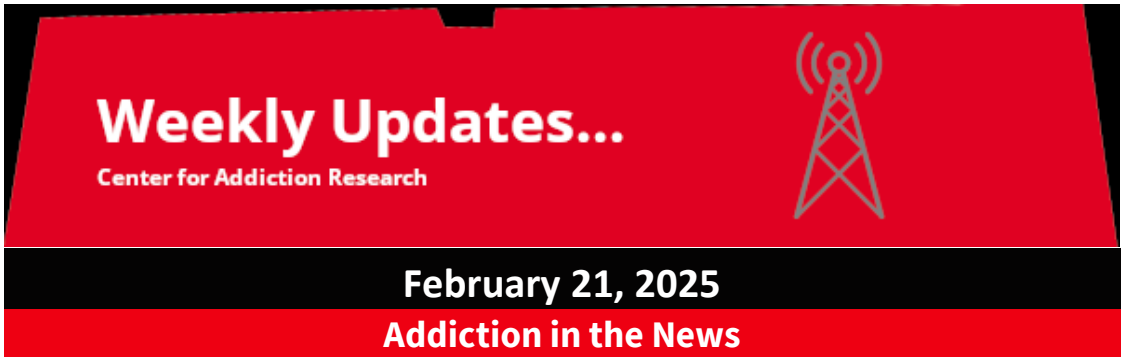
UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 2.21.2025

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

Drug deaths are down in one Ohio county and much of the US

The Washington Post recently published a story discussing Hamilton County's successes in battling the opioid crisis. That journey in many ways parallels the nation's experience at the start of 2025. The Post reports that drug deaths fueled primarily by illicit fentanyl reached staggering heights by 2023, topping 100,000 for the third straight year. But in the 12-month period ending in August, deaths had decreased by more than 20 percent from the same period the previous year, according to provisional state data published by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Although the CDC won't publish 2024 estimates for several months, experts say there could be more than 20,000 fewer deaths than the year…

Grant awarded to UC researcher studying chronic pain at cellular level

In a development in the field of pain research, the National Institutes of Health has awarded a $2.1 million grant to a University of Cincinnati College of Medicine researcher through the HEAL (Helping to End Addiction Long-term) Initiative. The national opioid epidemic has been deemed a public health emergency, and a goal of the initiative is to accelerate scientific solutions to the crisis. The initiative is funding more than 1,800 projects nationwide, including research into safe and effective pain treatment and pain management. At UC, Temugin Berta, PhD, associate professor in the Department of Anesthesiology, is leading a HEAL Initiative project, studying postoperative pain at the molecular and cellular…

Why is Hamilton County getting so much opioid settlement money?

Over the course of 18 years, Ohio and its communities are receiving nearly $2 billion from pharmaceutical companies to compensate for harm caused by opioids. The Ohio Newsroom is following the money. This is our settlement story of the month. The largest opioid settlement to date is a nationwide $26 billion deal with Johnson & Johnson, plus three of the country's biggest drug wholesalers. Ohio will receive upwards of $800 million from this deal — and of all the counties in the state, Hamilton County is expected to receive the biggest chunk of that change, according to data compiled by KFF Health News. Tana Weingartner, senior editor and reporter with WVXU in Cincinnati, joined The Ohio Newsroom to talk about how…

An ice rink to fight the opioid crisis? Some regrets over settlement cash spending

A Kentucky county nestled in the heart of Appalachia, where the opioid crisis has wreaked devastation for decades, spent $15,000 of its opioid settlement money on an ice rink. That amount wasn't enough to solve the county's troubles, but it could have bought 333 kits of Narcan, a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses. Instead, people are left wondering how a skating rink addresses addiction or fulfills the settlement money's purpose of remediating the harms of opioids. Like other local jurisdictions nationwide, Carter County is set to receive a windfall of more than $1 million over the next decade-plus from companies…

Lawmaker wants more options to help opioid crisis

FRANKFORT, Ky. (KT) – Legislation has been introduced for the 2025 General Assembly which is aimed at addressing the ongoing opioid crisis in Kentucky, by creating parity in Medicaid coverage for non-opioid pain management therapies. Senate Minority Leader Gerald Neal, D-Louisville, is the sponsor of Senate Bill 128, modeled after similar measures successfully passed in other states like Louisiana and Tennessee, which seeks to eliminate unnecessary barriers to non-opioid alternatives by ensuring they are not subject to more restrictive prior authorization requirements than opioids. "Opioid addiction and overdose have devastated communities across our state," said Neal. "This bill gives physicians and…

