

UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 9.20.2024

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

PATHS Toolkit about OUD and Pregnancy Now Available!

The CTN-0080 MOMs team (Medication Treatment for Opioid Use Disorder in Expectant Mothers: A Pragmatic Randomized Trial Comparing Two Buprenorphine Formulations) has developed the Prenatal Action for Taking Health Steps (PATHS) Toolkit which offers evidence-based educational resources about the use of medication to treat opioid use disorder (OUD) during and after pregnancy. The PATHS Toolkit includes flyers, info sheets, posters, an education video, and social media images and short videos (“Reels”), all available for download and sharing. There’s also a discussion guide that can be used to direct conversations about MOUD in pregnant/postpartum people either in a group or individual settings, as well as a set of external links and resources that can be helpful to the public. The materials are available in two versions so far — one for the general public and one that has been culturally adapted for American Indian/Alaska Native communities. Spanish translations are also coming soon! **(UC CAR Director, Dr. T. John Winhusen, is also the CTN-0080 Lead Investigator)**

How We Got the Fentanyl Epidemic Under Control in Our Community | Opinion

In my 30 years as a law enforcement officer, I have witnessed a transition when it comes to the threat posed by street drugs. The drug market is now flooded by synthetic opioids. In that time, I have seen addiction affect every generation. The stakes with these drugs are higher than ever before. As we face an evolving fentanyl crisis, our response must evolve too. Throughout my career, I have made addressing the epidemic of addiction and overdose my personal mission. I helped

launch a community coalition addressing the opioid crisis and addiction. Testifying before the Homeland Security Committee in the United States Senate on synthetic opioids, I warned the country of the changing drug market and how it...

Ohio artist transforms history of addiction into creative inspiration

COLUMBUS, Ohio — For people struggling with mental illness or addictions, the month of September is a time to remember lives lost, but also celebrate overcoming challenges. It marks both National Recovery Month and Suicide Prevention Month. One Ohio artist has taken pain from her past and transformed it into creative inspiration. “So these two are mine...these monsters,” said Emily Strange as she described a recent piece of art. Strange curated a new collection called “Surviving” inside the Blockfort Gallery in downtown Columbus. She fell victim to the opioid epidemic, but for nine years now her life has changed. “I got sober when my best friend took her life due to addiction to heroin. It was...

Youth-focused addiction prevention initiative introduced

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Attorney General Russell Coleman received a two-year \$3.6 million grant from the Kentucky Opioid Abatement Advisory Commission for a statewide youth-focused addiction prevention initiative during his appearance before the Commission on Tuesday afternoon. This campaign, called “Better Without It,” will feature data-driven outreach to engage with young Kentuckians (ages 13-26) where they are, including on social media, streaming platforms, college campuses and through partnerships with influencers. The campaign will showcase positive, Kentucky-focused messages designed specifically to encourage young people to fulfill their potential. “Our kids are growing up with no...

Gov. Beshear signs new legislation, mentions addiction resources

HENDERSON, Ky. (WEHT) – Officials say Governor Andy Beshear joined state and local leaders and recovery advocates at the state Capitol to recognize Recovery Month in Kentucky. Gov. Beshear also certified four counties as Recovery Ready Communities, bringing the total to 18, and signed three pieces of legislation supporting addiction recovery in the state. “We have made great strides in getting dangerous drugs off our streets and increasing access to addiction treatment resources in the commonwealth, but we still have more to do,” said Gov. Beshear. “My goal is to make sure every Kentuckian brave enough to take that first step to create a better life has the support they need to overcome addiction. I truly...

Indiana Youth Survey finds record lows in substance use among teens

Substance use among Indiana youth has reached its lowest levels in over 30 years, according to a recurring survey. The 2024 Indiana Youth Survey is conducted by Prevention Insights, part of the Department of Applied Health Science at the Indiana University School of Public Health-Bloomington. This year, the survey reveals significant decreases in substance use over the past two years. “The results of this survey are both encouraging and reflective of the hard work being done

across the state to promote healthier lifestyles among our youth," Prevention Insights Executive Director Ruth Gassman said. "Seeing these historic lows in substance use among Indiana's young people is a testament to the effectiveness...

