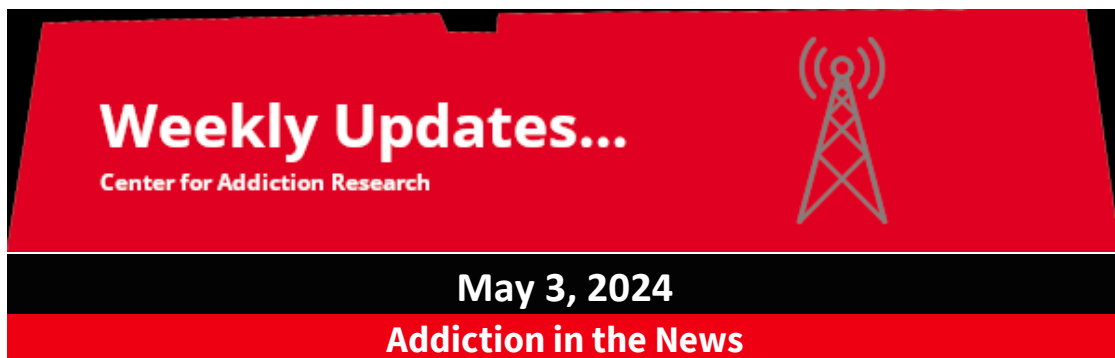


Welcome to the weekly newsletter from the Center for Addiction Research! Each newsletter includes highlights from addiction in the news topics, active funding opportunities offered by NIDA/NIAAA, and information about any new publications from CAR members. Please email Jen Rowe ([roweji@ucmail.uc.edu](mailto:roweji@ucmail.uc.edu)) to change your communication preferences. **Please note that the next weekly newsletter will be published Friday, May 17.** 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**

#### **Ohio lawmakers may look at existing marijuana laws following DEA push to reclassify it**

CINCINNATI (WKRC) - In a historic shift in United States drug policy, the DEA will reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug. The proposal would recognize the medical uses of cannabis at the federal level but wouldn't legalize it for recreational use. It could also reduce tax burdens on the marijuana industry. Marijuana is classified as a Schedule I drug. This means it's defined as a "drug with no current accepted medical use and a high potential for abuse." Heroin and LSD are in the same classification. The DEA wants to move cannabis to Schedule III alongside ketamine, anabolic steroids, and Tylenol with codeine. This change would better align federal law with the dozens of states that have legalized...

#### **An Ohio House passes bill with harsher human and drug trafficking penalties**

COLUMBUS, Ohio (Statehouse News Bureau) — A proposal to boost the penalties for human and drug trafficking cleared the Ohio House on Wednesday by a 80-13 vote. Introduced last June by Reps. Cindy Abrams (R-Harrison) and D.J. Swearingen (R-Huron), House Bill 230 would recategorize the felony classifications for trafficking certain amounts of drugs, such as cocaine, fentanyl, or heroin. Harsher penalties come with the state's potential reclassifications. The classifications and sentences for fentanyl or its modifications are the ones that increase the most under HB 230. Trafficking less than one gram of fentanyl would go from a fifth-degree felony to a third-degree felony—amended from an earlier...

## **National News**

### **Researcher explains the human toll of language that makes addiction feel worse**

When Mass General transplant hepatologist Wei Zhang says he wants his colleagues to think before they speak, he has the tragedy of a recent patient in mind. Admitted to intensive care for advanced alcohol-associated liver disease, the 36-year-old woman hid the truth when asked about her drinking. "She was like, 'No, I quit over a year ago, I didn't drink at all,'" said Zhang, also director of the hospital's Alcohol-Associated Liver Disease Clinic. "But we have tools that can detect the use of alcohol in the past three, four weeks." The patient, who had been traumatized by years of physical abuse, was denied a liver transplant, in part...

### **Study finds young adults reduced drinking during and after pandemic**

A new study examined the drinking levels and patterns of young adults before, during and after the pandemic. The researchers found alcohol use and alcohol-related problems substantially decreased in heavy-drinking young adults during the pandemic, and these decreases were still evident as the pandemic began to wane. The results are available in the May 2 issue of the journal *Nature Mental Health*. "The pandemic gave us a unique opportunity to see how wide-spread mitigation measures like social distancing and bar/restaurant closures may have affected alcohol consumption," said lead author Kasey Creswell...

### **DEA Will Move to Reclassify Marijuana in Historic Shift, Sources Say**

The Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA) will move to reclassify marijuana as a less dangerous drug, a historic shift to generations of American drug policy that could have wide ripple effects across the country. The DEA's proposal, which still must be reviewed by the White House Office of Management and Budget (OMB), would recognize the medical uses of cannabis, and acknowledge it has less potential for abuse than some of the nation's most dangerous drugs. However, it would not legalize marijuana outright for recreational use. The agency's move, confirmed to the AP on Tuesday by five people familiar with the...

