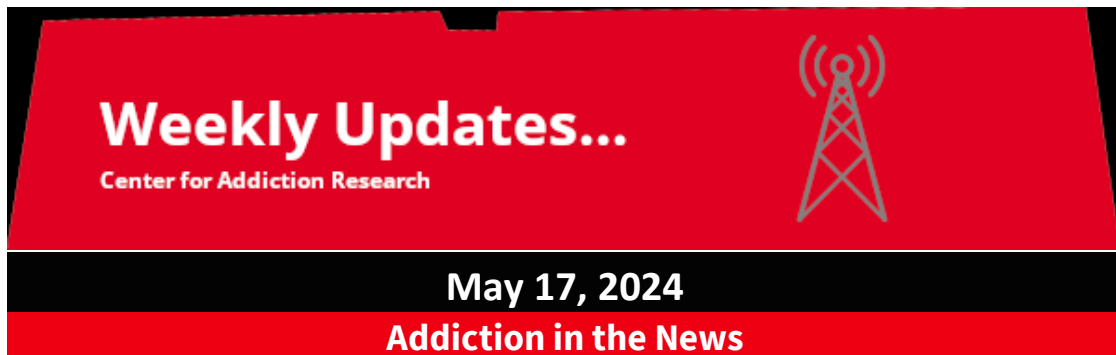


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

Fentanyl pill seizures dropped in Hamilton County. Why officials are still concerned

Fake prescription pills containing fentanyl are pouring into the United States, a new study shows, magnifying the threat of death from overdose nationwide. In the Cincinnati region, though, the fentanyl-tainted pills have seen a downturn among seized drugs analyzed by the Hamilton County Crime Laboratory. Even so, they remain a deadly threat – especially to people who do not have an opioid addiction, experts say. U.S. High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area agents seized 2,300 times more fentanyl-tainted pills in 2023 compared with 2017 – jumping from almost 50,000 in 2017 to more than 115 million pills in 2023, according to a study released Monday that was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse...

Ohio lawmakers debating proposal calling for longer prison terms for fentanyl dealers

CINCINNATI —As a parent and a former Cincinnati police Officer Cindy Abrams spends a lot of time worrying about a drug that can kill people who consume just a tiny amount. "You could ask the coroner, you could ask any law enforcement officer that deals with this fentanyl," said Abrams, a Republican member of Ohio's House of Representatives who calls Harrison home. "It's something we've never seen before." Because fentanyl can be so lethal, Abrams wants drug dealers convicted at the state level to face prison sentences familiar to federal inmates. "If the DEA is involved, you're going to prison," she said. "The state level doesn't have those as

strong penalties, but now we're ramping them up to mirror federal law." Abrams is...

How vape detectors are keeping Northeast Ohio schools safe

CLEVELAND (WJW) – Detectors that are intended to help identify smoking and vaping in areas, including bathrooms and school locker rooms, have advanced well beyond simply sensing smoke. The sensors are eavesdropping on conversations, listening for key words and sounds associated with TikTok challenges and bullying and fights, using a kind of radar to sense the number of people who are gathering or loitering in a bathroom. “Obviously you can’t have cameras in a restroom so what else can you use? What other tools can you and I use without having to, you know, putting a person in there?” said Will Hargett, the CEO of Zeptive, a company that makes sensors. “The sensors have motion sensors on there so they can...

National News

Binge drinking is a growing public health crisis—how research on alcohol use disorder has shifted

With the new Amy Winehouse biopic "Back to Black" in U.S. theaters as of May 17, 2024, the late singer's relationship with alcohol and drugs is under scrutiny again. In July 2011, Winehouse was found dead in her flat in north London from "death by misadventure" at the age of 27. That's the official British term used for accidental death caused by a voluntary risk. Her blood alcohol concentration was 0.416%, more than five times the legal intoxication limit in the U.S.—leading her cause of death to be later adjusted to include "alcohol toxicity" following a second coroner's inquest. Nearly 13 years later, alcohol consumption and...

