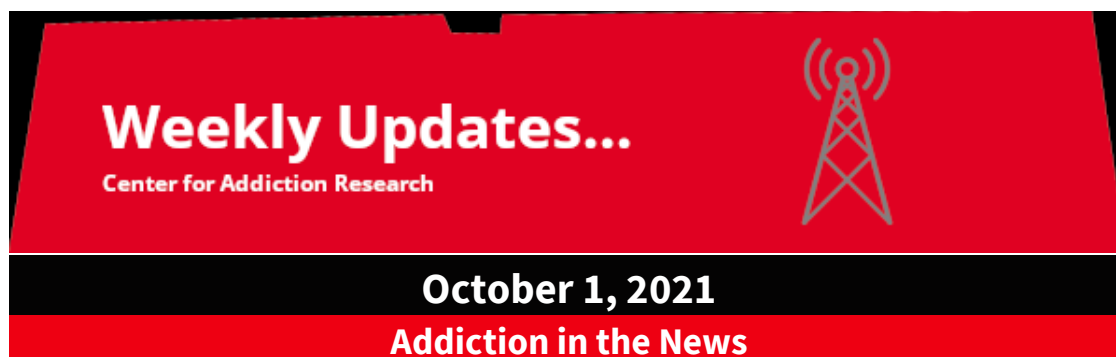


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

Gov. Beshear recognizes National Recovery Month

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Today, Gov. Andy Beshear, the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services recognized September as National Recovery Month and celebrated the thousands of Kentuckians who have achieved recovery while also reaffirming the commonwealth's commitment to helping even more Kentuckians overcome addiction. National Recovery...

Let's end the HIV epidemic

What does HIV in Ohio look like today? The present looks far better than the past. We've been living with HIV since the early 1980s. Back then, doctors raced to figure out what it was, and many people here and around the world died for lack of effective treatment. For many people who remember those frightening early days, they may not realize just how far we've come. I'd like to share some good news...

Safe Babies Court Team is up and running in Scioto County

SCIOTO — Judge Alan Lemons is a strong advocate for children of all ages and he has been running the drug court program for years and in the past year and a half, he has worked with Groundwork Ohio and the Children's Defense Fund- Ohio to expand the Safe Babies Court Team (SBCT) approach in Ohio through standing up infant-toddler court teams in Cuyahoga, Montgomery and Scioto...

National News

A Sobering Reality: Alcohol Kills More Americans Each Year Than Drug Overdoses Do.

In an opinion piece for [USA Today](#) (9/24, 12.7M), Chuck Ingoglia, President and CEO of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, said “America has a drinking problem, but our nation’s overdose crisis has shifted attention away from our national hangover.” Ingoglia asserted that it is “time to focus on this long overlooked problem.” Drug overdose fatalities “rose nearly 30% in 2020 to 93,000, according to preliminary statistics released in July by the” CDC. However, “an estimated 95,000 people die from alcohol-related causes annually, according to the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism (NIAAA).” Ingoglia wrote, “It’s tough to change the narrative, but too many Americans are drinking themselves to death. It’s time to sober up, America.”

Psychedelic Companies Hope At-Home DNA Tests Bring Better Highs.

[Bloomberg](#) (9/28, Kary, 3.57M) reports that Endocanna Health Inc. sells home saliva testing kits, “which looks for 57 genetic traits that could influence a customer’s response to marijuana, so they can select the best strain and correct dose.” Endocanna “also plans to look at similar factors for a range of psychotropic drugs.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

CBD Drinks And Edibles Claiming To Reduce Anxiety And Pain Are Mostly ‘Pointless,’ According To A Cannabis Researcher.

[Insider](#) (9/24, Naftulin, 2.74M) reported that during an episode of the podcast “It’s All Going to the Pot,” Adie Rae, a National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded cannabis researcher, “explained why CBD edibles and beverages are ‘pointless’ and a waste of money.” Rae said “So if you’re taking a 100 milligram CBD capsule or something, you might get five milligrams into your bloodstream. And that’s a whopping dose, right?” Insider added, “Since most edibles are dosed in 5, 10, and 20 milligram segments, eating or drinking edible CBD on a whim won’t offer any benefits, said Rae.”

Pandemic Changed College Drug Use.

[Middle Earth New Jersey](#) (9/27) reports in continuing coverage that the National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded Monitoring the Future study “discovered that alcohol use among college students declined, while marijuana use increased” during the COVID-19 pandemic. NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow said, “The pandemic seems to have actually made marijuana into an alternative to escape the monotony of isolation.”

