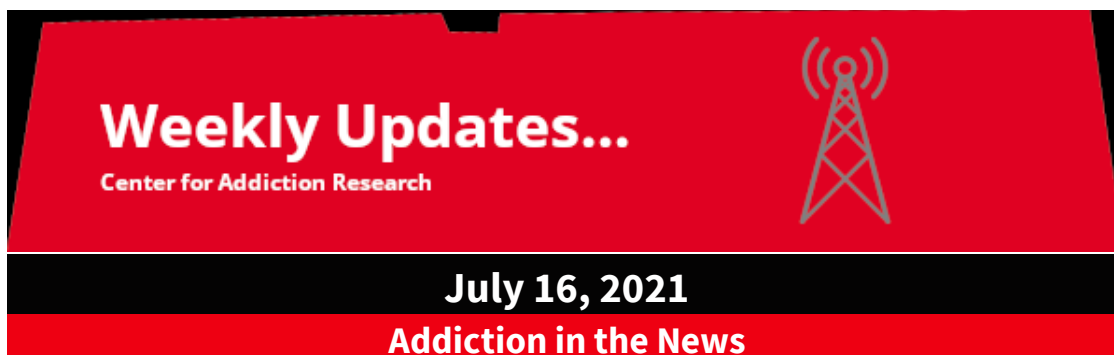


UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 7.16.2021

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**

### **CoM Institute Pilot Funding Announcement**

Join us in congratulating Dr. Jayme McReynolds, Assistant Professor in the Department of Pharmacology and Systems Physiology, and **CAR member** who was recently announced as a recipient of CoM Institute Pilot Funding in the amount of \$30,000 to pursue her studies on the project titled: Role of neuroimmune signaling in the effects of stress on addiction.

### **New data: fatal overdoses leapt 22% in Ohio last year**

At least 5,215 Ohioans fatally overdosed on drugs last year according to new government data, a nearly 22% increase over 2019 numbers. The data, released Wednesday by the National Center for Health Statistics, shows the Ohio uptick was more modest than the national rate. More than 93,000 Americans fatally overdosed in 2020, a staggering total amounting to a 29% increase from the year prior. The 2020 data reverses what was a promising trend of decreasing...

### **Many roads to recovery**

Recovery from a drug-related addiction – whether it be methamphetamine, heroin, spice, alcohol, opioids or a combination – is not uniform. Pathways to recovery may diverge in their respective philosophies on treating addiction, or they may differ in what programs or services they can offer people seeking treatment. In Lafayette,

those people have multiple options for wherever they are in their recovery process. The help comes from places filled with people who sympathize...

## **National News**

### **Less Than 2% Of Adults With AUD Using Medication To Treat Condition.**

[Behavioral Health Business](#) (7/8, Coward) reports new research indicates that “even as alcohol use disorder (AUD) remains a serious health issue, many Americans are struggling to access medications to help them combat it.” The study “collected data from 42,739 adults age[d] 18 and older who participated in the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH), which was conducted by the Substance Addiction and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA).” Of the 14.1 million adults who reported having AUD, “only 7.3% reported receiving any AUD treatment, and an even smaller percentage – 1.6% – reported using medications for AUD as part of their treatment regimen.” National Institute on Drug Abuse Science Policy Branch chief Emily Einstein, one of the study’s authors, “believes that a significant barrier to accessing medications for AUD lies within the stigma that many people feel in seeking treatment.” Einstein told Verywell Health, “Stigma is a huge factor that plays a role across that hopeful cascade of care.” The findings were published by JAMA Psychiatry.

### **Researchers Say Over 4% Of New Cancer Cases In 2020 Attributable To Alcohol Consumption.**

[CNN](#) (7/13, Rogers, 89.21M) reports on its website that “over 4% of all new cancer cases in 2020 were attributable to alcohol consumption, according to a study” in which researchers “analyzed available data on population-level alcohol use in 2010 and on cancer cases in 2020.” Researchers “assumed a 10-year period between alcohol consumption and the appearance of cancer, since the types of cancer included in the study – lip and oral cavity cancer, laryngeal cancer and breast cancer (among females) – have lengthy development periods and previous evidence of a causal relationship with alcohol consumption.” The findings were published in The Lancet Oncology.