National News

Medical Cannabinoids in Kids Linked to These Adverse Events

Cannabinoids used for medical purposes in children and adolescents come with a risk of adverse events, a systematic review and meta-analysis of 23 randomized clinical trials showed. The risk ratio (RR) of developing adverse events was higher in the cannabinoid group than in the control group (1.09, 95% CI 1.02-1.16), Lauren Kelly, PhD, MSc, of the University of Manitoba in Winnipeg in Canada, and colleagues reported in JAMA Pediatrics. Specific adverse events significantly linked to cannabinoid treatment -- cannabidiol (CBD) in about half of the trials -- included: Diarrhea (RR 1.82), Elevated serum aspartate...

How Older Adults Use, Think About, and Discuss Cannabis

Over half of U.S. states have legalized cannabis (marijuana) for recreational and / or medical use. Cannabis products that contain THC (delta-9 tetrahydrocannabinol) are psychoactive, meaning they can create a feeling of being "high" and be addictive. These are different than CBD products (often sold in pharmacies or grocery stores) that contain very small amounts of THC. To understand older adults' perspectives on and experiences with cannabis, in February and March 2024 the University of Michigan National Poll on Healthy Aging asked a national sample of adults age 50 and older about their cannabis use, reasons for using, risky...

'It's just a part of life': Cannabis use disorder an issue alongside increased normalization

With legalization of cannabis sweeping the nation—Ohio the most recent convert, starting sales of recreational pot in August—use of the drug has been increasing too. With this uptick in use and a widespread acceptance of cannabis, however, also come reports of misuse: Data show cannabis use disorder is more prevalent than ever. A study by Columbia University researchers found that three in 10 people who reported using cannabis developed cannabis use disorder. This fairly new condition is characterized by a craving to use cannabis, an inability to stop or decrease use and interruptions in social life or relationships. And...

With marijuana at a new level of scrutiny, here's what the research says

"Illinois Democrats legalized marijuana," proclaims a new billboard in Chicago. The ad, paid for by Gov. JB Pritzker's campaign fund, takes credit for a change that polls show is supported by about two-thirds of Americans. Chicagoan Sheila Hogan, one of 140,000 people registered in the state to use medical cannabis, believes in its powers. She uses mild gummies at bedtime to relieve debilitating pain from spinal stenosis, which has allowed her to get back to gardening and pickleball. "I could

not even believe it," she said. "It was remarkable. I was able to get a lot more active." Despite support for legalization, and increasing use of...

Reductions seen in benzodiazepine dispensing when states relax medical, recreational cannabis access

A small team of mental and public policy specialists from the Georgia Institute of Technology, the University of Georgia and Indiana University has found that when states relax or rescind laws governing the use of marijuana, reductions occur in benzodiazepine dispensing. As reported in JAMA Network Open, the group studied dispensation statistics for several drugs used to treat mental illnesses in states where marijuana laws were changed. Benzodiazepines are a class of drugs that work to depress the central nervous system, thereby producing a sedating effect. They are commonly prescribed by psychiatrists to patients with mental...

Publication demonstrates appeal of menthol cigarettes to young people

While the overall rate of cigarette smoking has decreased in the United States, the use of menthol cigarettes has risen among young adult smokers. A University of Oklahoma researcher published a study today showing that the addition of menthol flavoring to cigarettes makes them more appealing than non-menthol cigarettes, particularly among racial and ethnic minorities and the LGBTQ population, who have high rates of menthol cigarette use. The findings point to the heightened addiction risk of smoking menthol cigarettes and the role of flavorings in enhancing the appeal of cigarettes. Amy...

US youth vaping drops to lowest level in a decade

Just 5.9% of American middle and high school students now vape, a big drop from the 7.7% who did so a year ago, new government data shows. Put another way, about 1.6 million youth now say they used e-cigarettes at least once over the past month, compared to 2.1 million in 2023. Among those who say they vape, 23.6% said they do it on a daily basis. It was high school kids who drove the change, according to the National Youth Tobacco Survey (NYTS), with middle schoolers still vaping at rates roughly similar to a year ago. Still, any reduction in vaping is welcome, said Brian King, director of the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's...

Using AI, researchers find e-cigarette brands are skirting the rules about health warning labels on Instagram

Island breeze, blue lagoon, dew drop—these aren't the names of scented candles on display at your local home goods store. They're flavors of synthetic nicotine used in e-cigarettes, often advertised with neon-electric colors and bright lettering to make them look like boxes of candy or fruit juice. But underneath all the flair, a specific label written clearly in black text on a white background is required by law to be there: a warning that says the product contains nicotine and that nicotine is an addictive substance. Even though health warnings need to be written on physical products sold in stores and included in traditional...

