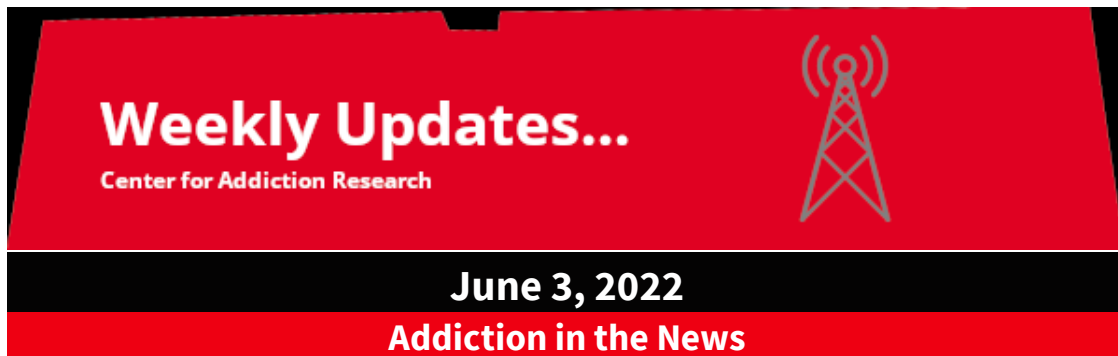


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe (roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)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

Blackard receives Fulbright Specialist Program award – Dean's List Weekly News from the College of Medicine 5.31.2022

Jason Blackard, PhD, professor in the Department of Internal Medicine, Division of Digestive Diseases, has received a Fulbright Specialist Program award from the U.S. Department of State and the Fulbright Foreign Scholarship Board. The award will support a three-week visit to India to instruct doctoral and postgraduate students and faculty in using multicolor flow cytometry for identifying various immune cells in blood. Beginning July 29, Blackard will be at Sri Ramachandra Institute of Higher Education and Research (SHIHER) in Chennai, on the southeast coast of India. SHIHER is a private institute that has nine colleges, including medicine, biomedical sciences and public health, with more than 6,000 students. Blackard's research focuses on studies to understand the interactions between various viral pathogens, such as hepatitis B and C, human pegivirus, HIV and Zika virus. He has developed international collaborations in South Africa, Botswana, India, Nigeria, Mozambique and Ghana. Blackard has traveled to India several times, most recently visiting SRIHER in September 2019, when he presented during an international symposium on HIV and other infectious diseases, and in October 2019 as part of an American Society for Microbiology/Indo-US Science and Technology Forum Professorship. During this 2022 visit, Blackard will be working with microbiologists and virologists studying HIV, viral hepatitis and SARS-CoV-2 in India. He will meet with graduate students regarding their projects and provide hands-on training related to virus diversity and evolution. "There are a number of exciting opportunities to collaborate with SHIHER, and their faculty, students and staff are the among the

best in all of India,” says Blackard. Recipients of the Fulbright Specialist awards are selected on the basis of academic and professional achievement, demonstrated leadership in their field and their potential to foster long-term cooperation between institutions in the United States and abroad. Blackard is one of more than 400 people selected for the program this year. The Fulbright program is sponsored by the U.S. government and is designed to build lasting connections between the people of the United States and the people of other countries. The program, established in 1946, is funded through an annual appropriation by Congress to the U.S. Department of State. Participating governments and host institutions, corporations and foundations around the world also provide direct and indirect support to the program, which operates in more than 160 countries. **(CAR member, Dr. Blackard)**

‘Life Saver’ Skin Patch To Detect, Instantly Reverse Drug Overdose In Development At IU.

The [Bloomington \(IN\) Herald-Times](#) (5/25, Smith, 79K) reports, “two researchers from Indiana University, Feng Guo and Ken Mackie, are developing a wearable device that can both detect and treat an opioid overdose as it happens.” According to the Herald-Times, “Still in its early stages of development, the project recently received \$3.8 million” in funding from the National Institute on Drug Abuse “to continue research on the Bloomington campus.”