### **Why Do So Few Men Understand That Addiction Is A Spectrum?**

[InsideHook](#) (7/12, Stahl, 49K) reports that many who are addicted to alcohol are “tweeners,” who “fall somewhere in the middle of the spectrum of addiction, making their substance problems trickier to manage – if they’re even noticed at all.” These individuals “likely just belong to one of the less-severe categories of the addiction spectrum, which account for the bulk of prospective addicts in society.” According to the article, “Of the 65 percent of people who consume alcohol, just nine percent fall into the category of drinkers at a ‘severe’ risk, according to Veach, who cited various sources, including the National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism.”

## **Overdose Deaths In Prisons Have Risen Dramatically Since 2001, Analysis Shows.**

[NPR](#) (7/15, 3.69M) reports, “From 2001 to 2018, the number of people who have died of drug or alcohol intoxication in state prisons rose more than 600%, according to an analysis of newly-released data from the Bureau of Justice Statistics.” Meanwhile, “in county jails, overdose deaths increased by more than 200%.” Furthermore, “2018 brought the highest number of prison deaths on record since the federal government began collecting this data 20 years ago.” The article notes that new “federal data does not include 2019 or 2020.”

## **Democratic Senators Unveil Draft Bill To Legalize Cannabis.**

[Reuters](#) (7/14, Nair, Khan) reports “three top U.S. Democratic senators on Wednesday unveiled a discussion draft of a bill that aims to legalize cannabis, a move that would allow adult Americans to buy and possess up to 10 ounces of marijuana without facing criminal penalties.” The Cannabis Administration and Opportunity Act unveiled “by Senate majority leader Chuck Schumer, Finance Chairman Ron Wyden and New Jersey Senator Cory Booker, would expunge federal non-violent marijuana crimes, further medical research and allow cannabis companies access to essential financial services.” The discussion “draft also states that a new definition of cannabis would be established and proposes moving cannabis oversight to the Food and Drug Administration and regulators that overlook alcohol and tobacco.”

[USA Today](#) (7/14, Elbeshbishi, 12.7M) reports the draft bill “would remove marijuana from the Controlled Substances Act, allowing pot to be regulated and taxed.” The legislation “also would allocate new tax revenue, which would come from marijuana sales, to pay for restorative justice programs as ways to address the consequences the war on drugs had on communities, according to the draft bill.”

[Politico](#) (7/14, Sheehey, 6.73M) reports President “Biden still opposes marijuana legalization, White House press secretary Jen Psaki said Wednesday, putting him at odds with Democratic leadership on Capitol Hill as it advances legislation to end the federal prohibition on pot.” When she was “asked about the majority leader’s proposal, Psaki told reporters at her Wednesday press briefing that Biden’s stance on marijuana legalization hasn’t changed.”

## **Legalization Of Cannabis Tied To Drop In Opioid-Related ED Visits.**

[Medscape](#) (7/13, Brooks, Subscription Publication, 219K) reports new research indicates that “states that legalize recreational marijuana may see a short-term decrease in opioid-related” emergency department (ED) “visits in the first 6 months, after which rates may return to prelegalization levels.” According to the article, “Lead researcher Coleman Drake, PhD, Department of Health Policy and Management, University of Pittsburgh Graduate School of Public Health, Pittsburgh,

Pennsylvania,” said, “Our findings indicate that cannabis legalization does not effect any increase in opioid-related ED visits, contradicting the gateway drug explanation.” The [study](#) (7/12, Subscription Publication), which was supported by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, was published online July 12 in Health Economics.

