

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

Mother Whose Son Died From Fentanyl Discusses How To Save Young People's Lives In Op-Ed.

In an opinion piece for the [Cleveland Plain Dealer](#) (12/3, 1.22M), Beth Weinstock, a mother "whose eldest son Eli was murdered in March 2021 when he unintentionally ingested fentanyl," says "we've reached a cultural pivot point; Eli is part of the 'fentanyl generation.'" Weinstock writes that the "rapid escalation of fatalities has hit every corner of American life." She says that HHS "recently announced increased funding for harm-reduction efforts," but this is "only a start." She adds that "life-saving tools exist, such as fentanyl test strips and Narcan, and should be easily available to any young person."

On Senate Floor, Portman Calls on Washington to Respond to Surging Addiction Epidemic

WASHINGTON, DC – On the Senate floor last evening, Senator Portman discussed the record number of overdose deaths that have devastated families and communities across America. According to the latest data from the Centers for Disease Control, April 2020 to April 2021 saw the most drug overdose deaths in a 12-month period in our nation's history, with more than 100,000 individuals...

Ohio Narcotics Center warns of dangerous counterfeit prescription tablets found in Ohio

The Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center (ONIC) released a public safety bulletin today alerting Ohioans that counterfeit/fake prescription tablets that look like alprazolam (Xanax®) and oxycodone (Oxycontin®) are being sold in Ohio. These counterfeits contain fentanyl, a powerful drug that can kill, and other contents that ONIC says could cause death. The number and letter markings, colors, and scoring...

U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Brennan Releases Statement on Cuyahoga County Overdose Surge

U.S. Attorney Bridget M. Brennan released a statement today after the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner issued a public health alert concerning suspected overdose deaths in the county. “There are no safe street drugs,” said U.S. Attorney Brennan. “Pills that look like oxycontin or percocet are often pressed fentanyl, fentanyl analogues or carfentanil. Similarly, cocaine is not just cocaine...

Fighting recidivism: UMADAOP lands \$750,000 grant

LIMA — Individuals in Allen, Auglaize and Hardin counties returning to their communities after serving time in jails or prison will have extra resources at their disposal with the announcement Tuesday that the Lima Urban Minority Alcoholism and Drug Abuse Outreach Program, or UMADAOP, has been awarded a \$750,000 federal grant aimed at reducing recidivism. U.S. Sen. Rob Portman...

14 charged in drug conspiracy involving millions of dollars worth of opioids

CINCINNATI — Fourteen people, including 12 people from Greater Cincinnati, have been charged in a narcotics conspiracy that allegedly involved millions of dollars worth of narcotics. According to Kenneth Parker, the United States attorney for the Southern District of Ohio, each person is charged with conspiring to distribute 400 grams or more of fentanyl in instances he says occurred for at least...

National News

America Ranks Fourth Among World’s Drunkest Countries In 2021, Survey Finds.

USA Today (12/3, Avery, 12.7M) reported that the heavy drinking habit of Americans led the US to be ranked fourth among the 22 countries involved in the 2021 Global Drug Survey, “with participants reporting to being drunk a little under twice a month, or 23 times a year, a new international study has shown.” Meanwhile, “respondents from Australia reported getting drunk more than any other country, with an average of 26 times a year, or about twice a month.” According to the survey, “Denmark and Finland followed with an average of 23 incidents per year of getting drunk, nearly twice higher than the global average of 14.6 times per year.”

Cannabis Use Climbing In Pregnancy Among People With HIV.

[MedPage Today](#) (12/3, D'Ambrosio, 183K) reported, “Among pregnant people living with HIV, marijuana use climbed over the last decade both in pregnancy and during the postpartum period,” researchers concluded in a study that “analyzed nearly 3,000 pregnancies from 2,300 people living with HIV.” The findings were published online in JAMA Network Open.

Top Federal Drug Official Personally Hesitates To Study Marijuana Because Of Schedule I Research Barriers.

[Marijuana Moment](#) (12/2, Jaeger) reports that National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow “says even she is reluctant to conduct studies on Schedule I drugs like marijuana because of the ‘cumbersome’ rules that scientists face when investigating them.” Volkow “made the comments during a Wednesday forum moderated by The Hill and sponsored by the Coalition for Cannabis Policy, Education, and Regulation (CPEAR) that also featured congressional lawmakers, state regulators and industry stakeholders.” Volkow “said she personally avoids studying Schedule I substances because of the federal red tape.” According to Volkow, “One of the barriers that has actually been noted is that cannabis, marijuana, by being a Schedule I substance, requires certain procedures that actually can be very lengthy. ... In some instances, it detracts researchers who want to investigate it because it’s just much more cumbersome than doing studies with other substances.”

Additional Source. [CannabisWire](#) (12/2, Martin) reports that Volkow “gave a high-level overview of the endocannabinoid system and about where NIDA is focusing its research, which is generally related to how cannabis affects the brain.” Volkow said, “There has been an enormous amount of interest because CBD can reduce anxiety and can have analgesic effects. ... CBD, though, is not rewarding. And it can actually in some instances antagonize the rewarding effects of THC.”