Kentucky getting \$35 million grant to address opioid addiction, overdoses

FRANKFORT, Ky. — Gov. Andy Beshear on Thursday announced over \$39 million in federal funding for opioid response and mental health services in Kentucky. From the grouping of grant funds, \$35.9 aims to combat addiction and support recovery statewide. “These funds will allow us to help more Kentuckians suffering from addiction as well as help those who lived through the deadliest tornado outbreak in our history recuperate from...

Tim Robinson: Kentucky is fighting for the future on the frontlines of national opioid epidemic

Addiction is one of the most difficult and destructive things a family can experience. It can tear people apart, and in worst-case scenarios, leave loved ones grieving and wondering if there’s anything they could have done differently. In Kentucky, the addiction crisis impacts thousands of families each and every day—and young people remain some of this epidemic’s most vulnerable and undeserving victims. Children living with parents who...

National News

The Kids Are Not All Right.

In an opinion [The Hill](#) (5/26, 5.69M), Danielle Ompad and Andy Tan write, “Copycat cannabis edibles, which have colorful packages that mimic popular snacks and candy, have come under scrutiny” with media coverage revealing “an apparent

rising trend of accidental ingestion by children that has led to severe symptoms, in some cases requiring hospitalization.” In their recent study, which was funded by the National Institute on Drug Abuse, they “found that packaging for 8 percent of 267 edibles closely resembled 13 snack products popular among children, including Sour Patch Kids and Nerds Rope candies and Doritos chips.” Ompad and Tan argue that “a multi-pronged approach to keep copycat edible cannabis packaging from the market and out of the hands of children” is needed.

Federal Drug Agency Needs Weed Hookup For Research Purposes.

The [Fresh Toast](#) (5/25, Loreto) reports, “The National Institute on Drug Abuse...shared this past Friday that they’re on the lookout for cannabis partners who can supply them with marijuana to research.” The agency “shared a notice where they listed what they’re looking for, making it clear that the marijuana must belong to facilities that operate under the Drug Enforcement Administration...approval.”

Young People More Likely To Try Cannabis In States With Legal Recreational Use, New Study Contradicts Prior Research.

[Benzinga](#) (5/26, Zdinjak, 152K) reports new National Institute on Drug Abuse-funded research indicates that the legalization of recreational cannabis actually does increase youth consumption, contradicting “so many prior studies, including a report issued in March by the Coalition for Cannabis Policy, Education and Regulation.” The new observational study, which was published in the May 26, 2022 online issue of *Addiction*, “tracked 6,925 youths and 14,938 adults using data from the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health in the United States (PATH), writes UC San Diego New Center.” According to Benzinga, “The authors revealed that young people, ages 12 to 20, were more prone to becoming marijuana consumers in states with legal adult-use cannabis programs than in states where the drug is still illegal. Furthermore, a higher likeliness was also confirmed in adults.”

The Opioid Epidemic: Is Pharma Doing Enough To Develop Treatments For The Crisis?

In an analysis for [Pharmaceutical Technology](#) (5/30), contributor Adam Zamecnik writes, “Despite the increasing investment and public interest” for treatments for substance use disorders, “big pharma remains apprehensive about leading the way for the development of new treatments in the backdrop of lawsuits for its alleged role in fueling the epidemic.” Zamecnik says, “This is partly due to the challenging nature of developing treatments for opioid addiction coupled with the fact that companies find the financial prospects of such investments less appealing.” He adds, “Many companies are averse to working in the substance use disorder space as they view the field as ‘risky,’ says acting deputy director of the Division of Therapeutics and Medical Consequences (DTMC) at the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) Jane Acri, PhD. ... But perceptions are beginning to change, says Acri,

as a growing number of small and medium-sized companies are showing interest in grants and collaborations with NIDA.”

Opioid Crisis Likely To Peak Before 2025, Then Start To Abate, New Model Suggests.