Schools are putting vape detectors in bathrooms — paid for by Juul

E-cigarette use among young people in the U.S. dropped significantly over the past year, according to a new government study. The hopeful signs come as more schools are installing high-tech vape detectors in bathrooms and locker rooms to curb student use of e-cigarettes. Some districts are using money from a \$1.7 billion legal settlement against e-cigarette manufacturer Juul Labs to pay for the devices. But there's disagreement over whether monitors are the best way to address the problem, and they have raised some privacy concerns. Nearly 1.63 million, or 6%, of high school and middle school students...

Go After the Big E-Cigarette Makers, Not Vape Shops, House Members Tell FDA

Members of a House committee examining FDA's regulation of the food and tobacco industries had a question for the agency's representatives at a hearing Tuesday: Why aren't you going after big e-cigarette makers? "On the enforcement side, it seems the FDA has chosen to focus on small actors," Rep. Brett Guthrie (R-Ky.), chairman of the House Energy & Commerce Health Subcommittee, said at a hearing aimed at evaluating the agency's human foods program and its tobacco program. He noted that most of the civil monetary penalties that the Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) has issued so far related to selling unapproved...

Understanding what helps families with teens maintain household vaping bans

In the roughly 20 years since e-cigarettes were introduced in the United States, use among young people has grown substantially. By 2022, more than one in five high school seniors reported they had vaped nicotine in the previous month. Household smoking bans—rules against anybody smoking inside a home—are an effective tool for delaying or preventing teen cigarette smoking, according to Jennifer Maggs, professor of human development and family studies at Penn State, and her collaborators, so they examined whether the same might hold true for vaping. They assessed how many households with teenage children in the...

The public health impact of the FDA's request for additional safety data on cytisine for tobacco cessation

Krishna Reddy, MD, MS, a physician-investigator at the Medical Practice Evaluation Center and the Tobacco Research and Treatment Center at Massachusetts General Hospital and an Associate Professor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School, is the lead author of a study in JAMA Health Forum, titled "Public Health Impact of FDA's Request for Additional Safety Data on Cytisine for Tobacco Cessation". Nancy Rigotti, MD, director of the Tobacco Research and Treatment Center, is senior author of the study. Tobacco smoking is the leading preventable cause of death in the US. No new tobacco cessation medication has been licensed in the...

NPR Exclusive: U.S. overdose deaths plummet, saving thousands of lives

For the first time in decades, public health data shows a sudden and hopeful drop in drug overdose deaths across the U.S. "This is exciting," said Dr. Nora Volkow, head of the National Institute On Drug Abuse [NIDA], the federal laboratory charged with studying addiction. "This looks real. This looks very, very real." National surveys compiled by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention already show an unprecedented decline in drug deaths of roughly 10.6 percent. That's a huge reversal from recent years when fatal overdoses regularly increased by double-digit percentages. Some researchers believe the data will show...

A 'miracle molecule' could cut fentanyl deaths in half — or lead more into addiction

America's sky-high rate of fatal fentanyl overdoses could be halved if users were treated with another opioid, Biden administration officials and a bipartisan group of senators believe. They and others who support expanded access to methadone argue that allowing addiction specialists to prescribe it outside of the clinics now permitted to dispense it would save tens of thousands of lives. "We are in a desperate situation right now where the risks of expanding methadone are so outweighed by the benefits of having more people on methadone," said Noa Krawczyk, a professor at NYU Grossman School of Medicine who studies barriers...

Telehealth boosts retention of people on buprenorphine in addiction treatment

Patients who initiated treatment for opioid use disorder through a telehealth mobile app stayed with treatment at a greater rate over six months than those who started treatment in a physical clinic, a new study led by Oregon Health & Science University has found. The study, published in the Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment, is among the first to compare patient retention between telehealth and traditional office-based treatment. The comparison was possible only because a federal exemption during the COVID-19 pandemic enabled clinicians to initiate treatment with buprenorphine through a phone or tablet...