The Right E-Cigarette Nicotine Delivery Can Help Smokers Quit.

[Futurity](#) (12/8, Schindo, 10K) reports new research indicates “[electronic] cigarettes with cigarette-like nicotine delivery may help some people stop smoking cigarettes,” reducing “their exposure to certain carcinogens, or cancer causing substances.” Researchers followed 520 smokers for 6 months “looking to reduce their cigarette consumption by at least 50% but had no plans to quit.” According to Futurity, “At the end of six months, significantly more participants who had received the 36 mg/mL nicotine ENDS, which has similar nicotine delivery to a cigarette, reported remaining abstinent from cigarettes compared to the other study groups.” The findings were published in *Nicotine and Tobacco Research*. The National Institute on Drug Abuse and the FDA’s Center for Tobacco Products funded the work.

New Zealand To Ban Smoking By Raising Age Limit Every Year So Many Current Teens Can Never Buy Cigarettes Legally.

The [Washington Post](#) (12/9, Cheng, 10.52M) reports, “New Zealand is planning to outlaw smoking for future generations, with new policies that include raising the age limit every year – meaning many people who are currently young teens will never be able to legally buy a cigarette.” New Zealand will start lifting the legal smoking age of 18 by one year every year starting in 2027 – creating a “smoke-free generation.”

The [AP](#) (12/9) reports that 65 years after the new law takes effect, shoppers could theoretically “still buy cigarettes – but only if they could prove they were at least 80 years old.” Officials have set the goal “of having fewer than 5% of New Zealanders smoking by 2025.”

Overdose Fight Spurs \$30 Million In HHS Harm Reduction Grants.

[Bloomberg Law](#) (12/8, Lopez, Subscription Publication, 4K) reports HHS “is offering \$30 million in grants for local health providers to fund drug harm reduction services, a move that fits into the agency’s four-pronged plan for combating climbing U.S. overdose rates.” The money “will come from the Biden administration’s American Rescue Plan and will target areas suffering most from the addiction epidemic.”

Additional Sources. [Newsweek](#) (12/8, Small, 2.67M) reports HHS Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use Dr. Miriam E. Delphin-Rittmon said about this initiative, “It’s about moving people further along in terms of stages of change. ... It’s planting valuable seeds that can make a difference and help people move into long-term recovery by connecting them to services and support.” The article adds that in 2020, “75,673 deaths were due to opioids, making up almost 75% of the total number of overdose deaths.” Experts say fentanyl is the most dangerous opioid. According to NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow, “This drug is 50 times more potent than heroin. ... That means you need 1/50 of the volume of fentanyl that you would need with heroin.”

[CNN](#) (12/8, Kounang, 89.21M) reports, “In addition to expanding funding for harm reduction efforts, the Biden administration also announced on Wednesday a framework for states to create syringe exchange-friendly laws.”

[Fierce Healthcare](#) (12/8, King, 150K) reports the grants are “aimed at harm reduction strategies to combat opioid abuse, including funding for needle exchanges and fentanyl test strips.” However, HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra “said the funding won’t be used for supervised injection sites, which have been the subject of legal battles across the country.” He told reporters, “Our new HHS overdose prevention strategy is clear: harm reduction services are critical to keeping people alive.” The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration will review applications for the grants.

[Healthcare Finance News](#) (12/8, Lagasse, 93K) also quotes Becerra as saying, “Overcoming addiction will not be easy, and it won’t happen overnight. ... While we can’t prevent someone from using these substances, we need to prevent them from dying. It’s not about stigmatizing them and pushing them into the shadows.”

Editorial: Overdose Crisis Goes Beyond Opioid Abuse.

The [Orangeburg \(SC\) Times And Democrat](#) (12/3, 33K) says in an editorial that health officials have tied the more than 100,000 deaths from drug overdoses reported in the year between May 2020 and May 2021 “to the COVID-19 pandemic and a more dangerous drug supply.” However, the editorial says, “Overdose deaths have been increasing for more than two decades, accelerated in the past two years and, according to new data, jumped nearly 30% in the latest year.” The editorial adds that National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow says that the US must tailor public health approaches “to address methamphetamine use across the diverse communities at risk.”

M.K. Montefiore, Einstein College Receive \$5.1M NIH Grant For Chronic Pain And Opioid Research.

[Crain's New York Business](#) (12/3, Sim, Kaufman, 230K) reports that the National Institute on Drug Abuse has awarded Montefiore Health System and the Albert Einstein College of Medicine a \$5.1 million grant for “research on people with both chronic pain and opioid-use disorder, or OUD, they announced Tuesday.” The grant was made “as part of its Helping to End Addiction Long-term initiative, which funds scientific research on ending opioid addiction.”

Father Faces Charges Of Second-Degree Manslaughter After Toddler Dies From Formula Contaminated With Fentanyl.