### **New WSU Study Highlights Road Blocks Faced By Cannabis Researchers.**

[Daily Nurse](#) (7/12) reports that researchers at Washington State University used the video conferencing app Zoom “to research a type of cannabis that is understudied: the kind people actually use.” The “researchers observed cannabis users over Zoom as they smoked high-potency cannabis flower or vaped concentrates they purchased themselves from cannabis dispensaries in Washington state, where recreational cannabis use is legal.” According to the article, “The researchers found no impact on the users’ performance on decision-making tests in comparison to a sober control group but did find some memory impairments related to free recall, source memory and false memories.” The [findings](#) were published in Scientific Reports on July 2. The researchers are some “of the few to investigate cannabis that contains much more than 10% tetrahydrocannabinol (THC), the plant’s main psychoactive ingredient.” Researchers were limited until recently “to using low-potency plants of around 6% THC supplied by the National Institute of Drug Abuse.”

### **You Absolutely Have To Talk To Them’: How To Speak To Kids About Marijuana Now That It’s Legal.**

The [Arizona Republic](#) (7/10, Randazzo, 1.05M) said “embrace the awkwardness” is “one key bit of advice from experts for how parents might start a discussion about marijuana with children now that it is legal and more prevalent in Arizona.” According to the article, “Marijuana is not going to cause a fatal overdose like opioids and statistically is less likely to cause addiction than hard drugs, but some people still develop a dependency.” A study published in 2015 in JAMA Psychiatry, which continues to be cited by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “found about 30% of marijuana users were dependent on the drug.”

### **The Olympics’ Ridiculous Cannabis Ban Is All The US’ Fault.**

[Vice](#) (7/7, Roberts, 1.13M) reports, “The saga of Sha’Carri Richardson – the fastest woman in the United States, banned from competing in the upcoming Tokyo Olympics after a drug test revealed she used cannabis last month – has united America” with most agreeing “that the 21-year-old athlete didn’t do anything terribly wrong when she smoked some weed to deal with emotional turmoil after learning from a reporter about her biological mother’s death.” The article explains that the scientific basis for these “rules” about cannabis in the Olympics “originates from a research paper that relies solely on data collected decades ago by an employee at the National Institutes on Drug Abuse.” Part of the NIH, which “also

employs Dr. Anthony Fauci, America's COVID-19 seer – NIDA is notorious in cannabis-research circles for only funding and publishing research that 'shows' cannabis is harmful and bad."

### **Pot And PTSD: Study Shines Light On Need To End Cannabis Prohibition As Researchers Seek Alternatives For Lousy Research Weed.**

The [Tucson \(AZ\) Weekly](#) (7/8, Abbott, 76K) reports, "A clinical study on the effects of cannabis as a treatment for veterans suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder was finally released in March, after more than a decade of work...by former UA assistant professor Dr. Sue Sisley and a network of organizations advocating for veterans' access to medicinal cannabis." For the Scottsdale Research Institute, which Sisley founded, "to apply to get product for the study, it first had to have the approval of an institutional review board connected to Health and Human Services, and then revise its study proposal for submission to both the state of Arizona and the Federal Drug Administration." Only after the DEA gave the study its final approval, "SRI was able to order cannabis through the National Institute on Drug Abuse to acquire quantities of low-grade weed, grown in the only federally sanctioned source in the US: the University of Mississippi." The findings were published March 17 in PLOS ONE.

### **These Factors Raise The Risk Of Nicotine Dependence.**

[Futurity](#) (7/8, Clarke-Emory, 10K) reports that new research funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse and the Academy of Finland "uses genome-wide association studies for a range of different traits and disorders correlated with nicotine dependence and explains 3.6% of the variation in nicotine dependence." The study "clarifies why some people casually smoke cigarettes for a while and then stop without a problem, while others develop long-term, several packs-per-day habits." The findings were published in the journal *Nicotine & Tobacco Research*.