[Nature](#) (6/1, 194K) reports, “The US opioid crisis might soon peak and then start to abate, a new model suggests.” However, the model “also projects that overdoses will kill more than half a million people from 2020 to 2032 due to the prevalence of the deadly synthetic opioid fentanyl.” Projecting “future scenarios assuming various policy choices and other factors,” the researchers found that, under any scenario, “overdose deaths are likely to peak before 2025 and then decline.” The [findings](#) were published online on May 31 in PNAS.

Canada Decriminalizes Possession Of Small Amounts Of Opioids, Other Drugs In British Columbia.

The [New York Times](#) (5/31, Isai, Porter, 20.6M) reports that “the Canadian government announced Tuesday that it would temporarily decriminalize the possession of small amounts of illegal drugs, including cocaine and methamphetamines, in the western province of British Columbia that has been ground zero for the country’s overdoses.” The exemption “puts Canada among a small group of countries worldwide that have taken steps to decriminalize illicit drugs.”

The [Washington Post](#) (5/31, Coletta, 10.52M) reports that the federal government on Tuesday cast the move as a “bold” step to “turn the tide” in the province’s overdose crisis. According to the Post, “Carolyn Bennett, Canada’s minister of mental health and addictions, said Ottawa had granted the provincial government’s request for an exemption from the federal Controlled Drugs and Substances Act for three years, starting Jan. 31, 2023.”

Blackfeet Nation Sees Fentanyl Overdoses Spike.

[NPR](#) (6/1, Bolton, 3.69M) reports that four people died from a fentanyl overdose on the Blackfeet Indian Reservation in Montana “the second week of March, according to Blackfeet health officials. An additional 13 people on the reservation survived overdoses that week, making a startling total for an Indigenous population of about 10,000 people.” Fentanyl has taken root in Montana and Mountain West communities during the pandemic, according to “Keith Humphreys of the Stanford-Lancet Commission on the North American Opioid Crisis.” According to NPR, “Montana law enforcement officials have intercepted record numbers of pale blue pills made to look like prescription opioids such as OxyContin.”

AMA Opposes Popular Bill Requiring Physicians To Get More Training On Opioid Use Disorder.

[STAT](#) (5/31, Florko, 262K) reports that the American Medical Association’s “Substance Use and Pain Care Task Force has recommended” that physicians get

“more training on treating people with opioid use disorder.” However, “the AMA is opposing an otherwise popular bipartisan bill that would mandate doctors be trained on treating people with opioid use disorder, according to a letter from the powerful lobbying organization obtained by STAT.” The Medication Access and Training Expansion Act “would require that doctors complete a one-time, eight-hour training course on treating patients with opioid and other substance use disorders as a condition of being able to prescribe controlled substances.” However, in a letter to lawmakers, the AMA said, “A one-time training mandate for substance use disorders, no matter how well-intentioned, will not have a meaningful impact on reducing drug-related overdose. ... The AMA is unable to support this legislation.”

Opinion: Person Using Illicit Substances Cannot See, Smell, Or Taste Fentanyl, Which Is 100 Times More Potent Than Morphine.

In an opinion for the [Tennessean](#) (5/26, Dodd, 645K), guest columnist Gary Dodd writes, “A person using illicit substances cannot see, smell or taste fentanyl,” an opium-related painkiller. Dodd says that the potency of fentanyl, an FDA-approved “anesthetic and analgesic with valid medical purposes,” is reported to be 100 times more potent “than morphine and 50 times more than heroin.” Dodd adds that data collected by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the National Center for Health Statistics on overdose deaths “suggest that from Dec. 1, 2020, to Nov. 30, 2021, approximately 106,854 people in the United States died from overdoses, a likely increase of more than 30% in one year.”

Program Aims To Reduce Opioid Overdose Deaths In State.

