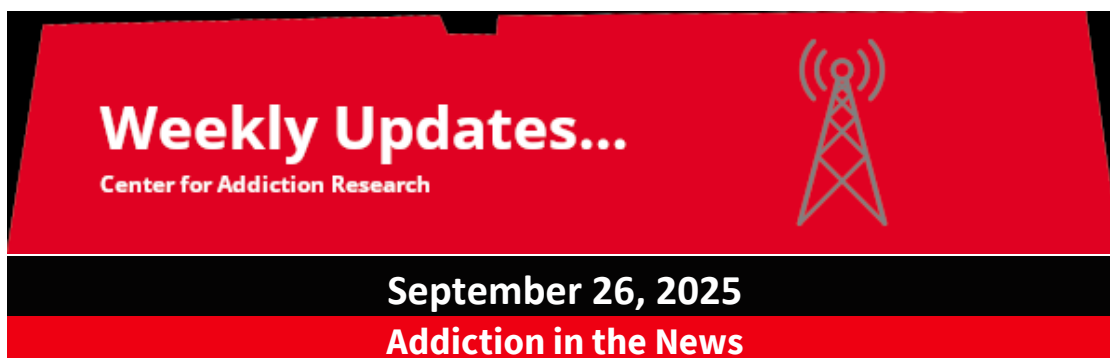


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu))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

#### **Opioid settlement agreement to bring over \$180K to Clermont County, funding new crisis center**

BATAVIA, Ohio — The job of the Clermont County Mental Health and Recovery Board is to find and provide solutions for its community when it comes to behavioral health issues. "Assessing the behavioral health needs of our community residents, planning for behavioral health services to meet those needs, funding those services," said Lee Ann Watson, the board's executive director. That's why they'll soon be renovating their current building to open a new crisis receiving center. "It's kinda like an urgent care for behavioral health needs, and when I say behavioral health needs, I mean substance abuse concerns as well as mental health concerns," said Watson. Watson said there has been a gap in the Clermont County...

#### **How an NKY doctor went from addiction**

Dr. David Suetholz sat in the front room of his Ludlow, Kentucky, condo overlooking the Ohio River on an ordinary summer day. He wore a blue, button-up shirt and glasses with blue frames just below a neatly combed head of white hair. Weeks earlier, Suetholz's environment was starkly different. The 76-year-old was an inmate at a federal prison camp in Ashland, Kentucky. As a primary care doctor, Suetholz was a pioneer in Kentucky in treating those suffering from opioid use disorder. He also saw an average of 20 overdose deaths per month at the height of the opioid epidemic as the elected Kenton County coroner. "It crossed all boundaries," he said, from the urban core of Covington to affluent suburbs. He...

## **National News**

### **Ozempic and Wegovy may help curb alcohol addiction, study suggests**

The blockbuster drugs Ozempic and Wegovy may help people cut back on drinking, new research published Wednesday in JAMA Psychiatry suggests. In a study of around 228,000 people in Sweden who had alcohol use disorder, researchers found that people who were taking a GLP-1 drug like semaglutide were less likely to be hospitalized for alcohol-related issues. Just over 28 million adults in the U.S. have alcohol addiction, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism. Only three medicines, however, are approved to treat it. “The pharmacological treatments available for AUD are not very...

### **Study pinpoints single drug therapy for PTSD, pain, and alcohol misuse**

About 12 million adults in the United States are affected by PTSD, impacting between 4% and 8% of the adult population—and up to 30% of military personnel and veterans. Strikingly, 63% of veterans with post-traumatic stress disorder also suffer from alcohol use disorder (AUD) and/or chronic pain. These conditions frequently overlap, with individuals who have AUD or chronic pain often also experiencing PTSD. When these disorders co-occur, they tend to worsen one another, making effective treatment significantly more challenging. Currently, no approved medications effectively treat PTSD and AUD together, and many...

### **Alcohol's hidden shortcut lets gut bacteria wreck the liver**

Alcohol-associated liver disease (ALD) is a major cause of liver transplantation and death worldwide, and its impact is only growing. In 2022, the annual cost of ALD in the United States was \$31 billion. By 2040, this number could be as high as \$66 billion. ALD has limited therapeutic options, so scientists are looking for new ways to target the molecular biology of ALD to help prevent its occurrence or reduce its severity. Now, scientists at University of California San Diego School of Medicine have found that chronic alcohol use impairs the production of a key cellular signaling protein that helps keep gut bacteria within the...

### **Low- and alcohol-free drinks gaining popularity among 'risky' UK drinkers**

There's been a significant rise in the use of low- and alcohol-free drinks to curb alcohol intake among "risky drinkers" over the past five years in England, Wales, and Scotland, finds research published in BMJ Public Health. The proportion of those using them to make serious attempts to cut down their alcohol intake rose from 35% in 2020 to 44% in 2024, while those using them in any attempt to cut down increased from 26% to 39%. The trends were especially noticeable among the over-65s, while women and the relatively well-off were more likely to consume these drinks than men and the most economically disadvantaged...