Brain activity related to craving and heavy drinking differs across sexes, study reveals

The brain circuits that underlie alcohol craving and heavy drinking share some similarities between men and women, but also some key differences, a new Yale study reveals. Using functional magnetic resonance imaging (fMRI), Yale researchers have observed that after viewing stress- or alcohol-related images (as opposed to "neutral" images), the brains of men and women with alcohol use disorder responded differently. Those differences, which were also related to alcohol craving intensity and future alcohol use, may signal the need for sex-specific therapeutic approaches to alcohol use disorder. The findings were...

Lost in the Haze: What Would Rescheduling Marijuana Really Do?

As has been reported, the Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is planning to move cannabis (marijuana) from Schedule I to Schedule III at the federal level. While many details of the proposal and plans are still missing, the move follows directives from President Biden in 2022 to review federal cannabis policy with the stated goal of ending criminal penalties for possession -- which disproportionately affect people of color and other minoritized groups -- and a subsequent directive from

HHS in August 2023 instructing the DEA to reschedule cannabis. While both medical marijuana and full legalization have broad public...

Higher Risk of Infant Death Tied to Dual Cannabis, Nicotine Use in Pregnancy

Use of cannabis and nicotine together during pregnancy was associated with higher risks for infant death and maternal and neonatal morbidity compared with no exposure to either substance, with dual-use risk estimates higher than with either substance alone, according to a retrospective population-based cohort study. Compared with use of neither substance, the risk of infant death was more than twice as high with combined use in pregnancy after controlling for possible confounders (adjusted risk ratio [aRR] 2.18, 95% CI 1.82-2.62), reported Jamie O. Lo, MD, MCR, of Oregon Health & Science University in Portland, and...

About 56 percent of pregnant smokers quit during pregnancy

More than half of women who smoke before pregnancy quit while pregnant, according to research published in the May 2 issue of the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report. Lauren Kipling, Ph.D., from the CDC in Atlanta, and colleagues used data from the 2021 Pregnancy Risk Assessment Monitoring System to estimate the prevalence of smoking before, during, and after pregnancy and quitting behaviors during pregnancy. The researchers found that the prevalence of cigarette smoking was 12.1, 5.4, and 7.2 percent before, during, and after pregnancy, respectively...

Study shows alarming rise of electronic vaping use in US adolescents

Electronic vapor products (EVPs), also known as e-cigarettes or vaping devices, have an allure because of their marketed image as a safer alternative to traditional cigarette smoking and for their variety of appealing flavors. Yet, they contain many substances beyond nicotine, including propylene glycol, glycerin, flavorings and potentially harmful chemicals such as formaldehyde and metals, which could pose significant health risks such as respiratory disease, cardiovascular disease and cancer. Vaping also is strongly linked with a serious medical condition that damages the lungs due to the vitamin E acetate, an additive...

Research finds e-cigarette content on Instagram violates policies, is marketed to teens

New research presented May 4 at the American Psychiatric Association's Annual Meeting indicates that methods of advertising e-cigarettes on digital platforms are violating federal government and Instagram policies. The primary violations include omitting age-restricted content tags on Instagram and neglecting to address the addictive potential of e-cigarettes and other vaping products. Previous studies have found that exposure to e-cigarettes on social media is correlated with increased use. The term "e-cigarette" refers to vaping products, synthetic nicotine products, and other electronic nicotine delivery...

Faster approach for starting extended-release naltrexone to treat opioid use disorder shown effective

Starting people with opioid use disorder on extended-release, injectable naltrexone (XR-naltrexone) within five to seven days of seeking treatment is more effective than the standard treatment method of starting within 10-15 days, but requires closer medical supervision, according to results from a clinical trial supported by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). Published in JAMA Network Open, the findings suggest that this rapid treatment protocol could make XR-naltrexone more viable as a treatment option for opioid use disorder, which continues to take lives at an...

More addiction patients can take methadone at home, but some states lag behind

Matt Haney's home in San Francisco isn't far from a methadone clinic. The 42-year-old state lawmaker has watched people line up early each morning outside the clinic in the Tenderloin, a community long considered the epicenter of the city's substance use epidemic. His neighbors wait for the daily dose of methadone that relieves their cravings and minimizes opioid withdrawal symptoms. Despite methadone's effectiveness, a labyrinth of state and federal rules — meant to guard against its misuse — keeps it inaccessible to many people who desperately need it, Haney said. "What kind of normal person with a job, a life and...