The [Russellville \(AR\) Courier](#) (6/1, 30K) reports, “A new program will seek to reduce overdose deaths in Arkansas by getting the overdose reversal drug naloxone into the homes of at-risk Arkansans.” NaloxHome will provide free Narcan (naloxone) “to participating Arkansas hospitals to dispense at discharge from the emergency room to patients or caregivers of patients who have experienced an overdose or are at risk for an overdose.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

California Bid To Create Legal Drug Injection Sites Advances.

The [AP](#) (6/1, Thompson) reports, “California moved a step closer Wednesday to creating sites where people could legally use drugs under supervision designed to save them from dying if they overdose, over the objections of opponents who said the state would be enabling dangerous and illegal activity.”

Additional Source. [Marijuana Moment](#) (6/1, Jaeger) reports, “A California Assembly committee on Wednesday approved a Senate-passed bill that would establish a pilot program to allow certain jurisdictions throughout the state to authorize safe consumption sites where people could use currently illicit drugs in a medically supervised environment.” The harm reduction legislation “was first introduced in December 2020 and advanced through the full Senate in April of last year before being transmitted to the Assembly, where it’s since been approved by

the Health Committee and has now passed out of the Public Safety Committee in a 5-2 vote on Wednesday.” National Institute on Drug Abuse “Director Nora Volkow has repeatedly expressed concerns about the harms caused by the criminalization of drug possession, and she told Marijuana Moment in an interview last year that she is open to continuing to explore ‘how these support systems as a community can help people, for example, engage in treatment, how they can prevent them from getting infected from HIV and how they can prevent them from overdosing and dying.’”

Federal Institution Working On “Anti-Addiction” Vaccine To Prevent Addicts From Getting High.

The [Published Reporter](#) (5/25, Boyle) reports, “An ongoing medical development in the battle against drugs has led to an ‘anti-addiction’ vaccine being promoted by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA), but the proposed solution this job offers is being questioned by some who are concerned about the possibilities of its potential misuse.” NIDA officials “lauded the use of ‘anti-addiction vaccines aimed at eliciting antibodies that block the effects of a specific drug’ in the agency’s 2016 to 2020 strategic plan to combat drug addiction.” Published Reporter adds, “In 2017, then-NIH director Dr. Francis S. Collins and current NIDA director Dr. Nora D. Volkow encouraged scientists to develop vaccines that specifically target drugs such as opioids; while work on these vaccines have been undertaken, they are currently still in development and are not in active use.”

Nora D. Volkow, MD: The Pain Crisis, And Optimizing Addiction Care Delivery.

[HCPLive](#) (5/25, Kunzmann) reports, “As highlighted in previous segments of her interview with HCPLive, National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) director Nora D. Volkow, MD, foresees an uphill climb in combating the exacerbation of US substance use disorder and overdose rates spurred by the COVID-19 pandemic.” In a separate interview “during the American Psychiatric Association (APA) 2022 Annual Meeting in New Orleans this week, Volkow discussed the twin epidemic status of substance use disorders and chronic pain conditions in the US, the means to pursue value-based care options, and the value of APA’s headline theme of ‘Social Determinants of Mental Health.’” Dr. Volkow said, “When we speak about pain, we make these distinctions between physical and psychological pain, but it’s a little bit arbitrary because one of the issues that hardest for patients to deal with pain is the emotional aspect of that pain, the fear that they have. ... And to the extent that we can mitigate that emotional component of pain, they are able to tolerate much more physical pain.”

Commentary Urges Improved Access To Care For Adults Who Need Substance Use, Mental Healthcare.

Chuck Ingoglia, president and CEO of the National Council for Mental Wellbeing, writes in [The Hill](#) (5/31, 5.69M), “The number of adults reporting symptoms of anxiety or depressive disorder nearly tripled during the pandemic, from 11.0

percent in 2019 to 31.6 percent in the fall of 2021, according to the Kaiser Family Foundation.” Furthermore, the CDC “on May 11 reported that drug overdose deaths increased 15 percent in 2021 to nearly 108,000 deaths.” Now, “new data released today reveals another alarming fact: 43 percent of U.S. adults who say they needed substance use or mental health care in the past 12 months did not receive that care.” Ingoglia says, “Our will to correct these problems and help people find the care they need and deserve must be stronger than the challenges we face. We cannot be mentally well and actively thriving if we are unable to access services.”