## **ACOG Releases New Recommendations on Cannabis Use in Pregnancy and Lactation**

Washington, D.C. — Universal screening for cannabis use during the prepregnancy, pregnancy, and postpartum periods is now recommended by the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, according to new and significantly updated clinical guidance released today. Despite the fact that cannabis use in pregnancy has been associated with spontaneous preterm birth, low birth weight, NICU admissions, and postnatal neurocognitive and behavioral dysfunction, there is a misperception in the general public that cannabis is safe for use during pregnancy due to its increasing availability...

## **Study reveals why some medical cannabis patients use illegal products**

Use of medical cannabis has been on the rise since it first became available to Utah patients in 2020. A medical cannabis card, which can be prescribed for difficult-to-treat conditions including PTSD and chronic pain, allows a patient to access licensed cannabis products in designated pharmacies. But some people whose medical conditions permit use of medical cannabis use unregulated products instead, which can lead to unforeseen health risks due to additives and contaminants. A new survey of over 200 people enrolled in Utah's medical cannabis program reveals why some people turn to unregulated cannabis to treat their...

## **Inhaling cannabis may greatly increase your risk of getting asthma**

If you're looking to reduce your chances of developing lung disease, say experts at UC San Francisco, then it may be smart to avoid inhaling cannabis. A new study in the Journal of General Internal Medicine found that inhaling marijuana every day is associated with a 44% increased chance of developing asthma. It also increased the odds of developing chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) by 27%. The COPD risk may be understated, since the disease takes decades to develop, and the researchers did not have detailed information on how long people in the study had been using cannabis. In defining the concept of inhaling...

## **Reducing cannabis-related risks becomes focus of new app**

Scientists at Université de Montréal's affiliated hospital research center (CRCHUM) are testing out a mobile application to help young adults who have a first episode of psychosis to support safer cannabis consumption. The nationwide clinical trial, a first in Canada, is led by Université de Montréal psychiatry and addictology professor Didier Jutras-Aswad, a researcher at CRCHUM. Called CHAMPS (Cannabis Harm-reducing App to Manage Practices Safely), the pilot study is described in an article published in the August issue of Psychiatry Research. "Built in collaboration with young adults, clinicians and a number of experts...

### **Flavored marijuana vapes becoming new face of teen drug use, sparking addiction fears**

Flavored marijuana vaping is now the most common form of use among American teenagers who vape cannabis, according to new findings from the University of Michigan's annual Monitoring the Future surveys. The study is published in the Journal of Adolescent Health. The research found particularly sharp increases among younger teens between 2021 and 2024. Among eighth graders who vaped marijuana, the percentage using flavored solutions jumped from 47% in 2021 to 63% in 2024. The trend was similar for older students, with use climbing from 41% to 53% for 10th graders and from 36% to 50% for 12th graders. "The...

### **Research paves way for personalized TMS to aid smokers**

Science and artificial intelligence combined at the Medical University of South Carolina in a study that could lead to personalized repetitive transcranial magnetic stimulation, or rTMS, for smokers who want to quit. "We want to improve the effectiveness and specificity of rTMS and reduce side effects," said study leader Xingbao Li, M.D. He's an associate professor in the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Sciences who has done extensive research on TMS. His team published its findings in the journal Brain Connectivity. TMS uses electromagnetic pulses to affect brain activity and may be best known for its role in treating depression...

### **Plain packaging may help tackle teen vaping**

Plain packaging of vape pods reduces young people's interest in trying them, but does not reduce interest among adults, according to a new study led by UCL and King's College London researchers. The study, published in The Lancet Regional Health—Europe and carried out in collaboration with Action on Smoking and Health (ASH) and Brighton and Sussex Medical School researchers, looked at survey responses from 2,770 young people in Great Britain (aged 11–18) and 3,947 adults (18+) in the U.K. who were shown either branded vape pod packs or standardized packs. The research team found that 53% of young people...

### **HHS Provides More Than \$1.5 Billion in State and Tribal Opioid Response Grants**

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), today allocated more than \$1.5 billion in FY25 continuation funding awards for the State Opioid Response (SOR) and Tribal Opioid Response (TOR) grants. This funding provides critical resources to states and Tribal communities to address the overdose crisis through prevention, opioid overdose reversal medications, treatment (including medications for opioid use disorder, or MOUD), and recovery support. "America's addiction and overdose crises are tearing apart families...

### **SAMHSA Awards More Than \$45 Million in Supplemental Funding to Support Young Adult Sober Housing Services**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), a division within the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), today announced it has awarded more than \$45 million in new supplemental funding to State Opioid Response (SOR) program recipients to focus on sober or recovery housing among young adults. This investment advances President Trump's Executive Order, Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets, by providing sober housing and recovery support services, which are critical to combatting our Nation's challenge of homelessness, addiction, and illness. "President...