Bill cracking down on nicotine sales to underage Kentuckians clears committee

A legislative committee unanimously advanced a bill Tuesday that the sponsor has promised will add "teeth" to Kentucky laws aimed at keeping nicotine products out of the hands of youth. Senate Bill 100, from Sen. Jimmy Higdon, R-Lebanon, can now go to the Senate floor for a vote. Delanie Crump, a first year student at Boyd County High School in Ashland, testified before the Senate Licensing and Occupations Committee alongside Higdon. She said that too many of her peers have access to vapes with the potential for long term effects. "Imagine this: A middle schooler, just 12 years old, trying a vape for the first time because it tastes like candy," Crump said. "They don't see the addiction coming, but it grabs…

National News

Parental alcohol use linked to increased cancer risk in children

New research from the Texas A&M College of Veterinary Medicine and Biomedical Sciences has discovered that parents who chronically abuse alcohol can pass along adverse effects that increase their children's susceptibility to cancer—especially in the liver. Researchers working in the lab of Dr. Michael Golding have previously demonstrated that paternal drinking habits before conception can have a negative effect on fetal development, even up to three months after ceasing to drink. They have also shown that alcohol use from either mothers or fathers can result in early aging symptoms in children, even when drinking…

Authentic communication can reduce risky teen drinking

While fear-based messaging around alcohol aimed towards teens is common practice, new research suggests a key to curbing adolescents' risky drinking behavior is through authentic and open communication that acknowledges some of the positive aspects while warning of the negative consequences of drinking. University of Adelaide's Dr. David Jaud from the Adelaide Business School explains that communication should be genuine and balanced to provide effective messaging to reduce excessive drinking behavior in adolescents. "Positive communication messages on drinking can include acknowledging the teen's…

Daily cannabis use linked to public health burden

A new study analyzes the disease burden and the risk factors for severity among people who suffer from a condition called cannabinoid hyperemesis syndrome. Researchers at the George Washington University say the condition occurs in people who are long-term regular consumers of cannabis and causes nausea, uncontrollable vomiting and excruciating pain in a cyclical pattern that often leads to repeated trips to the hospital. "This is one of the first large studies to examine the burden of disease associated with this cannabis-linked syndrome," says Andrew Meltzer, professor of emergency medicine at the GW School of…

Researchers look for the best ways to help people with HIV quit smoking

Human immunodeficiency virus (HIV) treatment has gotten so good that people can take a pill once a day to achieve viral suppression that lets them live much longer than anyone could have imagined just a few decades ago. "But what if I were to tell you that smoking cigarettes nearly eradicates the survival benefit of taking these medications?" asked Seth Himelhoch, MD, MPH, Chair of the Department of Psychiatry and Behavioral Neuroscience at the University of Chicago Medicine. "That would make it very important to find the best ways to help people with HIV stop smoking cigarettes." Himelhoch is the lead author of a study…

Young adults may be more vulnerable to nicotine addiction than the middle-aged

People in their late teens and early 20s may be more sensitive to nicotine and more susceptible to nicotine addiction than middle-aged adults, according to a new study in mice from researchers in the Penn State Department of Biobehavioral Health. The results provide evidence that the effects of drugs on the body—both medication and misused substances—change over the lifespan in ways that clinicians and researchers need to consider when developing and prescribing treatments, the researchers said. Doctoral student Carlos Novoa and his adviser, Thomas Gould, Jean Phillips Shibley Professor of Biobehavioral Health…

ADHD symptoms linked to onset of nicotine, tobacco use in youth

Attention-deficit/hyperactivity disorder (ADHD) symptoms are associated with onset of nicotine and tobacco use in U.S. youths, according to a study published online Feb. 11 in JAMA Network Open. Sean Esteban McCabe, Ph.D., from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor, and colleagues examined whether ADHD diagnosis, symptom severity, and pharmacotherapy are associated with incident electronic cigarette (e-cigarette) and tobacco use. A nationally representative sample of U.S. youths and their parents in the Population Assessment of Tobacco and Health Study were followed via questionnaires from wave…

Would the prohibition of menthol cigarettes cause more harm than good?