Homeless Deaths From Drug Overdoses Spiked During Pandemic.

[USA Today](#) (5/28, Hayes, 12.7M) reported, “Those experiencing homelessness have been dying in greater numbers across the nation throughout the pandemic, reaching new highs in several U.S. cities, according to a USA TODAY review of data in 10 U.S. cities and counties with some of the highest numbers of homeless people,” and drugs “are largely to blame, the data” show. In San Francisco, more than twice as many homeless people died “in the first year of the pandemic compared with the four years before,” and approximately “54% of these deaths were from drug overdoses – a proportion that hadn’t been seen in previous years. Not a single death was from COVID-19.”

Researchers Receive NIDA Grant to Study Nonhallucinogenic Compounds to Treat SUD.

[Psych Congress Network](#) (5/30, Valentino) reports, “Researchers from the University of California, Davis, and the University of Colorado Anschutz Medical Campus have announced plans to screen hundreds of compounds to identify nonhallucinogenic treatments for substance use disorders” with the support of a \$2.7 million National Institute on Drug Abuse grant.

Increasing Number Of Youth Attempting Suicide By Self-Poisoning, Study Finds.

[TIME](#) (6/1, Kluger, 18.1M) reports “a new study published in the journal Clinical Toxicology has” found that “from 2015 to 2020, suicide attempts by ingesting toxic substances or overdosing on medications soared by 26% among people ages 6 to 19.” Furthermore, “the greatest increase in self-poisonings occurred among 10 to 12 year olds, with numbers leaping 109% in the five-year study period.”

Number Of Suspected Suicide Attempts By Poisoning Among Children Rose Between 2015 And 2020, Study Finds.

[The Hill](#) (5/31, Barnes, 5.69M) reports “the number of suspected suicide attempts by poisoning among children rose sharply between 2015 and 2020,” according to a study. The study found that while “all pediatric groups saw increases in suspected suicides...the largest jump occurred in children between the ages of 10 and 12 who saw an increase of more than 109 percent.” Also, “the over-the-counter pain killers

ibuprofen and acetaminophen were the two most common substances used in the suspected pediatric attempted suicide cases, researchers found.”

Cybin Filed IND Application With FDA For Psychedelic Compound As Major Depressive Disorder Treatment.

[Forbes](#) (5/31, Hasse, 10.33M) reports, “Cybin, a psychedelics-focused pharma company, has filed an Investigational New Drug...application with the U.S. Food and Drug Administration...for a Phase 1/2a first-in-human clinical trial evaluating its proprietary deuterated psilocybin analog, CYB003, for the treatment of major depressive disorder (MDD).” According to Forbes, “This move could make CYB003 the first psilocybin analog to be evaluated in Phase 1/2a development.”

Evidence Suggests MDMA Effective Part Of PTSD Treatment.

The [New York Times](#) (5/29, Nuwer, 20.6M) reported that PTSD “is a major public health problem worldwide and is particularly associated with war. In the United States, an estimated 13 percent of combat veterans and up to 20 to 25 percent of those deployed to Iraq and Afghanistan are diagnosed with PTSD at some point in their lives, compared with seven percent of the general population.” Physicians “still have not found a surefire cure,” but “there is growing evidence that MDMA – the illegal drug known as Ecstasy or Molly – can significantly lessen or even eliminate symptoms of PTSD when the treatment is paired with talk therapy.” A second Phase 3 trial on the treatment “should be completed by October; FDA approval could follow in the second half of 2023.”

Suicide Rates Among Military Members Analyzed.