### **Pediatric resource use less likely with legalization of recreational cannabis, study finds**

In cases of cannabis intoxication in children, resource utilization is less likely in states with recreational legalization of cannabis, according to a study published online May 1 in *Pediatrics*. Patrick S. Walsh, M.D., from the Medical College of Wisconsin in Milwaukee, and colleagues conducted a cross-sectional study of the Pediatric Health Information System, including emergency department encounters between January 2016 and April 2023 for children aged younger than 6 years with cannabis ingestion to examine whether the legal status of recreational cannabis was associated with resource utilization outcomes...

## **Trial finds increasing or altering smoking-cessation treatment helps persistent smokers quit**

For most smokers, quitting on the first attempt is likely to be unsuccessful, but a new study from The University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center found patients were more likely to quit if their cessation regimen was altered and doses were increased. Researchers also found that varenicline, a cessation medication, was more effective than combined nicotine replacement therapy (CNRT), such as patches or lozenges. The study, published in JAMA, revealed smokers who failed to quit with varenicline in the trial's first phase were seven times more likely to quit by the end of the second phase if varenicline doses were...

## **White House Indefinitely Delays Plan to Ban Menthol Cigarettes**

The Biden administration is again delaying issuance of a final rule banning the sale of menthol cigarettes. "This rule has garnered historic attention and the public comment period has yielded an immense amount of feedback, including from various elements of the civil rights and criminal justice movement," HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra said in a very brief statement posted Friday on the HHS website. "It's clear that there are still more conversations to have, and that will take significantly more time." The statement gave no details about how long the delay might be. Feedback on the statement, in contrast...

## **As federal menthol ban languishes, Black smokers are left to the mercy of marketers: Study**

After decades of deception, Black adults who smoke menthol cigarettes are often unaware of the deceitful ways tobacco companies market their products to them, according to a Rutgers study. "Evidence shows that the tobacco industry engages in predatory marketing tactics and that companies push certain products on specific groups," said Kymberle L. Sterling, an associate professor at the Rutgers School of Public Health and lead author of the study published in Nicotine and Tobacco Research. "The tobacco industry uses these predatory methods to target Black communities with menthol cigarettes, and many..."

## **Understanding youth nicotine use to prevent initiation and escalation**

Using multiple nicotine products can be associated with higher levels of nicotine dependence among youth and increased mortality in adults, compared with the use of one product alone. Yale researchers have now uncovered factors that contribute to adolescents using multiple nicotine products. These findings, they say, will help inform efforts to prevent escalation from single to multiple product use. Their findings were reported April 24 in the journal Preventative Medicine. While public health campaigns have spread awareness on the harms of smoking and, more recently, vaping, an increasingly diverse landscape of nicotine...

### **Teen Vaping Linked to Higher Lead, Uranium Levels**

Teens with more frequent vaping had increased urine lead and uranium levels, researchers found. Among 200 individuals ages 13 to 17, those who vaped intermittently had 40% higher urine lead levels than occasional users (mean 0.21 vs 0.16 ng/mg creatinine, adjusted geometric mean ratio [GMR] 1.4, P=0.03), reported Hongying Daisy Dai, PhD, of the University of Nebraska Medical Center in Omaha, and colleagues. Frequent vapers also had 30% higher urine lead levels than occasional users (0.20 vs 0.16, adjusted GMR 1.3, P=0.01), they noted in Tobacco Control. And frequent users had about twice the urine uranium levels of...

### **Expanded methadone access: giving patients greater choice**

WASHINGTON — Nicholas Voyles, executive director of the Indiana Recovery Alliance, ended up missing his daily dose of methadone on Monday. He'd requested "guest dosing" before traveling to Washington but discovered that day that the paperwork hadn't been processed yet. Although he has requested guest doses in clinics across America, Voyles told an audience at the STAT policy in health care meeting, the process has only worked a single time. "A paperwork misplacement allowed me not to dose," Voyles said. "For me, it's a little different. I've been taking methadone for a long time. But if I was a year in or something, this..."

### **More doctors can prescribe a leading addiction treatment. Why aren't more people getting help?**

It's easier than ever for doctors to prescribe a key medicine for opioid addiction since the U.S. government lifted an obstacle last year. But despite the looser restrictions and the ongoing overdose crisis, a new study finds little change in the number of people taking the medication. Researchers analyzed prescriptions filled by U.S. pharmacies for the treatment drug buprenorphine. The number of prescribers rose last year after doctors no longer needed to get a special waiver to prescribe the drug, while the number of patients filling prescriptions barely budged. It may take more than one year to see a bigger increase in patients, said...