Passage Of Recreational Cannabis Laws Leads To Some Rise In Use But Not For All Demographics.

[Columbia University \(NY\)](#) (9/27) reports, “The U.S. is seeing an increased use of cannabis resulting from its legalization for recreational purposes, according to a study conducted at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health” with the support of the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the National Institutes of Health. The research indicates “that passage of the laws led to a rise in the odds of past-year and past-month cannabis use among individuals of Hispanic, Other and non-Hispanic white race/ethnicity compared to the period prior to enacting laws for recreational use. However, most importantly, as of 2017, legalization did not lead to more frequent use, or cannabis use disorder among these groups.” In addition, “no changes in use were observed among non-Hispanic Black people or among individuals aged 12-20 of all racial/ethnic groups, for whom cannabis use remains illegal.” The findings were published in JAMA Network Open.

Federal Grant Approved To Study Medical Marijuana Impact In Arkansas.

The [High Times](#) (9/27, Edward, 20K) reports in continuing coverage that the \$1.3 million National Institute on Drug Abuse grant “will help fund a study on the medical cannabis program in Arkansas.” With the grant, “researchers affiliated with the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences (UAMS) and Arkansas Center for Health Improvement will conduct what is being described as ‘a first-of-its-kind population health analysis of the medical marijuana program, combining eligible consumers’ cannabis purchase information with insurance claims records and other data sources to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the effects of cannabis on consumers’ medical care.’” The study will “also examine the impact of COVID-19 on the Arkansas medical marijuana program, including changes in cardholder requests, product purchases, healthcare utilization and adverse events,” according to a press release

Nicotine Withdrawal May Cause Former Smokers To Prefer Fatty, Sugary Foods, Study Suggests.

The [New York Post](#) (9/26, Reilly, 7.45M) reports a new study from the University of Minnesota found that quitting “may cause former smokers suffering from nicotine withdrawal to prefer fatty, sugary foods to fill the void.” A group of participants ages 19 to 75 “were asked to stop using nicotine for 24 hours and received either a placebo or 50 mg of naltrexone, a drug commonly used to treat patients with substance addiction problems.” Researchers “found that those who were experiencing nicotine withdrawals consumed more calories.” The findings were published in the Journal of Drug and Alcohol Dependence.

Opinion: Tobacco Harm Reduction Will Combat Addiction More Effectively Than Prohibition.

In an opinion piece for the [Washington Times](#) (9/28, 626K), Dr. Michael Madden writes, “The Prohibition-era of the 1920s and early ‘30s and the War on Drugs of the last 50 years show that outright prohibitions and bans on alcohol and drugs of all kinds fail to curtail use of the banned substance. Despite this historical evidence, many modern advocates are attempting to ban nicotine and tobacco products from sale and use – ostensibly to ‘save the children’ from nicotine addiction.” He goes on to say that “former leaders of the nation’s leading scientific organization dedicated to the study of nicotine and tobacco are attempting to remind us of history’s lessons: bans don’t work, but a measured, evidenced-based, harm-reduction strategy will.” He references an article where “15 past presidents of the Society for Research on Nicotine and Tobacco urge us to follow the science on tobacco harm reduction. Tobacco harm reduction is a strategy wherein we steer smokers away from more harmful combustible cigarettes and cigars toward less harmful nicotine alternatives.” Madden writes that “policymakers at the state and federal levels should look to the success of harm reduction policies in other public health crises and put away their blinders on tobacco and nicotine products to create a successful tobacco harm reduction strategy.”

Feds Fund Study Into Whether Psilocybin Can Help People Quit Smoking Cigarettes.

[Marijuana Moment](#) (9/23) reports that the [National Institute on Drug Abuse \(NIDA\)](#) “is funding a study into how psilocybin could help people quit smoking cigarettes – one of the latest examples of the government’s growing interest in psychedelic therapy.” NIDA “recently approved the grant, which will enable researchers at Johns Hopkins University (JHU), New York University and the University of Alabama at Birmingham to explore how so-called magic mushrooms can help people curb their addiction to cigarettes.” According to the article, “NIDA Director Nora Volkow told Marijuana Moment in a recent interview that the increased media attention to psychedelics research, and the reform movement to loosen restrictions on these substances, is contributing to” increased investment in psychedelics research. Volkow said, “People start to discover the potential that these drugs have for therapeutics and the current trials that are ongoing. ... This takes on a momentum because the ideal world of having a drug that can cure things very dramatically [is appealing].”

First Opioid Vaccines In Clinical Trials In The U.S.