### **People with substance dependency face stigmatization at community pharmacies**

People with substance dependency may face stigmatization when they attend community pharmacies and deserve to be treated with greater dignity and respect, according to new research. The study found that pharmacy students and newly qualified pharmacists in Scotland sometimes observed discriminatory treatment by staff, including negative language, segregation practices and unfriendly attitudes towards people being treated for drug dependency. However, they also saw exemplary practice when respect and compassion were shown, and the patients displayed appreciation in return. There were also signs that...

### **Team-based care aids pregnant women with substance use disorders**

A new study from Oregon Health & Science University shows that a team-based, whole-person approach to caring for pregnant people with substance use disorders holds promise in improving health outcomes and helping keep families together. The findings come from an in-depth look at seven organizations participating in Project Nurture and its rural expansion, Nurture Oregon—models designed to deliver integrated, stigma-free care by bringing together medical, behavioral health and social support professionals. The results are published in The Annals of Family Medicine. This care model comes at a critical time. In...

### **CDC Backs Twice-Yearly Injectable for HIV Prevention**

The CDC made a strong recommendation based on a high certainty of evidence to use the long-acting injectable lenacapavir (Yeztugo) for HIV pre-exposure prophylaxis (PrEP), but will that ensure the treatment's place in the nation's health plan formularies? "[Lenacapavir] is a highly effective and safe PrEP option administered every 6 months, which provides the potential to improve PrEP adherence and thus enhance HIV prevention in the United States," the CDC's PrEP Guidelines Work Group stated in its clinical recommendation, published last week in the Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Even so, the CDC's new position...

### **Loneliness and anxiety fuel smartphone and social media addiction in 'night owls,' new study finds**

Young adult "night owls" (or "evening types"—those who prefer to stay up late) are significantly more at risk of developing problematic relationships with smartphones and social media, according to a new study. Problematic smartphone use is characterized by anxiety when separated from one's phone, neglecting responsibilities in favor of phone use, and compulsively checking notifications. Social media addiction is similarly marked by excessive, uncontrolled usage that interferes with daily life. Nearly 40% of U.K. students are now believed to exhibit signs of social media addiction, with young women at particularly...

### **Meditation may help treat depression and gaming addiction**

Mindfulness meditation may help people struggling with concurrent depression and Internet gaming disorder, according to a study published in PNAS Nexus. Guang-Heng Dong and colleagues treated 59 people with depression and Internet gaming disorder (IGD)—which is characterized by excessive and dysregulated video game playing. About a third of people struggling with IGD also suffer from depression. For some, gaming becomes the only way to feel pleasure in an otherwise painful or colorless world. Of the 59 participants, 27 engaged in progressive muscle relaxation exercises and 32 engaged in mindfulness...

## **Funding Opportunities**



## **GRANTS & FUNDING**

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

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

## **CAR Member New Publications**

### **An individual-level data synthesis of Clinical Trials Network studies to examine the impact of psychosocial treatments for Black people who use cocaine and/or opioids**

A. Kathleen Burlew, Lesia M. Ruglass, Adriana Espinosa, Caravella McCuistian, Angela M. Haeny, Ayana Jordan, Christopher Roundtree, Joel Lopez, Ashley Vena, Antonio A. Morgan-López

*Drug and Alcohol Dependence*

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.drugalcdep.2025.112850>

## ABSTRACT

**Objective:** Cocaine- and opioid-related overdose deaths have increased among Black people, which makes identifying effective treatments for Black people a high priority. We investigated the comparative effectiveness of behavioral treatments among Black adults who use cocaine and/or opioids.

**Methods:** Identified multisite randomized clinical trials (RCTs) of behavioral interventions that targeted substance use, had participants who self-identified as Black, and included cocaine use outcome measures from the National Drug Abuse Treatment Clinical Trials Network (CTN) datashare. We estimated cocaine use and opioid use severity scale scores while considering study-level measurement non-invariance. Then, we estimated the inverse probability of treatment-weighted (IPTW) linear mixed models to assess comparative effectiveness of treatments that address social-contextual factors and those focused solely on substance use (e.g., contingency management (CM)) relative to treatment-as-usual/controls on cocaine use and opioid use severity scores during- and post-treatment.

**Results:** Nine RCTs met inclusion criteria, with a combined sample of 1381 Black adults who used cocaine and/or opioids. The IPTW linear mixed models indicated that cocaine use severity decreased from baseline to end-of-treatment across three treatment groups, with a greater decrease for social-contextual treatments and CM relative to treatment-as-usual/controls. However, this greater reduction was maintained at 12-month follow-ups for social-contextual treatments, while CM worsened relative to TAU/controls. We found decreases in latent opioid use severity with no or minor differences between treatment groups.

**Conclusion:** The findings suggest that addressing social-contextual factors is an essential treatment component for long-term reduction of cocaine use among Black adults.

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