

UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 8.25.2023

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/NIAAAA, 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

**Today! Biomedical Informatics Friday Research Seminar Series, August 25 at 11:00 AM:** **Tongli Zhang, PhD**, associate professor, Department of Pharmacology and Systems Physiology (**and CAR Associate Member**), will present "Developing Digital Twins to Guide Personalized Diagnosis and Treatment" in Cincinnati Children's S1.204. **Subscribe to the biomedical informatics email list** to receive the virtual seminar Zoom meeting details.

### **UC tobacco use researcher cited as expert in a national news feature on vaping in the office**

Cigarette smoking has long been banned in the majority of public and commercial spaces in the U.S., but vaping doesn't have the same regulatory guidelines yet. According to a Daily Mail article, recent studies find that 76 percent of e-cigarette users reported vaping at work. "There may be confusion about whether vapes are covered by tobacco-free policies in work environments if there is no written policy addressing vaping, especially since these products became available on the market after combustible tobacco products," UC's Ashley Merianos says in the article. Some studies show that second hand vape fumes have the potential to be as dangerous as secondhand smoke; and researchers, the article... **(featuring CAR member, Dr. Ashley Merianos)**

### **A marijuana legalization question will be on Ohio's fall ballot after lawmakers failed to act on it**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (AP) — A proposal to legalize recreational adult use of marijuana in Ohio was cleared Wednesday to appear on statewide ballots this fall after the Republican-led state Legislature failed to act on it. The measure would allow adults 21 and over to buy and possess up to 2.5 ounces of cannabis and to grow plants at home. A 10% tax would be imposed on purchases, to be spent on administrative costs, addiction treatment programs, municipalities with dispensaries and social equity and jobs programs. Republican Secretary of State Frank LaRose determined that the Coalition to Regulate Marijuana Like Alcohol had submitted 127,772 valid signatures, more than the 124,046 needed to put the...

### **How Ohio is handling the billions in opioid manufacturer and distributor settlement money**

CLEVELAND — Governor Mike DeWine announced Monday that Alisha Nelson will take over as executive director of the OneOhio Foundation. Nelson most recently served as director of Humana Healthy Horizons Ohio and previously was the first director of RecoveryOhio. "We definitely have to get this money out to the local governments, but we're also being thoughtful about statewide efforts," she said. "We're also thinking about prevention and reducing stigma as it relates to this issue. And finally thinking about research and innovation. What does it take to see the vision of 2050 where we want to really see this issue abated and that no one else has to struggle with the loss of a loved one." The...

### **More Resources for KY Nonprofits Working to Reduce Overdose Deaths**

More than 615,000 dollars is going to nonprofit groups in Kentucky working to end opioid addiction. According to state data, more than 2,100 Kentuckians lost their lives to a drug overdose last year - the first decline in deaths since 2018. Eligible groups include those working to raise awareness about overdose prevention, reduce the stigma around substance use disorders, and improve access to harm reduction, treatment and recovery support. Marianne Smith Edge, chair of board of directors with the Foundation for a Healthy Kentucky said grant awardees will also receive administrative help. "The uniqueness is not just the dollars - it's really providing that support that a lot of times..."

### **What to do with \$50 billion? Louisville organization has ideas for overdose settlement funds**

LOUISVILLE, Ky. — Community organizations in Louisville are advocating for ways to distribute Opioid Settlement funds. Kentucky's Opioid Settlement money totals more than \$842 million. Nationwide, \$50 billion is at stake to distribute. "These [pieces of plywood] are covering up our new space," said Jennifer Twyman, an organizer with VOCAL-KY who's showing the work in the organization's expansion. "Our new space is just a way for us to better, like layout that roadmap in terms of getting input from directly impacted people." The Kentucky VOCAL chapter now has

joined a list of over 130 organizations. These organizations represent advocates and experts from public health, overdose...

### **Wayne Township tackles substance abuse epidemic with opioid rescue kits**

INDIANAPOLIS — Wayne Township is tackling substance abuse head-on. The township has about six opioid rescue kits placed in the community, and on Wednesday, they educated the community on what to do if they need one. A group of township residents came out to learn an important lesson — how to save a life using naloxone. "We just don't know what the children are going to try. They don't always understand the ramifications of what they're going to get into," said Linda Johnson, who attended the meeting. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, more than 1 million people have died since 1999 from a drug overdose. The Wayne Township Trustee's Office invited...