More stigmatizing language found in clinical notes for older, female, or patients of color with opioid use disorder

New research presented May 4 at the American Psychiatric Association's Annual Meeting reveals that patients who are older, female, or of color and have an opioid use disorder are more likely to experience stigma and bias from a health care professional when seeking treatment. Studies have found high prevalence of bias and stigma in the U.S. health care system. Bias refers to a "personal and sometimes unreasoned judgment," akin to prejudice, while stigma is defined as "a set of negative and unfair beliefs that a society or group of people have about something." Bias and stigma can be experienced and communicated...

What If States Paid People to Stop Using Drugs and Smoking?

The U.S. is grappling with two leading and interwoven crises of addiction that result in far too many preventable deaths each year. While one is a problem that the country has been battling for decades, the other is relatively new. By now, you may have guessed the crises at hand: tobacco use and opioid and stimulant-related overdoses. Policymakers, health researchers, and clinicians alike have advocated for and instituted countless measures to try to quell the high levels of tobacco and substance use and resulting morbidity and mortality -- to no avail. Yet, one approach has not received nearly enough attention: contingency...

Over 115 million pills containing illicit fentanyl seized by law enforcement in 2023

Law enforcement seizures of illicit fentanyl increased dramatically in number and size between 2017 to 2023 in the U.S., especially in pill form, according to a new study (link is external) funded by the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA). The number of individual pills containing fentanyl seized by law enforcement was 2,300 times greater in 2023 compared to 2017, with 115,562,603 pills seized in 2023 vs. 49,657 in 2017. The proportion of fentanyl pill seizures to the total number of fentanyl seizures more than quadrupled, with pills representing 49% of illicit fentanyl seizures in 2023...

Scientists discover surprising details about xylazine in combination with fentanyl

Unregulated use of fentanyl and overdose deaths have increased dramatically in recent years, and this trend was made more alarming when authorities found fentanyl laced with the animal tranquilizer xylazine. Some addiction specialists and public health officials feared the added xylazine would impede the fast-acting effects of the drug naloxone, which can effectively treat patients experiencing respiratory depression—a serious side effect of opioid use that can lead to death. In a recent research discovery published in the journal *Addiction Neuroscience*, scientists at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill found that...

Revised clinical guidelines on mandatory reporting of substance-exposed newborns show promise

Researchers at Boston Medical Center (BMC) have published findings in *JAMA Pediatrics* that show the hospital's revised clinical guidelines for reporting substance-exposed newborns support family health. In May 2021, BMC revised its clinical guidelines to report suspected abuse after a child is born when there are tangible concerns about the parent's ability to safely care for the child, rather than automatically filing Child Protective Services (CPS) reports for all cases of prescribed use of opioids or medication for opioid use disorder. This clinical guideline shift reduced reporting to CPS by 45%, eliminating reporting in the...

Almost all counterfeit oxycodone (Oxycontin) pills contain fentanyl, finds study

Lab tests of counterfeit oxycodone (Oxycontin) pills seized by police in Rhode Island in 2022 found 99.3% also contained dangerous fentanyl. It was typically mixed with another potentially deadly drug, xylazine. Both drugs make overdose more likely and more fatal, experts note. As too many American families have tragically come to know, "counterfeit prescription pills have been associated with adverse outcomes, including fatal overdose," said a team of researchers led by Dr. Rachel Wightman. She's associate professor of epidemiology and emergency medicine at Brown University in Providence, RI...

Local governments struggle to distribute their share of billions from opioid settlements

Settlement money to help stem the decades-long opioid addiction and overdose epidemic is rolling out to small towns and big cities across the U.S., but advocates worry that chunks of it may be used in ways that don't make a dent in the crisis. As state and local governments navigate how to use the money, advocates say local governments may not have the bandwidth to take the right steps to identify their communities' needs and direct their funding shares to projects that use proven methods to prevent deaths. Opioids have been linked to about 800,000 deaths in the U.S. since 1999, including more than 80,000...