### **Drug Deaths Spiked By 30 Percent Last Year, Surpassing 90,000.**

The [New York Times](#) (7/14, A1, Katz, Sanger-Katz, 20.6M) reports, "Drug overdose deaths rose nearly 30 percent in 2020 to a record 93,000, according to preliminary statistics released Wednesday by the" CDC. That figure represents the "largest single-year increase recorded." According to the article, "Several grim records were set: the most drug overdose deaths in a year; the most deaths from opioid overdoses; the most overdose deaths from stimulants like methamphetamine," and "the most deaths from the deadly class of synthetic opioids known as fentanyl."

**Additional Sources.** The [Washington Post](#) (7/14, A1, Bernstein, Achenbach, 10.52M) reports on its front page, "The increase came as no surprise to addiction specialists, drug counselors and policy experts who have watched the steady rise in deaths throughout the pandemic. But that did not make the statistics any less horrifying." National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora Volkow "said in an

interview that fentanyl has so thoroughly infiltrated the illegal drug supply that 70 percent of cocaine overdose deaths and 50 percent of methamphetamine overdose deaths also involved fentanyl. In many cases, she said, users are unaware that their drugs are laced with the powerful painkiller, which can halt breathing even if a minute amount is ingested." NIH Director Dr. Francis Collins said in an interview, "I'm just heartbroken. ... We have another public health crisis, of major proportions. It's not infectious, but is spreading across our [country] and taking far too many lives."

NPR (7/14, Chappell, 3.69M) reports Volkow told NPR, "This is the highest number of overdose deaths ever recorded in a 12-month period, and the largest increase since at least 1999."

Politico (7/14, Goldberg, 6.73M) reports that "health officials and experts worry that the political will to address the drug crisis has faded after the pandemic has consumed the public's attention and exhausted public health departments." Volkow said, "It's not prioritized. ... Addiction is a neglected disease."

### **Opioid Use Disorder Treatment Rises In Medicaid Recipients.**

MedPage Today (7/13, Grant, 183K) reports, "Opioid use disorder (OUD) treatment increased in Medicaid recipients from 2014 to 2018," investigators concluded in an "analysis of Medicaid data from the 11 states that participated in the Medicaid Outcomes Distributed Research Network (MODRN) – Delaware, Kentucky, Maryland, Maine, Michigan, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Virginia, West Virginia, and Wisconsin." That analysis "included six of the 10 states that ranked highest in the nation for overdose deaths." The study revealed that "the proportion of people with opioid use disorder who received buprenorphine (Buprenex), methadone, or naltrexone (Revia) increased from 47.8% to 57.1% across that period." The findings of the "exploratory serial cross-sectional study" were published June 13 in JAMA. According to the article, "The study was supported by grant funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse." **(Article attached.)**

### **Man's Death By Opioid Overdose Reportedly Shows How ERs Fail Patients.**

NPR (7/14, 3.69M) reports, "Jameson Rybak tried to quit using opioids nearly a dozen times within five years," but his mother, Suzanne Rybak, grew worried in March 2020 and took "him to the emergency room at McLeod Regional Medical Center in Florence," South Carolina. However, "when they recommended admitting him...Jameson said" that he could not afford the care. His mother "doesn't remember any mention of the hospital's financial assistance policy or payment plans." She also does not "remember any discussions of providing Jameson medication to treat opioid use disorder or connecting him to addiction-specialty providers." Jameson later died of an overdose. NPR adds that Rybak fell "victim to two huge gaps in the U.S. health care system: a paucity of addiction treatment and high medical costs." The two issues "can come to a head in the ER, where" the



“facility’s staff may not be equipped to deal with substance use” and treatment can be “prohibitively expensive.”