The [Washington Post](#) (5/30, 10.52M) reports, “Suicide has been the main killer of U.S. personnel since the Sept. 11 attacks. More than 30,000 of them have died by their own hands since, during a period that saw about 7,000 service members die in combat or training exercises, according to a project from Brown University.” Furthermore, “suicide in the military community is at its highest rate since 1938, according to a Department of Defense report released last month.” An increasing number of “those killed are women. In 2020, they accounted for 7 percent of military suicides – up from 4 percent a decade earlier, according to Department of Defense numbers. About 1 in 6 servicemembers is female.”

Senate Finance Leaders Propose Bill To Expand Telehealth For Mental Healthcare.

[Modern Healthcare](#) (5/26, Subscription Publication, 215K) reports, “A bipartisan group of Senate Finance Committee leaders on Thursday proposed expanding telehealth access for mental health services.” The committee “issued a discussion draft that pushes to eliminate Medicare’s in-person visit requirement prior to patients seeking online mental health services.” The proposal “also demands benefit transparency for Medicare members looking for telemental health services, urges the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services to encourage providers to

promote telehealth services and calls for states to use their Children's Health Insurance Programs to address mental health in schools via telehealth." HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and the National Institute of Mental Health are mentioned.

Team Of WFU Doctors Gets \$9M Grant To Study 'Love Hormone' As Pain Treatment.

The [Triad \(NC\) Business Journal](#) (5/26, Subscription Publication, 845K) reports, "Scientists at Wake Forest University School of Medicine have been awarded approximately \$9 million" from the National Institute of Neurological Disorders and Stroke "to study the use of the 'love hormone,'" oxytocin, "as a pain treatment."

CVS Health Launches New Digital Platform To Provide Access To Health Services On Demand.

[Modern Healthcare](#) (5/26, Devereaux, Subscription Publication, 215K) reports "CVS Health's new digital platform" CVS Health Virtual Primary Care "intends to give consumers access to health services on demand, whether they are at home or in a retail or community-based setting." Aetna and CVS Caremark members who are eligible "will be able to use" the platform "to request remote primary care, chronic condition management and mental health services, in addition to being seen at an in-network provider in person, the company said Thursday." The new "platform will roll out to Aetna members on Jan. 1, 2023, and CVS Caremark during the second quarter of 2023."

Research Chemicals Provide Dangerous, Experimental Highs To Desperate Users.

The [High Times](#) (5/25, Maravelias, 20K) reports, "Research chemicals are newly-synthesized drugs that have not yet been scheduled by the FDA, making them very easy to order online under the guise of 'not for human consumption.'" Scientists across the globe each year "create oodles of new chemical compounds that are relatively similar to drugs people already take recreationally, but completely different chemically speaking. ... Many of the thousands of different novel compounds available for purchase online have never been tested on humans but are still sold under catchy names like 'Dr Buzz pellets' or 'Mitsubishi capsules,' leading one to assume that there are people taking gross advantage of this legal loophole to lure addicts and dealers into buying knockoff drugs." The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

FDA Issues Final Guidance On Importation Of Prescription Drugs From Canada.

[Bloomberg Law](#) (5/25, Castronuovo, Subscription Publication, 4K) reports, "A licensed pharmacist or wholesale drug distributor may participate in programs to import any drug from Canada that could be sold legally there or in the American market, the FDA said in final guidance Wednesday." This "document includes recommendations for small entities to comply with the Food and Drug Administration's 2020 final rule on the importation of certain prescription drugs

from Canada.” The final “rule, which the FDA intends to implement under Section 804 Importation Programs...is part of the agency’s efforts to reduce costs for American consumers seeking eligible prescription drugs from Canada.” **[Final Guidance attached.]**

Funding Opportunities



[RFA-DA-23-015](#)

[Transformative Research on the Basic Mechanisms of Polysubstance use in Addiction \(R01 - Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[NOT-NS-22-100](#)

[Notice of Informational Webinar for BRAIN Initiative Connectivity across Scales \(BRAIN CONNECTS\) Funding Opportunity Announcements](#)

[RFA-AI-22-038](#)

[A Multi-omics Approach to Immune Responses in HIV Vaccination and Intervention \(P01 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

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