...

Veterinary tranquilizer medetomidine leaves patients severely sedated and harder to treat for withdrawal

A brief research report explored patient experiences with the clinical effects of medetomidine, a veterinary sedative that has increasingly contaminated the illicit fentanyl supply, and its impact on treatment outcomes. Interviews with people exposed to the drug suggest that medetomidine can create medical complications and withdrawal symptoms that differ from those associated with opioids, raising new concerns for clinicians and public health officials. The report is published in Annals of Internal Medicine. Researchers from the University of Pittsburgh School of Medicine interviewed 16 adults hospitalized with opioid...

AI tools could make postoperative opioid prescribing more individualized

For a patient having their wisdom teeth removed, the days after surgery can bring an important question: How much pain medication will I actually need? Over-the-counter medications such as acetaminophen and ibuprofen provide adequate pain relief for most patients, but some experience breakthrough pain that does not respond to these medications and may benefit from an opioid. For clinicians, the challenge is knowing before surgery which patients will need additional pain relief. Harvard School of Dental Medicine faculty, residents and students are exploring whether artificial intelligence could help make those decisions...

Health, Defense Secretaries Pave Way for Ketamine Drug

At first, the Federal Register notice set off alarm bells: The secretaries of health and defense were collaborating on emergency use of medical countermeasures for U.S. military forces -- but they didn't specify why. In July, Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth determined there was a military emergency -- or significant potential for

one -- involving a higher risk of a chemical, biological, radiological, or nuclear attack on U.S. forces. The next month, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy Jr. determined that circumstances existed to justify emergency use of drugs, specifically targeting moderate-to-severe acute pain caused by such...

ER Visits For Gambling Disorders Double After Online Betting Markets Legalized

THURSDAY, Sept. 17, 2026 (HealthDay News) — More people are seeking emergency help for gambling problems in the face of expanded online betting markets, a new study says. ER visits for gambling disorders nearly doubled following the legalization of single-event sports betting and expansion of online gambling markets in Ontario, researchers reported Sept. 15 in the American Journal of Preventive Medicine. “Most people experiencing gambling problems will never seek care, so the concern is that the increases in ED visits for gambling disorders we observed may be revealing much larger increases in gambling-related...

New lawsuit accuses Trump administration of blocking NIH grants as form of censorship

Researchers filed a class-action lawsuit against the National Institutes of Health (NIH) on Wednesday, arguing the Trump administration is blocking and cancelling scientific grants to censor topics with which it disagrees. The administration has used a list of 235 keywords – such as “gender” and “racist” – to prevent topics from health equity to climate change from being funded. The NIH is the world’s largest public funder of biomedical research. “Our study on Alzheimer’s disease was designed to better understand how to identify and reduce the risk of dementia in communities who are at high risk of developing the disease, who have...

Continuation of Modifications to Peer Review Practices

This notice is to provide NIH's extramural community with information on the continuation of select peer review practices implemented following a lapse of appropriations in 2025. To address the large volume of peer review meetings that were missed during the lapse in appropriations, modifications were made to peer review practices for applications submitted for the January, May, and October 2026 Advisory Councils. NIH finds it necessary to continue modified peer review practices to effectively review an unprecedented number of grant applications. Prior to receipt deadlines for small business grant mechanisms, NIH has more than 35,000 grant applications under review for the January 2027 Advisory Council. Application numbers are expected to substantially exceed the record of 33,640 applications reviewed for the May 2026 Advisory Council. To enable NIH to continue high quality and timely peer review of NIH grant applications, the following modifications will remain in place for the January 2027 Advisory Council:

- The percent of applications discussed in most meetings will be reduced to 30-35%, instead of the usual ~50%.

- Applications voted by the committee to be in the middle third will be designated as "competitive but not discussed" and applications in the lowest third will be designated as "not competitive and not discussed". Applications in the middle third will be considered for funding, along with the discussed applications.
- Summary statements will be simplified. Narrative paragraphs summarizing committee discussion will not be used. Instead, summaries will have a sentence describing the degree of consensus in the committee vote, plus bullets listing the main score driving points. Summaries for all applications will contain the written critiques from the 3 assigned reviewers, as is currently the case. Summaries for applications that are discussed will have the overall impact score.

Request for Information: Draft NIH Policy on Sharing Summary Level Study Results with Clinical Research Participants

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is seeking public input on a new policy proposal requiring summary level study results from NIH supported clinical research to be shared with participants of those studies. NIH is also seeking input on areas for which supplemental guidance would enable successful implementation with minimal administrative burden. Through this policy, NIH intends to strengthen respectful, transparent partnerships with clinical research participants and enable them to benefit through translation of discoveries into improved health. NIH seeks public input on its proposed NIH Policy on Sharing Summary Level Study Results with Clinical Research Participants, including ways to promote and enable the research community to share summary level study results with clinical research participants. NIH welcomes input from researchers, clinical research participants, clinicians, professional organizations, and other interested members of the public. Comments are also sought on specific considerations for how NIH can promote and enable the research community to feasibly share summary level study results with clinical research participants with minimal administrative burden. This feedback may inform the identification of topics and content for potential supplemental guidance. Comments will be accepted until October 26, 2026.

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

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

New Publications from UCAC Faculty

Sex-specific differences in endocannabinoid regulation of cocaine-evoked dopamine in the medial nucleus accumbens shell

Andrew D. Gaulden, Kristin Chase, Jayme R. McReynolds

Neuropharmacology

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.neuropharm.2026.111139>

ABSTRACT

Endocannabinoid (eCB) signaling is a key regulator of reward-related dopaminergic signaling, particularly in response to drugs of abuse, such as cocaine. To date, our understanding of this mechanism has primarily been limited to male subjects. Prior work establishes that female cocaine users have more adverse outcomes, and female rats show greater sensitivity to cannabinoid type 1 receptor (CB1R) regulation of cocaine self-administration. Therefore, we hypothesize that female rats exhibit enhanced eCB regulation of cocaine-evoked dopamine (DA). We used in vivo fiber photometry recording of the dopamine biosensor, dLight 1.3b, in the nucleus accumbens medial shell (NAcMs) in response to cocaine in male and female rats. Rats were pretreated with cannabinoid-targeting drugs to investigate the effects of CB1R inactivation or augmentation of the eCB 2-AG on cocaine-evoked DA. Our results revealed that CB1R inactivation attenuates cocaine-evoked DA in male and female rats, but females showed enhanced sensitivity for CB1R regulation of cocaine-evoked DA. Cocaine-evoked DA was enhanced by augmenting 2-AG levels, and females again showed increased sensitivity to this manipulation. Finally, females show greater cocaine-evoked DA when in a non-estrous cycle compared to estrous, reinforcing that estrous cycle is a determinant of cocaine-evoked DA. These data indicate that females show enhanced eCB regulation of cocaine-evoked DA signaling, underscoring the importance of sex as a biological variable in our understanding of endocannabinoid regulation of drug reward.

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