### **Narcan May Have Moved Over the Counter, but It's Still Underutilized**

"Opioid emergencies can happen anytime, anywhere. Be the difference between life and loss." This is just one of the commercials you might have seen or heard for over-the-counter (OTC) naloxone (Narcan), the medication used to treat overdoses from drugs like fentanyl. Not only are pharmaceutical companies putting out these advertisements, but government agencies and public health organizations too have been promoting OTC naloxone. Just recently, the White House even announced multiple new actions aiming to promote increased naloxone access to combat overdoses. For anyone following our "opioid..."

## **To stop fentanyl deaths in Philadelphia, knocking on doors and handing out overdose kits**

On a narrow street lined with row houses and an auto body shop in the Kensington neighborhood of North Philadelphia, Marsella Elie climbs a home's front steps and knocks hard on the door. A middle-aged man appears with a wary look on his face. "Hello, sir, how are you doing today?" asked Elie, wearing a royal-blue jacket embroidered with the city government's Liberty Bell logo. "My name is Marsella. I'm working with the city. You heard about the overdoses that are going around in the neighborhood, right?" The man gives a cautious nod. Elie gestures to the pamphlets she's holding about drug overdoses and...

## **Fentanyl inhalation may cause potentially irreversible brain damage, warn doctors**

Inhaling the synthetic opioid fentanyl may cause potentially irreversible brain damage (toxic leukoencephalopathy), warn doctors in the journal *BMJ Case Reports*, after treating a middle-aged man found unresponsive in his hotel room after snorting the drug. Leukoencephalopathy refers to inflammation and damage to the brain's white matter—the network of nerve fibers that enable the exchange of information and communication between different areas of the brain's gray matter. Toxic leukoencephalopathy is a sudden or longstanding neurological syndrome, which has been reported after heroin inhalation...

## **How fentanyl and COVID-19 pandemic reshaped the racial profile of overdose deaths in US**

For as long as statistics about opioid overdose deaths have been collected in the United States, white individuals have been much more likely to die than Black individuals of the same age. With the rapidly increasing rate of fentanyl overdoses in the late 2010s, that trend began to reverse—by the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020, more Black Americans began to die of opioid overdoses and from drug overdoses of any kind, according to researchers at Penn State. New research from the Penn State College of Health and Human Development examined racial and regional differences in overdose fatalities from...

## **Job losses help explain increase in drug deaths among Black Americans**

New research points to an economic factor that might be overlooked when considering why drug-related deaths among Black Americans increased significantly after 2010 in U.S. regions reporting heightened fentanyl activity: job losses that followed the Great Recession. Researchers analyzed data on employment, demographics, drug seizures and causes of death for over 200 counties in the United States between 2010 and 2021. They found that overall, one more job per 100 Black workers in a county was associated with .29 fewer overdose deaths per 100,000 Black Americans—a substantial difference when considering...

### **People with opioid use disorder less likely to receive palliative care at end of life, finds study**

Compared with people without opioid use disorder, those with opioid use disorder were less likely to receive palliative care in clinics and in their homes, and were dying at younger ages of causes other than opioid use, according to new research published in Canadian Medical Association Journal. "The majority of conversations about the opioid crisis focus on the high number of opioid toxicity deaths. The unfortunate reality is that people with opioid use disorder are dying young from other causes as well," says author Dr. Jenny Lau, medical director of the Harold and Shirley Lederman Palliative Care Centre at Princess...

### **Study finds big jump in addiction treatment at community health clinics**

The number of health care professionals able to write a prescription for a key medication to treat addiction quadrupled at community health clinics from 2016 to 2021, according to a new study by researchers at Oregon Health & Science University. The findings, published online today in the journal JAMA Health Forum, provides a glimmer of hope amid a national overdose epidemic that has claimed more than 100,000 lives in the United States in each of the past few years. The study examined community health centers serving low-income people primarily in West Coast states. Researchers found the number of health...

### **How LA County is trying to remake addiction treatment—no more 'business as usual'**

Gary Horejsi wrestled with the decision before him, knowing a life could be in his hands. It was the third time that the woman had used drugs or alcohol since coming to CRI-Help, which runs a 135-bed residential facility in North Hollywood where people are treated for substance use disorder. CRI-Help needed to be a safe place for people grappling with their addictions. In the past, others had been removed for less. Horejsi, the clinical director, had the final say on whether she should be discharged. He perused her file on his computer. The woman was still trying, CRI-Help staffers told him. She hadn't shared drugs with anyone. And if she were...