The [Washington Times](#) (9/23, Tan, 626K) reports, “The first opioid vaccine clinical trials are” in progress as the CDC “reports this month that more than 71,000 opioid overdose deaths occurred in the 12-month period that ended in February.” National Institute on Drug Abuse Chief of Science Policy Dr. Emily Epstein said, “Novel approaches like an opioid vaccine could help save some of the many lives lost to

opioids. ... We owe it to the millions of Americans whose lives have been impacted by the opioid overdose epidemic to pursue every therapeutic approach with strong potential.” She added, “This vaccine would not have made it to the clinical trials stage without robust evidence in support of such therapeutic potential.”

DEA Warns Many Pills On Black Market Have Deadly Amounts Of Fentanyl.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/27, Barrett, Dwoskin, 10.52M) reports on Monday, the Drug Enforcement Administration “issued a public warning...that a growing number of pain medications bought on the black market are laced with the synthetic opioid fentanyl or the stimulant methamphetamine, driving overdose deaths to record levels.” DEA Administrator Anne Milgram told The Washington Post, “We are in the midst, in my view, of an overdose crisis, and the counterfeit pills are driving so much of it.” The Post adds that there were a 93,000 overdose deaths last year, up nearly 30% over 2019. Administrator Milgram said, “There’s no question in my mind right now there are chemicals largely coming from China to Mexico.”

The [New York Times](#) (9/27, Vigdor, 20.6M) reports the DEA “warned...that a record number of the 9.5 million fake prescription pills it had seized in the United States this year contained lethal amounts of fentanyl” as “two of every five fake pills that have been seized this year have contained lethal amounts of fentanyl.” The Times adds that the “vast majority of the counterfeit pills...were brought into the United States from Mexico” and “the chemicals used to make them come from China, the agency said.”

Cook County Health Expands Fight Against Opioid Crisis With Medication Take-Back Bins.

[WMAQ-TV Chicago](#) (9/29, Hush, 307K) reports that “even as we emerge from the coronavirus pandemic, the ongoing opioid epidemic continues to get worse, studies show.” In 2020, “the National Institute on Drug Abuse reported a nearly 30% increase in overdose deaths since 2019.” In order to combat the opioid crisis, Cook County Health in Illinois “will install medication take-back bins in all pharmacies.”

WVU Neuroscience Institute Studying Whether DBS Could Help Patients With Opioid Addiction.

[NBC News](#) (9/29, Snow, 4.91M) reports West Virginia University’s Rockefeller Neuroscience Institute completed its third experimental brain surgery to determine if deep brain stimulation (DBS) could help people with opioid addiction. During surgery, “tiny electrodes are implanted in a part of the brain that evolved to reward behaviors such as seeking food and sex.” The electrodes “are designed to carry electrical stimulation that could, in theory, help drown out the constant craving” for opioids. The initial phase of the trial “is designed to test the safety of the treatment.” A second phase will then “test how well it works in keeping people off drugs.”

Fentanyl Deaths Rising In Colorado, Data Show.

The [Denver Post](#) (9/26, Schmelzer, 660K) reports, “In 2018, at least 102 Coloradans died after overdosing on fentanyl, according to data collected by the Colorado Department of Public Health and Environment.” In 2019, “that number doubled – 222 people died,” and “in 2020, the death toll more than doubled again and 540 Coloradans died.” In the first six months of 2021, “at least 381 Coloradans died of fentanyl overdoses.” Fentanyl caused 10% of overdose deaths in Colorado in 2018 and 44% in the first six months of 2021.

Drug, Fentanyl Overdose Deaths Continue To Plague San Francisco.

The [San Francisco Chronicle](#) (9/28, Thadani, 2.44M) reports that in spite of spending more than \$13 million “for new and expanded overdose prevention programs this year,” by the end of August, 51 more people died, “the majority due to fentanyl, according to data released by the medical examiner’s office last week.” This year’s death toll stands at 457, “which compares with 473 at this time last year.” A record 712 people died from overdose in 2020.

Methamphetamine Use, Overdose Deaths From Psychostimulants Soar.

[Psychiatric News](#) (9/24, 91K) reported Dr. Beth Han of the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) and colleagues indicated that “methamphetamine use in adults aged 18 to 64 years increased 43% between 2015 and 2019,” and that “overdose deaths involving psychostimulants other than cocaine, mostly methamphetamine, increased 180% during the same period.” Investigators arrived at these conclusions after examining “data from 195,711 people who responded to the annual National Survey on Drug Use and Health...between 2015 and 2019.” NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow, one of the authors of the study, said in a press release, “Public health approaches must be tailored to address methamphetamine use across the diverse communities at risk, and particularly for American Indian and Alaska Native communities, who have the highest risk for methamphetamine misuse and are too often underserved.” The [findings](#) were published online Sept. 22 in *JAMA Psychiatry*.