How Mindfulness Could Help Folks Quit Opioids

WEDNESDAY, May 8, 2024 (HealthDay News) — Using mindfulness to help people trying to overcome opioid addiction can boost their odds of continuing treatment, new research shows. The approach helps folks how to deal with tension, savor life and reframe their thinking, the researchers explained. "Better treatment protocols could save thousands of lives per year, and the data we have from our pilot study and this phase II trial suggest mindfulness training may create a genuinely better treatment protocol," said study author Nina Cooperman, an associate professor of psychiatry at Rutgers Robert Wood...

Economists imagine an alternate universe where the opioid crisis peaked in '06, and then explain why it didn't

The U.S. opioid epidemic is a story of failed policy initiatives, missed opportunities, and more than 600,000 deaths. It's also a story with no end in sight, and for that, two economists say, we can blame relationships. The central problem owes to the nature of the market, according to David Cutler, the Otto Eckstein Professor of Applied Economics at Harvard, and former Harvard doctoral student J. Travis Donahoe, co-authors of new research posted as a working paper focused on the persistence of the crisis. In a situation with ample buyers and sellers—what economists call a "thick market"—spillovers in demand for opioids stem from...

U.S. Overdose Deaths Dropped in 2023, but Experts Say It's Too Soon to Celebrate

The number of fatal overdoses in the U.S. fell last year, according to CDC data posted Wednesday. Agency officials noted the data are provisional and could change after more analysis, but that they still expect a drop when the final counts are in. It would be only the second annual decline since the current national drug death epidemic began more than three decades ago. Experts reacted cautiously. One described the decline as relatively small, and said it should be thought more as part of a leveling off than a decrease. Another noted that the last time a decline occurred -- in 2018 -- drug deaths shot up in the years that...

More than 321,000 U.S. children lost a parent to drug overdose from 2011 to 2021

An estimated 321,566 children in the United States lost a parent to drug overdose from 2011 to 2021, according to a study published in JAMA Psychiatry. The rate of children who experienced this loss more than doubled during this period, from approximately 27 to 63 children per 100,000. The highest number of affected children were those with non-Hispanic white parents, but communities of color and tribal communities were disproportionately affected. The study was a collaborative effort led by researchers at the National Institutes of Health's (NIH) National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), the Substance Abuse and...

Scope of maternal substance use disorder crisis is dramatically underestimated, says study

Drug overdoses are a leading cause of maternal mortality in the United States, which has the highest maternal mortality rate of all high-income nations. And despite this convergence of the maternal mortality and overdose crises, substance use during pregnancy has traditionally only been tracked during the hospital visits when babies are delivered. In a new study, published in the June edition of Annals of Epidemiology, researchers at Emory University's Rollins School of Public Health found the traditional measurements greatly underestimate the true impact of substance use disorders (SUD) on the maternal mortality crisis. The...

Sociodemographic Factors May Predict Substance Use Initiation in Kids

NEW YORK CITY -- Sociodemographic factors such as religion and race were the most robust predictors of substance use initiation in early adolescence, according to an analysis of the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development (ABCD) study. Of the included kids who were substance-naïve at baseline, those raised in Mormon families were less likely to start using substances by age 12 (coefficient -0.87), as were Black kids (coefficient -0.32), while those raised in Jewish families were more likely to initiate use (coefficient 0.32), reported ReJoyce Green, PhD, of the Medical University of South Carolina in Charleston, during a...

Drugs and Addiction Science: NIDA Celebrates 50 Years of Research and Looks to the Future

The National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)—first established in 1974 as part of the Alcohol, Drug Abuse, and Mental Health Administration and in 1992 becoming part of the National Institutes of Health (NIH)—is the largest funder of research on drug use and addiction in the world. Over its 50-year history, NIDA's work has led to tremendous progress in advancing science and improving individual and public health. But the overdose epidemic at hand is a powerful reminder that there is much more to be done. Commemorating NIDA's 50th anniversary provides an opportunity to acknowledge the significant advances that...