### **“Game-changer”? Tarantula Venom May Yield Powerful Pain Medication To Help Curb Opioid Epidemic.**

[CBS News](#) (7/14, 5.39M) reports, “Researchers at the University of California-Davis are trying to use the venom from tarantulas to develop a pain medication to help curb the opioid epidemic.” The researchers are reprogramming “the proteins of the venom, called peptides, from the scary, hairy spiders and turning it into a painkiller.” Dr. Vladimir Yarov-Yarovoy of UC-Davis Health said, “We redesign that peptide to make it more selective for particular receptors in our nervous system that are highly responsible for pain signals.” This local portion of the NIH Helping to End Addiction Long-Term (HEAL) Initiative “could take some time – at least five years – before any new meds from it hit the shelves.”

### **New Jersey Governor Enacts Legislation Allowing Residents To Purchase Life-Saving Opioid Antidote Naloxone Without Prescription.**

[NJ Spotlight](#) (7/14, Stainton, 2K) reports, “By summer’s end, every New Jersey resident will be legally permitted to purchase the life-saving opioid antidote naloxone without a prescription.” Residents “can then administer it to anyone they believe is suffering from a drug overdose, or share it with others to use on themselves or another individual struggling with addiction.” This is “the crux of one of the half-dozen bills Gov. Phil Murphy signed into law last week to benefit New Jerseyans battling substance-use disorders, as well as their friends and family members.” According to the article, “Other measures require state-regulated insurance companies to cover the cost of the naloxone, which health officials hope to make more readily accessible at drug stores, schools and other public facilities, and prompt the state Division of Consumer Affairs to publish a retail price list for the various forms available to the public.”

### **Opinion: Maine Lawmakers Had A Chance To End The State’s War On Drugs. They Failed.**

In an opinion for the [Bangor \(ME\) Daily News](#) (7/13, 178K), University of Maine Political Science Department graduate Elijah Munro-Ludders writes that “Maine’s Legislature had the opportunity to pass a bill, L.D. 967, that would have reformed” the state’s “failed approach” to the war on drugs “by decriminalizing possession of drugs for personal use.” However, he says “elected officials in the state Senate rejected it and failed our state.” He adds, “The National Institute on Drug Abuse estimates that less than a quarter of those who use heroin in their lifetime struggle with addiction,” which “means that the majority of people who use heroin do not experience problematic drug use and live perfectly healthy lives.”

### **Louisiana City Leaders Join Founders For Recovery/Addiction Treatment Center Launch As Fentanyl, Overdose Deaths Skyrocket.**

[WVUE-TV](#) New Orleans (7/13, Roberts, 37K) reports that coroner Gerry Cvitanovich said “fentanyl related deaths have been skyrocketing” in Jefferson Parish, Louisiana. He said fentanyl deaths more than doubled in 2020 compared to 2019. Furthermore, “looking at the first four months of 2021, he says they’re on pace to double again.” With the opioid and fentanyl addition crisis “growing across the greater New Orleans area, city leaders joined the founders of the newly launched NOLA Detox and Recovery Center.” Dan Forman, founder and CEO of the center, “says addiction treatment has advanced and they plan to bring new recovery treatment approaches mixed with New Orleans’ hospitality to the new 36-bed facility.”

### **Fatal Opioid Overdoses On The Rise In DC, Maryland, Virginia Worrying Health Officials.**

The [Washington Post](#) (7/8, Rosensweig-Ziff, Hilton, 10.52M) reports that there are “an increasing number of fatal opioid overdoses in the District and across Maryland and Virginia.” According to the article, “Health officials point to a rise in fentanyl-laced substances, including opioids, marijuana and cocaine for the recent increase in overdoses, with a suspected bad batch of fentanyl circulating in the region exacerbating the trend.”