U.S. Meth Overdose Deaths Tripled In Recent Years.

[HealthDay](#) (9/23, Reinberg, 11K) reports in continuing coverage that new research indicates that deaths attributed to methamphetamine overdoses in the US “nearly tripled between 2015 and 2019.” According to HealthDay, “While the number of methamphetamine users did not increase as steeply, researchers said frequent use of methamphetamine, and using other drugs at the same time, may have contributed to the increase in overdose deaths.” Meth users have “become more diverse, according to the report.” National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow said, “We are in the midst of an overdose crisis in the United States, and this tragic trajectory goes far beyond an opioid epidemic. In addition to heroin, methamphetamine and cocaine are becoming more dangerous due to

contamination with highly potent fentanyl, and increases in higher risk use patterns such as multiple substance use and regular use.” The findings (9/22, 35K) were published online Sept. 22 in the journal JAMA Psychiatry.

California Officials Pursuing Legislation, Appealing To Federal Regulators To Make Meth Contingency Management More Widely Available.

NPR (9/30, Dembosky, 3.69M) reports, “As overdoses and public health costs related to meth and cocaine continue to spiral in California, state officials are desperate for more effective treatment options and are pursuing legislation and appealing to federal regulators to make contingency management more widely available.” NPR adds, “Washington, Montana, and West Virginia are also exploring similar strategies.” Contingency management “incentivizes drug users with money or gift cards to stay off drugs.” Research indicates this approach “is the most effective treatment for meth or cocaine addiction, especially when combined with other behavioral therapy.”

Rethinking What It Means To Recover From Addiction.

In an opinion in TIME (9/29, 18.1M), Maia Szalavitz, who is the author of “Undoing Drugs: The Untold Story of Harm Reduction and the Future of Addiction,” writes that she was told that she must “abstain forever from psychoactive substances including alcohol” to successfully kick cocaine and heroin in 1988. However, Szalavitz says that she discovered later that “research shows that most people who meet full diagnostic criteria for having an addiction to alcohol or other drugs recover without any treatment or self-help groups – and many do so not by quitting entirely, but by moderating their use so that it no longer interferes with their productivity or relationships.” Szalavitz advocates for the harm reduction approach of the Chicago Recovery Alliance, which “defines recovery as making ‘any positive change.’” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

House Group Unveils Bipartisan Mental Health, Addiction Legislative Plan.

Roll Call (9/29, Raman, 130K) reports, “A bipartisan group of 144 House lawmakers plans to unveil their agenda Wednesday for expanding access to mental health care and combating the growing drug epidemic after overdose deaths hit new highs, CQ Roll Call has learned first exclusively.” The “blueprint outlining the group’s legislative goals includes 12 policy subcategories including prevention, treatment, rural and underserved communities, workforce development, first responders, interdiction, children and families, veterans, prescribing, education, health care access and health parity.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

How CMS Is Boosting Telehealth And RPM With New CPT Codes.

Healthcare IT News (9/28, Siwicki, 2K) reports, “In the latest Medicare Physician Fee Schedule, the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services proposed for the first time a set of CPT codes for remote therapeutic monitoring.” The codes, “according

to the proposal, are intended to be used to understand the effectiveness of and the patient's response to a prescribed therapy," and "also represent one of the latest advancements to modernize reimbursement for digital health." Preventable hospitalizations and emergency department visits in the US "related to medication non-adherence cost more than \$300 billion a year, according to National Institutes of Health research" which means "the inclusion of medication adherence programs in CMS' proposed RTM codes represent a major step forward in solving one of healthcare's biggest challenges."

Expert Discusses Report On Building Data Capacity For Patient-Centered Outcomes Research At HHS.

[Federal News Network](#) (9/28, 220) says Federal Drive with Tom Temin interviewed George Isham, committee chair and a senior fellow at the HealthPartners Institute, about a new report on "building data capacity" for "patient-centered outcomes research." Isham said the office of the Assistant Secretary for Planning and Evaluation at HHS coordinates a "portfolio of projects for building data capacity to conduct patient centered outcomes research. And they asked us to identify issues critical to the continued development of data infrastructure for patient-centered outcomes research and contribute to the development of their strategic plan for the expenditure of those funds over the next decades. And so this activity, both the three interim reports, as well as the recorded workshops...that input informs the working groups, which are already working, I understand, at HHS on this project, and will help them in terms of forming their strategic plan to expand these funds."