Ultra-low-dose ketamine can curb opioid withdrawal

Drug overdose is the leading cause of injury deaths in young adults in the United States, with fentanyl causing over 70,000 deaths annually. Many people who use fentanyl become trapped in their addiction out of fear and a low tolerance for the withdrawal symptoms, which include muscle cramps, nausea, chills, sweats and intense cravings. They can't stop using fentanyl, and they also have trouble starting either of the two medications, methadone and buprenorphine, that can dramatically reduce their risk of overdose death. Research findings published Aug. 29 in Addiction Science & Clinical Practice may offer hope. A pilot study...

An industrial chemical is showing up in fentanyl in the US, troubling scientists

An industrial chemical used in plastic products has been cropping up in illegal drugs from California to Maine, a sudden and puzzling shift in the drug supply that has alarmed health researchers. Its name is bis (2,2,6,6-tetramethyl-4-piperidyl) sebacate, commonly abbreviated as BTMPS. The chemical is used in plastic for protection against ultraviolet rays, as well as for other commercial uses. In an analysis released Monday, researchers from UCLA, the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST) and other academic institutions and harm reduction groups collected and tested more than 170 samples of drugs that had been...

'Cuddle hormone' oxytocin may provide pain relief and help curb harmful opioid use, study suggests

In the midst of America's growing opioid crisis, a much healthier alternative to long-term pain management is emerging—one affectionately known as "the cuddle hormone," or oxytocin. University of Florida researchers are currently investigating whether a synthetic version of this naturally-occurring human hormone can be used in conjunction with prescription drugs to help curb opioid addictions, especially in susceptible older adults. An interdisciplinary research team is conducting the two-year study and completion is expected in April 2025. "The idea is that physicians could potentially prescribe, in combination, an opioid...

Nearly 1 in 4 Americans know someone addicted to opioids, survey finds

A 50-state survey led by Northeastern University's David Lazer reveals that one in four Americans say they know someone who struggles with opioid addiction, while one in seven knows multiple people. The statistics are even more alarming in poor, white, rural communities, with nearly half of West Virginians reporting that they know at least one person addicted to opioids. The purpose of the survey was to show the indirect impact of the opioid epidemic that resulted in 107,543 people in the U.S. dying of overdoses last year, says Lazer, one of the principal investigators of the Civic Health and Institutions Project...

Disparity in access to medications for opioid use disorder persist in criminal legal settings: Study

Individuals involved in the criminal legal system have a high rate of opioid use disorder (OUD) and a high risk of overdose death compared to the general population, yet the most effective treatments—medications for opioid use disorder (MOUD)—are underutilized in criminal legal settings where treatment is mandated as part of a person's probation or parole. Medications are often not provided due to stigma or lack of adequate funding for evidence-based care. According to a study published today in JAMA Health Forum, use of these lifesaving medications has increased only modestly in criminal legal settings in recent years...

For people with opioid addiction, Medicaid overhaul comes with risks

It was hard enough for Stephanie to get methadone treatment when she moved from Indiana to Florida last year. The nearest clinic, north of Tampa, was almost an hour away, and she needed help with transportation. But at least Stephanie didn't have to worry about affording it. Medicaid in Florida covers methadone, which reduces her opioid cravings and prevents withdrawal symptoms. Stephanie had young children, and had trouble landing a job after the move. So even though Florida has strict eligibility rules for Medicaid, she qualified for coverage. For nearly a decade, methadone has helped Stephanie juggle jobs and take...

Fentanyl Education Resources Available in 12 Languages

In a large-scale effort to make fentanyl and counterfeit pill education resources available to non-English speaking communities, The Addiction Policy Forum today released fentanyl educational resources translated into 12 different languages. The video explainer, Facts about Fentanyl: Understanding the Risks, provides important information on counterfeit pills, the risks of fentanyl exposure, and steps communities and families can take to prevent overdose and substance use disorders. With support from the Cencora Impact Foundation, the open-source educational campaign provides communities and families with...

Study finds nonfatal opioid overdoses in youth spiked during pandemic: Majority occurred at home

Drug overdose mortality has risen faster among adolescents than the general population in recent years, largely due to fentanyl, a potent opioid pain medication. A study published in JAMA sheds light on trends in nonfatal opioid overdoses in youth—an area that was not as well characterized, but key to formulating prevention strategies to save lives. Researchers from Ann & Robert H. Lurie Children's Hospital of Chicago and colleagues analyzed data using Emergency Medical Services (EMS) encounters from January 2018 to December 2022. They found that opioid overdoses in youth increased at pandemic onset and...