### **California strikes deal for cheaper overdose-reversing medication**

California struck up a new deal with Amneal Pharmaceuticals on April 29 to bolster the state's supply of the opioid overdose-reversing medication naloxone at a much lower price for schools, police departments and others trying to ease the toll of fentanyl. The deal would put the price tag for a two-dosage pack of FDA approved naloxone, often known by the brand name Narcan, at \$24, a 40% drop from the current purchase price, state officials said at a news conference Monday. That lower price will allow the state's health agencies to "stretch the opioid settlement-fund dollars much further," and purchase far more of the...

### **At least 9 dead, dozens treated in Texas capital after unusual spike in overdoses**

Authorities in Texas are investigating at least nine deaths this week in connection with an unusual spike of opioid overdoses in Austin that health officials are calling the city's worst overdose outbreak in nearly a decade. Emergency responders in the Texas capital typically field only two to three calls per day, said Steve White, assistant chief of the Austin-Travis County Emergency Medical Service. But at least 65 people required overdose treatment between Monday and Wednesday, said Darren Noak, a spokesman for the agency. "At this time, it is apparent that there is a deadly batch of illicit narcotics in our...

### **Medication-assisted treatment, along with group therapy, found to improve inhibitory control in heroin addiction**

In line with their previous work, researchers from the Icahn School of Medicine at Mount Sinai showed that individuals with heroin use disorder have lower activity in the anterior and dorsolateral PFC when performing an inhibitory control task compared with healthy controls. Importantly, they revealed that 15 weeks of medication-assisted therapy, which included supplemental group therapy, improves impaired function of the anterior and dorsolateral PFC during an inhibitory control task among the group of participants with heroin use disorder, suggesting a time-dependent recovery of inhibitory control and PFC...

### **People who inject drugs are transitioning to smoking them**

Researchers from the University of California San Diego have revealed new trends in drug consumption that shed light on how people are adapting to the evolving risks associated with unregulated drug use in the United States. The findings could help policymakers and public health officials better tailor interventions to meet the needs of vulnerable populations and reduce the public health burden of substance-related harm. The study was published in *Drug and Alcohol Dependence*. Since the early 2010s, deaths from accidental overdoses have been on the rise in the United States due to an increase in the contamination of unregulated...

### **Perinatal substance use may shape how strongly mothers feel toward infants**

Substance use during pregnancy and postpartum may impact areas of the brain associated with what psychologists and neuroscientists call "affective empathy," or the emotional response experienced as a result of others' emotions, a new study suggests. Researchers exposed both mothers who used substances during the perinatal period [start of pregnancy until one year after birth], and those who didn't, to pictures of happy and sad infant faces and sounds of crying babies. The types of substances used among the former group of mothers varied, but the most common substance was tobacco (70%), followed by alcohol...

## Funding Opportunities



### GRANTS & FUNDING

NIH Central Resource for Grants and Funding Information

[NOT-DA-24-025](#)

[Notice to Extend PAR-22-027, "Mechanism for Time-Sensitive Drug Abuse Research \(R21 Clinical Trial Optional\)"](#)

[NOT-DA-24-030](#)

[Notice to Update PAR-23-194, "Substance Use/Substance Use Disorder Dissertation Research Award \(R36 Clinical Trials Not Allowed\)"](#)

[RFA-MH-25-185](#)

[Advancing HIV service delivery through pharmacies and pharmacists \(R01 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[RFA-MH-25-186](#)

[Advancing HIV service delivery through pharmacies and pharmacists \(R21 Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[PA-24-187](#)

[Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research \(Parent K24 Independent Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

[PA-24-188](#)

[Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research \(Parent K24 Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PA-24-189](#)

[Midcareer Investigator Award in Patient-Oriented Research \(Parent K24 - Independent Basic Experimental Studies with Humans Required\)](#)

[PA-24-178](#)

[Independent Scientist Award \(Parent K02 - Independent Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

[PA-24-179](#)

[Independent Scientist Award \(Parent K02 - Independent Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PA-24-180](#)

[Independent Scientist Award \(Parent K02 Independent Basic Experimental Studies with Humans Required\)](#)



[PAR-24-131](#)

[Small Business Transition Grant for New Entrepreneurs \(R43/R44 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-132](#)

[Small Business Transition Grant for New Entrepreneurs \(R43/R44 Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

[PAR-24-133](#)

[Small Business Transition Grant for New Entrepreneurs \(R41/R42 Clinical Trial Not Allowed\)](#)

[PAR-24-134](#)

[Small Business Transition Grant for New Entrepreneurs \(R41/R42 Clinical Trial Required\)](#)

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