Pilot Program Aims To Reduce Drug-Laced Mail In Prisons.

The [AP](#) (9/27, Hamer) reports, "A new mail policy at Fox Lake Correctional Institution" in Wisconsin "aimed at curbing the infiltration of dangerous drug-laced paper could expand to all prisons." According to the article, "Under the pilot policy, started in April, inmates receive only photocopies of their mail, not the originals, which staff later shred." However, "prisoners say they have seen months-long delays in receiving mail, educational materials denied, missing pages and the margins of letters cut off with no way to get the missing material back." The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

Congo's Authorities Working To Stamp Out Car-Exhaust Drug Craze.

[Reuters](#) (9/27, Nyemba) reports that police in Kinshasa, the capital of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, in August "rounded up and paraded nearly 100 alleged dealers and users of the drug 'bombe,' which means powerful in the local Lingala language, following a call to action by...President Felix Tshisekedi." According to Reuters, the craze for the "drug derived from crushed vehicle exhaust filters is rattling authorities in Kinshasa, triggering a campaign to stamp out the concoction and a related rash of car part thefts."

Are Magic Mushrooms Legal And Can They Treat Depression?

[Newsweek](#) (9/23, Kim, 2.67M) reports, “The FDA has granted ‘Breakthrough Therapy’ designation for two formulations of psilocybin to facilitate clinical trials for its ‘psilocybin-assisted therapy for treatment-resistant depression’ and the trials will determine the safety and efficacy of the drug, the NIDA told Newsweek.” According to the National Library of Medicine “website, there are currently at least 29 clinical trials relating to psilocybin and depression.” The NIDA warned: “It is important to note that research on psilocybin as a medical treatment is done within a therapeutic structure, which includes a preparatory session with a clinician, a controlled environment and supervision while experiencing the effects of psilocybin and follow-up sessions for processing.”

WPost: Administration Should Support States That Want Supervised Injection Sites.

The [Washington Post](#) (9/23, 10.52M) argues in an editorial that the Administration “should lend its support” to states that want to open supervised drug injection sites. According to the Post, the Administration has thus far been silent on this “issue, despite repeated appeals for engagement by advocates of a harm-reduction approach to drug use.”

MHA Nation Funds Construction Of Recovery Center In North Dakota.

The [Louisville \(KY\) Courier-Journal](#) (9/22, 554K) reports the Native American tribes Mandan, Hidatsa and Arikara are part of the Fort Berthold Indian Reservation-based MHA Nation, which funded the construction of a residential substance use disorder recovery center. The North Dakota facility uses “a culturally competent model that incorporates tradition and customs to help people heal.” An increasing “number of residents have sought treatment in this community, which has been inundated by” illegal drugs that Mexican cartels have smuggled into the US.

Organizations Lobbying For Expanded Telehealth Coverage For Rural Providers Beyond Pandemic.

[mHealth Intelligence](#) (9/27, Wicklund) reports “several organizations are making an extra effort to lobby for expanded telehealth coverage for rural healthcare providers beyond the pandemic.” Although “telehealth advocates have been lobbying the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services to make permanent a number of rules enacted during the pandemic to improve access and coverage, they’re putting emphasis on telemental health services delivered through federally qualified health centers (FQHCs), rural health centers (RHCs) and critical access hospitals (CAHs).” A letter signed by 20 organizations that was sent to CMS Administrator Chiquita Brooks-LaSure said, “Without action to ensure these hospitals can bill tele-behavioral health as they do in-person services, access to CAH-provided outpatient will be lost for thousands of Americans in rural areas.”

New Study Indicates Wearable Health Monitors Could Predict Infections Before A Person Experiences Symptoms.

STAT (9/29, Bender, 262K) reports, “A new study that infected willing participants with common cold and flu viruses provides the most rigorous evidence yet that wearable health monitors could predict infections, even before a person starts experiencing symptoms.” For the study, “researchers recorded biometric data from young people before and after they were inoculated with H1N1 influenza and human rhinovirus. By comparing each participant to their uninfected baseline metrics, researchers detected infection with up to 92% accuracy and distinguished between mild and moderate disease with up to 90% accuracy.”

Funding Opportunities



[PAR-21-344](#)

[Interventions for Stigma Reduction to Improve HIV/AIDS Prevention, Treatment and Care in Low- and Middle- Income Countries \(R01 - Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-NS-22-029](#)

[Notice of Early Expiration of PAR-20-316 "NIH Countermeasures Against Chemical Threats \(CounterACT\) Research Centers of Excellence \(U54 - Clinical Trial Optional\)"](#)

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