### **A.G. Morrisey Raises Alarm Over Fentanyl Influx Into West Virginia.**

The [Wheeling \(WV\) News-Register](#) (7/14, Allen Adams, 57K) reports, “Attorney General Patrick Morrisey said Tuesday that West Virginia is seeing a dramatic uptick in the amount of fentanyl [in] the state, resulting in a spike of overdose deaths.” Morrisey said during a press briefing on Tuesday, “This has been a real problem in our state, but it’s getting a lot worse.” He “said his office penned a letter to President Joe Biden regarding his concerns about fentanyl trafficking” and that “his office is in contact with the federal Drug Enforcement Agency as well.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

### **Atlantic City Likely To Close Syringe Exchange Despite Warnings From Health Advocates.**

The [Philadelphia Inquirer](#) (7/12, Whelan) reports that Atlantic City has long battled “the twin epidemics of HIV infections and injection drug use,” but “health advocates warn, the seaside resort’s desire to make its storied Boardwalk and the surrounding neighborhood more appealing to tourists is imperiling the very service that helped abate the HIV crisis and has saved the lives of people in addiction.” According to the article, “Later this month, most of the City Council is expected to vote in favor of an ordinance to close Atlantic City’s syringe exchange.”



### **Biden Nominates Former West Virginia Health Commissioner To Lead ONDCP.**

The [Washington Post](#) (7/13, Diamond, 10.52M) reports that on Tuesday, President Biden “nominated Rahul Gupta, a former West Virginia health official, to lead the Office of National Drug Control Policy [ONDCP] and steer the response to the opioid epidemic.” The Post adds, “Gupta, a primary-care doctor who previously served as West Virginia’s health commissioner, led Biden’s transition efforts for the drug policy office and serves as the top health official at maternal and child advocacy group March of Dimes, would be the first physician to serve as drug czar if confirmed by the Senate.”

The [New York Times](#) (7/13, Stolberg, 20.6M) says the decision “immediately drew mixed reviews from advocates for people with substance abuse problems.” The Times adds the announcement comes just as the CDC “was preparing to publish statistics, expected on Wednesday, on drug overdose deaths in 2020, which all evidence suggests will shatter previous records.”

### **Tripp Melds Meditation And Virtual Reality.**

The [Los Angeles Business Journal](#) (7/12, Subscription Publication, 75K) reports that Tripp Inc, a Culver City, California-based “digital psychedelic” technology company “uses virtual reality experiences to promote mental health by fully immersing users in digital meditations.” Founder Nanea Reeves “plans to further the company’s clinical research in substance abuse disorders, she said, including tapping \$1 million awarded to the company by the National Institute on Drug Abuse in August.”

### **Health IT Agency Adds Social Needs To Guidelines Covering Patient Data.**

[Bloomberg Law](#) (7/9, Subscription Publication, 4K) reported, “Electronic health record systems could soon begin capturing information on housing, transportation, nutrition, and other social needs under an update to federal standards announced Friday by the Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology.” A new version of the United States Core Data for Interoperability “-- which specifies the data EHR systems should be able to capture and exchange -- will include for the first time data elements for a patient’s social determinants of health, sexual orientation, and gender identity,” said Micky Tripathi, national coordinator for health information technology at the Department of Health and Human Services.” The update “is part of a broader push by the Biden administration to address health inequities that have been laid bare by the Covid-19 pandemic.”

## Funding Opportunities



### GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-AA-21-039](#)

[Notice of Clarification of Responsiveness to NIAAA RFA-AA-21-002 "SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 and Consequences of Alcohol Use \(R01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-AA-21-041](#)

[Notice of Clarification of Responsiveness to NIAAA RFA-AA-21-004 "SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 and Consequences of Alcohol Use \(R21 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-AA-21-040](#)

[Notice of Clarification of Responsiveness to NIAAA RFA-AA-21-003 "SARS-CoV-2, COVID-19 and Consequences of Alcohol Use \(R03 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-21-002](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): International Research Collaboration on Drug Abuse and Addiction Research](#)

[NOT-AA-21-038](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Collaborative Partnership between Research Centers in Minority Institutions \(RCMI\) and Alcohol Research Centers \(U54 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

© [2020 Center for Addiction Research]