## **National News**

### **Heavy drinking, handgun-carrying linked among rural youth**

In the rural United States, an adolescent who drinks heavily has a 43% greater probability of carrying a handgun in the following year, according to a study published in The Journal of Rural Health. "While there has been a lot of research on this correlation in urban areas, little is known about the association between alcohol use, particularly heavy drinking, and handgun carrying in rural areas," said lead author Alice Ellyson, an acting assistant professor of pediatrics at the University of Washington School of Medicine and investigator in UW Medicine's Firearm Injury & Policy Research Program. "Our study...

### **Understanding mechanisms of alcohol-associated bowel disease**

Alcohol consumption is a significant risk factor for gastrointestinal diseases, including cancer. Alcohol can damage the gastrointestinal tract in several ways. It can promote an impairment of several intestinal barrier functions, leading to leaky gut and dysbiosis. Ethanol metabolism can also produce toxic substances such as acetaldehyde and acetate, further damaging the gut and potentially promoting cancer. Ethanol and its metabolites enhance DNA damage response and dysregulate the epithelial proliferation/differentiation program, thereby increasing the risk of cancer development. In a new paper...

### **Marijuana and hallucinogen use, binge drinking reached historic highs among adults 35 to 50**

Past-year use of marijuana and hallucinogens by adults 35 to 50 years old continued a long-term upward trajectory to reach all-time highs in 2022, according to the Monitoring the Future (MTF) panel study, an annual survey of substance use behaviors and attitudes of adults 19 to 60 years old. Among younger adults aged 19 to 30, reports of past-year marijuana and hallucinogen use as well as marijuana and nicotine vaping significantly increased in the past five years, with marijuana use and

vaping at their highest historic levels for this age group in 2022. The MTF study is funded by the National Institute...

### **CBD Vapes Rising in Popularity Among Teens**

THURSDAY, Aug. 17, 2023 (HealthDay News) -- Vaping CBD (cannabidiol) is on the rise among middle and high school students, according to a national U.S. survey, and health experts warn there can be serious risks involved. More than 1 in 5 students who use electronic cigarettes said they had vaped CBD, a component of marijuana that does not get people high the way THC does, according to results of the 2022 National Youth Tobacco Survey. And more than 6% didn't know whether or not they had vaped CBD. Hispanic and LGBTQ+ kids are the most likely groups to vape CBD, the survey revealed. While the...

### **Vapes disguised as school supplies worry authorities and prompt warnings as items pour into US from China**

Authorities are warning parents and teachers to be on the lookout for drugs that don't always look like drugs, especially as a new school year gets underway. For example, there are vapes disguised as school supplies — highlighters in particular. Some highlighter vapes are even available in kid-friendly flavors such as mango, strawberry banana and blueberry ice. Other vapes can look like USB drives, ballpoint pens and even phones, according to reports. Stefan Bjes, a patrol sergeant who has served with a police department in the Chicago suburbs for over 19 years, and previously served as a school resource officer...

### **Largest US study of e-cigarettes shows their value as smoking cessation aid**

E-cigarettes do have value as a smoking cessation aid, according to a new study just released by a team of MUSC Hollings Cancer Center researchers. Whether e-cigarettes should be considered for smoking cessation is a hotly debated topic, and different countries have taken different approaches. E-cigarettes contain harmful chemicals, which has led many public health advocates to shun them. But they are less harmful than traditional cigarettes, which can cause a dozen types of cancer as well as heart disease, stroke, diabetes and chronic obstructive pulmonary disease. That's prompted others to say...

### **Almost half of all Israeli households suffer from second-hand smoke coming in from neighbors' apartments or balconies**

A new study from the School of Public Health at the Faculty of Medicine at Tel Aviv University estimates that almost half the Israeli population suffers from second-hand smoke (SHS) penetrating their homes, mostly from smoking neighbors. The study also found that only 1 of 4 families who suffer from smoke infiltrating their homes complain about it to the smoking neighbor, homeowner, or building committee. The High Court of Justice is now reviewing an appeal against several government ministries for not acting to prevent harmful SHS caused by neighbors who smoke in balconies, houses, yards, or next to...

### **Study finds improved prison reentry programs could help flatten rate of opioid overdose deaths**

With opioid overdose deaths surging in the United States, many communities are in desperate need of solutions to bring down the body count. Among the most promising is strengthening prison reentry programs for highest-risk users, a Rutgers-led study has found. "For people who use drugs and have been in prison for several years, the reentry period can be chaotic and disorienting," said Grant Victor, an assistant professor in the Rutgers School of Social Work and lead author of the study published in the Journal of Offender Rehabilitation.

"Closing the health care services gap after release, especially for...