Obstacles to alcohol, drug treatment higher for rural Americans

Rural Americans are less likely to initiate care for substance use disorders and to receive ongoing care compared with those who live in urban areas, according to a new study. When they do access care, people who live in less populated areas are more likely to have to go outside their provider network to receive treatment, which comes with higher out-of-pocket costs, found a team of researchers at The Ohio State University College of Public Health. Their study appears in the journal *Health Services Research*. “One thing that’s really striking is that we looked at sort of a best-case scenario for people with substance use...

Researchers say future is bright for treating substance abuse through mobile health technologies

Researchers at the University of Oklahoma are creating and studying health interventions delivered via smartphones to make effective, evidence-based treatments available to those who cannot or don't want to enter traditional in-person treatment. Michael Businelle, Ph.D., co-director of the TSET Health Promotion Center, a program of OU Health Stephenson Cancer Center, recently published a paper in the *Annual Review of Clinical Psychology* that details the current landscape of mobile health technology for substance use disorders and suggests a roadmap for the future. The Health Promotion Research Center...

Biden-Harris Administration Announces Maternal Mental Health Task Force’s National Strategy to Improve Maternal Mental Health Care Amid Urgent Public Health Crisis

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced the release of a national strategy today, with recommendations developed by the Task Force on Maternal Mental Health, a subcommittee of the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Advisory Committee for Women’s Services, to address the urgent public health crisis of maternal mental health and substance use issues. The Report to Congress (PDF | 2.1 MB) and accompanying National Strategy to Improve Maternal Mental Health Care (PDF | 3.6 MB) are part of broader federal efforts to address women’s...

First Responders, Veterans Hail Benefits of Psychedelic Drugs as California Debates Legalization

Wade Trammell recalls the time he and his fellow firefighters responded to a highway crash in which a beer truck rammed into a pole, propelling the truck’s engine through the cab and into the driver’s abdomen. “The guy was up there screaming and squirming. Then the cab caught on fire,” Trammell says. “I couldn’t move him. He burned to death right there in my arms.” Memories of that gruesome death and other traumatic incidents he had witnessed as a firefighter in Mountain View, California, didn’t seem to bother Trammell for the first seven years after he retired in 2015. But then he started crying a lot, drinking heavily, and...

Georgia governor signs law adding regulations for production and sale of herbal supplement kratom

ATLANTA (AP) — Georgia’s governor on Thursday signed a bill putting new regulations on the production and sale of products containing kratom, a plant-based supplement. The law, which takes effect Jan. 1, prohibits the sale of kratom to anyone under 21 and says it must be kept behind a counter or in a display area that is only accessible to store employees. It also limits the concentration of kratom’s main chemical components in products sold in Georgia, imposes new labeling requirements and adds penalties for violations. Extracted from the leaves of a tropical tree native to Southeast Asia, kratom is used to make capsules...

Funding Opportunities



[RFA-AA-24-007](#)

[Specialized Alcohol Research Centers \(P50 Clinical trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-AA-24-008](#)

[Comprehensive Alcohol Research Centers \(P60 Clinical trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-DA-25-030](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Exploring the Effects of Endocannabinoids and Exogenous Cannabinoids on Brain Development](#)

[PAR-24-152](#)

[Academic Research Enhancement Award \(AREA\) for Undergraduate-Focused Institutions \(R15 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-214](#)

[Academic Research Enhancement Award \(AREA\) for Undergraduate-Focused Institutions \(R15 Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

[PAR-24-207](#)

[Interventions to Address Disparities in Liver Diseases and Liver Cancer \(R01 - Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

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.

Helping Hand Grants Support Mental Health and Substance Use Disorder Projects

Deadline: May 31, 2024

The American Psychiatric Association Foundation invites applications for its Helping Hands Grants program. Established in 2005, the program aims to encourage medical students to participate in community service activities, raise awareness of mental illness and the importance of early recognition of illness, and build interest among medical students in the psychiatric field and working in underserved communities. Grants of up to \$5,000 will be awarded to medical schools for mental health and substance use disorder projects, particularly in under-served minority communities. Funded projects are created and managed by medical students and can be conducted in partnership with community agencies, or in conjunction with ongoing medical school outreach activities.

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