New research published in Health Economics indicates that a national prohibition of menthol cigarettes in the United States could increase the number of people who attempt to quit smoking but also support an illegal menthol cigarette market. For the research, 639 adult menthol smokers made hypothetical choices between menthol and non-menthol cigarettes, menthol and non-menthol e-cigarettes, and attempting to quit. Participants were presented with situations where menthol cigarettes and menthol e-cigarettes were described as either legal, prohibited but available under-the-counter and online from retailers who continue…

Study sheds light on how people's DNA affects their response to smoking cessation drug

The effectiveness of a common drug to quit smoking could be down to people's genes, according to a study from the University of Leicester (United Kingdom). Varenicline is widely recognized as the most effective medication for helping people stop smoking, but unfortunately it does not work for everyone. Researchers from Leicester have uncovered important insights into how people's DNA affects their response to the drug, which will soon be available to smokers through the UK's National Health Service (NHS). Varenicline works by targeting specific receptors in the brain to block the rewarding effects of smoking and…

Study shows smoking is tied to some unexplained strokes in young adults

Smoking, particularly heavy smoking, is linked to some unexplained strokes in younger adults, mainly in male individuals and in people ages 45 to 49, according to a study published in Neurology Open Access. A stroke with no known cause, called a cryptogenic stroke, is a type of ischemic stroke caused by a blockage of blood flow, but it is unclear what has caused the blockage. Symptoms include weakness, trouble speaking and vision problems. Strokes can be fatal. Most strokes occur after age 65. "While smoking has long been linked to ischemic stroke, little is known about how smoking affects people under 50, especially in those with…

Stigmatizing language related to substance use in grants shows notable drop

The use of stigmatizing terminology in National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA)-funded grant abstracts has decreased by over half since 2013 according to a new paper by researchers at Columbia University Mailman School of Public Health. However, one in four abstracts still contained a stigmatizing term in 2023. The researchers found accelerated decreases in stigmatizing terminology after high-level federal guidance in early 2017 to use non-stigmatizing language and continued decreases after NIDA issued similar guidance in 2021. The results are published in JAMA Network Open. "This overall decrease may indicate…

California clinicians boost buprenorphine prescriptions, aiding recovery efforts

In the face of the alarming number of opioid-related deaths in the U.S., there have been national efforts to increase emergency clinician prescribing of buprenorphine, a medication used to treat opioid use disorder. In a study published in JAMA, UCLA Health researchers report on the extent and success rate of such efforts in California. Opioid-related emergency department (ED) visits, hospitalizations, and deaths have increased markedly since 1999, and the growing number of cases was declared a public health emergency in 2024. Combined psychotherapy and medication, either methadone, buprenorphine, or naltrexone, is the…

Methadone treatment shown to improve HIV care for formerly incarcerated individuals

When transitioning from prison to the community, formerly incarcerated individuals face numerous challenges, including lack of employment, housing, and health care. This transition is more precarious for those with HIV or opioid use disorder, who—due to these diseases—have an increased risk of medical complications and even death. In a new Yale-led study, published in the International Journal of Drug Policy, researchers have shown that treatment with methadone in patients with HIV and opioid use disorder before they are released from prison resulted in substantially better HIV outcomes during the year…

Surgeons detail challenges in treating 'tranq' wounds amid Philadelphia's Xylazine crisis

A new study examining the treatment of xylazine-associated wounds in Philadelphia sheds light on the severe medical complications and health care challenges caused by the widespread presence of the drug in the city's illicit supply. Conducted by surgeons at Cooper University Hospital and researchers from Drexel University College of Medicine and the Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine, and overseen by the Rothman Institute Foundation for Opioid Research & Education, the study provides some of the first detailed insights into how hospitals are grappling with the influx of patients suffering from severe…

Large-scale study reveals rates of drug use among homeless adults and treatment barriers

Less than half of people experiencing homelessness regularly used illicit drugs in the prior six months. The most common drugs used by this population aren't opioids but methamphetamines. And a significant percentage of people who are homeless and use drugs regularly have tried, but have been unable to receive treatment. These are some of the findings revealed in a UC San Francisco-led report of more than 3,200 adults experiencing homelessness, the largest representative study of the homeless population since the National Survey of Homeless Assistance Providers and Clients was published in 1996. Only around…

Study reveals surge in gambling addiction following legalization of sports betting

A new study, published in JAMA Internal Medicine, led by researchers from the University of California San Diego Qualcomm Institute and School of Medicine, reveals a dramatic increase in sports betting and gambling addiction help-seeking since the landmark Murphy v. NCAA Supreme Court decision in 2018 paved the way for states to legalize sports betting. "When the Supreme Court legalized sportsbooks—a venue where people can wager on various sports competitions—in Murphy v. NCAA, public health experts paid little attention," said the study's senior author John W. Ayers, Ph.D., who is vice chief of innovation in the Division of…