### **Lawmakers Urge FDA to Consult with Tribal Nations on At-Home Opioid Disposal Policy**

Lawmakers have penned a letter to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) urging the agency to consult with Tribal Nations as it finalizes a new policy on at-home disposal of prescription opioids. In April, the FDA issued a policy in partnership with the United States Postal Service (USPS) that would require manufacturers of opioids dispensed in pharmacies to provide prepaid mail-back envelopes for patients to dispose of unused prescription pills. The policy is an effort to curb nonmedical opioid use and a response to the ongoing opioid epidemic. More than 103,000 Americans died in opioid-related...

### **Q&A: Bringing addiction care 'inside the house of medicine'**

As civilization ground to a halt during the COVID-19 pandemic, trapping humans like caged mice, addiction expert Keith Humphreys could only agonize over the collateral damage. America was already losing the war on addiction with 70,000 annual overdose casualties, even after a decade-long battle against opioids. The opioid death rate spiked by nearly 40% in the first year of the pandemic, and in 2021 U.S. overdose deaths topped 100,000 for the first time in history. With all available public health resources and mental energy diverted to a virus and a vaccine, millions of struggling Americans—many already...

### **New tools enable non-clinicians to diagnose substance use disorders**

Many of the diagnostic measures for opioid and stimulant use disorders currently available have barriers for usage—along with long interviews and fees, a clinician must administer them. A new study by Yale School of Medicine (YSM) and NYU Grossman School of Medicine researchers demonstrates the validity of two new diagnostic tools—the Rapid Opioid Use Disorder Assessment and the Rapid Stimulant Use Disorder Assessment. These instruments may be used to increase diagnoses of opioid and stimulant use disorder and access to treatment, as they can be easily administered by non-clinical...

### **Sound Waves Could Be A Novel Tactic in Battling Cocaine Addiction**

Researchers are launching a pioneering study using low-intensity focused ultrasound to address cocaine addiction by targeting the insula region of the brain. This noninvasive technique aims to reprogram brain cells to diminish cocaine cravings. If successful, this approach could revolutionize addiction treatment. The initiative springs from increasing cocaine use and related deaths in Virginia and a lack of FDA-approved treatments for the addiction. Pioneering researchers at UVA Health are testing whether focused sound waves can help people overcome cocaine addiction, a growing problem...

### **Using traumatic childhood experiences to understand substance use**

Some people are more likely to develop substance use disorders than others. Medical University of South Carolina researchers wondered whether adverse childhood experiences (ACEs), such as abuse or neglect, could be one reason why. They asked men and women participating in substance use research to complete an ACE questionnaire and to provide details on their use of four substances: tobacco, alcohol, cocaine and opioids. The MUSC study was led by Aimee McRae-Clark, Pharm.D., professor of Psychiatry and Neuroscience, and neuroscience doctoral candidate Erin Martin. They reported...

### **New analysis finds stigma stopping evidence-based response to drug overdoses in UK**

A new analysis in the BMJ argues that UK government opposition to drug consumption rooms is rooted in societal stigma. Dr. Andrew Guise has led on the publication in the British Medical Journal arguing that the UK government's opposition to drug consumption rooms is rooted in long running and societal-wide stigma towards people who use drugs. Drug overdoses are a growing problem worldwide, in the UK the number of people dying from drug overdose is rising, with over 4000 deaths reported in 2021. In response to this issue, many countries have drug consumption rooms. Drug consumption rooms are sites where...

### **Police involvement may hamstring overdose outreach efforts**

A new study finds law enforcement officials play a critical role in launching programs designed to reduce the risk of repeat overdoses in people who use drugs. However, the study also raises concerns that law enforcement's involvement in the outreach component of these programs may undermine program effectiveness. At issue are post-overdose outreach programs, called post-overdose response teams in North Carolina, which are designed to reach out to people who have recently survived an overdose. Specifically, the goal of the programs is to connect survivors to available resources—such...

## Funding Opportunities



### GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[PAR-23-253](#)

[Device Based Treatments for Substance Use Disorders \(UG3/UH3 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-DA-23-036](#)

[Notice of NIDA's participation in PAR-23-240, "Alcohol and Other Substance Use Research Education Programs for Health Professionals \(R25 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-25-025](#)

[Notice of Intent to Publish a Funding Opportunity Announcement for Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network - Phase II Research Hubs \(U01 Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

[RFA-DA-24-069](#)

[HEAL Initiative: Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network \(JCOIN\) - Phase II Coordination and Translation Center \(U2C Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-DA-24-068](#)

[HEAL Initiative: Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network \(JCOIN\) - Phase II Methodology and Advanced Analytics Resource Center \(UM1 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[RFA-DA-25-018](#)

[Engaging Survivors of Sexual Violence and Trafficking in HIV and Substance Use Disorder Services \(R34 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

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