Philly residents with opioid addiction get medication from the 'bupe bus' — creating a path for treatment

A mobile team offering medication treatment to people with opioid use disorder showed promise in getting patients in Philadelphia to return for follow-up visits, according to a peer-reviewed study I co-authored that was released in the September 2024 issue of the Journal of Substance Use and Addiction Treatment. The team, which includes a physician, case manager and outreach workers who have personal experiences with substance use disorder, worked out of a van parked at six sites in neighborhoods that have high rates of fatal and nonfatal overdoses. The goal was to get patients same-day prescriptions for buprenorphine...

Man Who Sold Fentanyl-Laced Pill Liable for \$5.8 Million in Death of Young Woman

In 2019, Brandon McDowell was contacted by a sophomore in college who asked to buy oxycodone-acetaminophen (Percocet), a prescription painkiller. What the 20-year-old sold her instead were counterfeit pills laced with fentanyl, a deadly synthetic opioid that can be lethal in a dose as small as 2 mg. Hours later, Alexandra Capelouto, also 20, was dead in her Temecula, California, home. It is an increasingly common scenario as fentanyl overdoses have become a leading cause of death for minors in the last 5 years, with more than 74,000 people dying in the U.S. from a synthetic opioid in 2023, according to the CDC. McDowell...

A New Treatment for Addiction? Rosemary Extract Reduces Cocaine Cravings in Breakthrough Study

A team of researchers from the University of California, Irvine has discovered that an antioxidant in rosemary extract can help reduce voluntary cocaine consumption by regulating the brain's reward system, presenting a new potential treatment for addiction. The study, recently published online in the journal *Neuron*, describes team members' focus on a region of the brain called the globus pallidus externus, which acts as a gatekeeper that regulates how we react to cocaine. They discovered that within the GPe, parvalbumin-positive neurons are crucial in controlling the response to cocaine by changing the...

This preventive drug could be a 'game changer' in ending the HIV epidemic

Can we eliminate the HIV epidemic? It's a question that dates back to the start of the epidemic in the 1980s. With 1.3 million new infections a year, the epidemic continues ... and the world is not on track to meet the ambitious U.N. goal of ending HIV/AIDS by 2030. But now there's rising optimism among leading infectious disease experts after the latest groundbreaking clinical trial results for a drug called lenacapavir which have shown it to be capable of virtually eliminating new HIV infections through sex. PURPOSE 2, the name for the latest trial sponsored by Gilead Science, the California-based maker of lenacapavir...

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[RFA-DA-25-073](#)

[Exploratory Studies to Investigate Mechanisms of HIV infection, Replication, Latency, and/or Pathogenesis in the Context of Substance Use Disorders \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-297](#)

[Imaging - Science Track Award for Research Transition \(I/START\) \(R03 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-NS-25-023](#)

[HEAL Initiative: Studies to Enable Analgesic Discovery \(R61/R33 - Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[NOT-DA-26-003](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Consequences of Prenatal Fentanyl Exposure](#)

[NOT-DA-26-004](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Training Program in Application of Artificial Intelligence in Development of Treatment for Substance Use Disorders\)](#)

[NOT-DA-26-005](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Application of Artificial Intelligence in Treatment Development for Substance Use Disorders](#)

UC Foundation Funding Opportunities

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or carol.russell@uc.edu **at least 5 business days before the deadline**, prior to applying to the below opportunity, to ensure coordination and to facilitate assistance with approaches.

Gambling Disorder Researchers Can Apply for Prevention Study Grants

Deadline: September 30, 2024

The International Center for Responsible Gaming (ICRG) invites investigators to apply for a two-year grant to study the safety and effectiveness of responsible gambling strategies and other prevention models. The total amount that may be requested is \$187,500. Applicants may request up to \$75,000 per year for up to two years plus 25 percent of direct costs in Facilities & Administration or indirect costs. The ICRG will award one grant under this initiative. Eligible applicants include domestic or international, public or private, nonprofit or for-profit organizations. The principal investigator must have a PhD, MD, or other terminal degree. The purpose of this funding opportunity is to advance the development, implementation, and validation of interventions to minimize gambling-related harm. This request for applications invites investigators to explore interventions to prevent the negative consequences associated with gambling, including impacts on the gambling of players who gamble in a problematic manner.