'Loot box' virtual rewards associated with gambling and video game addiction

A new study of more than 1,400 adults who gamble and play online video games has found loot box buying is associated with real-world gambling, video gaming addiction, and other mental health issues. The international research published in Computers in Human Behavior brings new insights into the loot box phenomenon—the virtual items offered in video games to give players random rewards, including weapons, cosmetics or "skins." The new research—carried out in collaboration between Flinders University, Nottingham Trent University, the University of Gibraltar, and the ELTE Eötvös Loránd University in Hungary—also points…

South African scientists were testing a promising HIV vaccine. Then came Trump's aid cuts

JOHANNESBURG, Feb 18 (Reuters) - South African lab technician Nozipho Mlotshwa was waiting for the test results for a potential HIV vaccine, which has eluded scientists for decades, when the order came from USAID to stop work. The first round of vaccines she and her colleagues made in Johannesburg had produced an immune response in rabbits, which was promising but not conclusive - so they tweaked the formula and sent off four new versions for pre-clinical tests. "This was very exciting. We were getting quite good results," Mlotshwa, 32, told Reuters in the lab in the Antiviral Gene Therapy Research Unit at the…

Federal Register hold makes 'end run' around court pause on NIH funding freeze

A large portion of grants awarded by the U.S. National Institutes of Health (NIH) cannot be funded for the foreseeable future because of a hold on submissions to the Federal Register, where such public notices about upcoming meetings are required by law to be posted, according to an email reviewed by The Transmitter. "FRN [Federal Register Notice] submissions are now on hold indefinitely" reads the email, which was sent on 7 February from an NIH official to a researcher who shared it with The Transmitter. The decision, the email continues, "came from the HHS [Health and Human Services] level and no further…

Funding Opportunities

NIH GRANTS & FUNDING
NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

Due to a pause in communications, there are no new NIH Grants Funding Opportunities to post this week.

UC Foundation Funding Opportunity

Please contact Carol Russell at (513) 556-6169 or **russecg@foundation.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.

Kent Richard Hofmann Foundation Invites Inquiries to Fund HIV/AIDS Efforts

Deadline: February 28, 2025 (Letters of Intent) - Selected applicants will be invited to submit a full application, due March 21.

The Kent Richard Hofmann Foundation invites letters of intent from community-based organizations in HIV/AIDS care as well as in support of direct services, education, and research. Awards range from $1,000 to $6,000. Grants are made

semi-annually to nonprofit organizations in support of care and direct services, education, and research. Grants will be awarded to support developing or established programs, with emphasis on direct benefit to clients or target audiences. Requests from across the United States are considered, with a particular interest in smaller communities and rural areas. Previous requests receiving serious consideration have included requests from locations with a scarcity of available funding; seed money for new projects, programs, or structures; and innovative ideas for meeting basic needs. Applicants must be tax-exempt under section 501(c)(3) of the Internal Revenue Code to be eligible.

Grand Challenges in Health: Gates Foundation Announces New Initiative - Enhancing HIV and TB Diagnosis

Deadline: March 25, 2025

The Gates Foundation has posted its next Grand Challenges aimed at solving global health and development problems for people most in need, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. This initiative aims to develop innovative adjunct technologies that improve sample collection, preparation, and processing for point-of-care diagnostics. This initiative seeks to bridge critical gaps in the accessibility, affordability, and implementation of diagnostic testing, particularly in low- and middle-income countries. By investing in novel pre-analytical solutions, this effort intends to enhance the performance and reach of diagnostic platforms for HIV and tuberculosis. Selected proposals will receive funding ranging from $100,000 to $250,000 for a grant term of up to two years. Despite advancements in diagnostic technology, significant barriers remain in the widespread adoption of point-of-care tests, especially in resource-limited settings. The early and accurate detection of HIV and TB is essential for initiating timely treatment, reducing transmission, and improving patient outcomes. Proposals will be evaluated based on feasibility, innovation, cost-effectiveness, scalability, and their alignment with point-of-care needs. Analytical performance data and validation against published guidelines will also be considered. Eligible applicants include nonprofit organizations, for-profit companies, international organizations, government agencies, and academic institutions.

© [2020 Center for Addiction Research]

University of CINCINNATI
CENTER FOR ADDICTION RESEARCH

MADE WITH stripo