The [New York Times](#) (12/2, Newman, 20.6M) reports a New York father “was arraigned Wednesday on charges of second-degree manslaughter” after his infant son died from consuming formula that “was contaminated with fentanyl.” The infant’s death in June “came amid a surge in fatal overdoses caused by fentanyl, a synthetic, super-concentrated opioid, across the country, including in New York City. According to the National Center for Health Statistics, 106 American children 5 and under died of drug overdoses in 2019, the most recent year for which data is available. It was the highest number since the center began tracking such deaths in 1999.”

Debate Cracking Down More On Fentanyl.

[WHLT-TV](#) (12/3, 1K) reported “the US has seen record levels of drug overdoses in the past year,” and “many of those deaths were fentanyl-related.” The Biden Administration aims “to permanently schedule fentanyl – and all of its variations – as a schedule one controlled substance.” On “Thursday, the House held a hearing to examine the White House’s proposal.” There seems “to be bipartisan support to permanently classify fentanyl as a class one drug.” However, “there is a sharp divide over the Administration’s plan to exempt it from mandatory minimum drug trafficking laws.” Kemp Chester from the Office of National Drug Control Policy said at the hearing, “The President opposes mandatory minimums and the Administration is committed to criminal justice reform that eliminates race- and

income-based disparities. ... This exemption does not apply, however, where there is a direct link to death or serious bodily injury.” [WJTV-TV](#) (12/3, 5K) aired the same story.

Verinetics Awarded NIDA Grant to Develop System for Take-Home Methadone Option.

[HMP Global Learning Network](#) (12/5, Valentino) reported, “Verinetics announced on Tuesday that it has been awarded a \$1.5 million contract by the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) under the Small Business Innovation Research (SBIR) Phase II program to develop a system for expanding access to medications to treat opioid use disorder (MOUD).”

Will The DEA Deschedule A Cocaine-Based Drug Before Marijuana?

[Entrepreneur Magazine](#) (12/8, Cann, 2.81M) reports that the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) is “working tirelessly to see that a cocaine-derived drug is rescheduled before cannabis on a federal level,” confusing many marijuana advocates. “Marijuana, which is a fast-rising medical drug, is classified as a Schedule 1 drug” which means “it has no medical value and a high potential for abuse. Whereas, cocaine which has an established reputation of posing one of the highest risks of abuse and little medical value is a Schedule 2 drug. All these and more are some of the reasons why the majority are confused about the DEA’s stance on decriminalizing a cocaine-derived drug before cannabis.” The piece adds that following a “scientific and medical evaluation,” HHS, the “FDA and the National Institute on Drug Abuse worked together to offer a recommendation.”

Syrian Drug Empire Flourishing In The Mediterranean.

The [New York Times](#) (12/5, Hubbard, Saad, 20.6M) reports, “Powerful associates of Syria’s president, Bashar al-Assad, are making and selling captagon, an illegal amphetamine, creating” a multibillion-dollar operation on the Mediterranean, “eclipsing Syria’s legal exports and turning the country into the world’s newest narcostate.” The Times “found that much of the production and distribution is overseen by the Fourth Armored Division of the Syrian Army, an elite unit commanded by Maher al-Assad, the president’s younger brother and one of Syria’s most powerful men.”

Telehealth Services In Medicare Skyrocketed Last Year, HHS Says.

[Fierce Healthcare](#) (12/5, King, 150K) reports that the number of beneficiaries in traditional Medicare “using telehealth exploded 63-fold in 2020 from 840,000 in 2019 to nearly 52.7 million, a new [study](#) found.” The study, “released Friday (PDF) by the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), comes as advocates are pressing to make key flexibilities the federal government enabled at the start of the pandemic to be permanent.” At the onset of the pandemic, HHS “gave providers more flexibility to get Medicare reimbursement for certain services via telehealth.”

Funding Opportunities



GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-AA-22-002](#)

[Notice of Special Interest: Administrative Supplements and Urgent Competitive Revisions on Coronavirus Disease 2019 \(COVID-19\) within the Mission of NIAAA](#)

[RFA-HD-23-020](#)

[Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions \(ATN\) Scientific Leadership Center \(UM2 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-HD-23-021](#)

[Adolescent Medicine Trials Network for HIV/AIDS Interventions \(ATN\) Operations and Collaborations Center \(UM2 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

Other sources:

[SAMHSA Announces Unprecedented \\$30 Million Harm Reduction Grant Funding Opportunity to Help Address the Nation's Substance Use and Overdose Epidemic](#)

[Urban Health Pathway Seed Grant Program](#)

The Urban Health Pathway of Next Lives Here is pleased to offer our FY21-22 Seed Grant Program RFP designed to support investigators in collecting promising research that will be leveraged for extramural grant applications. Funded proposals will be those that will most successfully advance the health and health equity of the residents of the Greater Cincinnati region. Grants will range between \$5,000 - \$20,000. Please contact Dena Cranley at cranleda@ucmail.uc.edu with questions. [\(see attached\)](#)

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