

UC CAR Weekly Newsletter 8.27.2021

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. 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

### **CoM Office of Research Gallery of Awardees**

The CoM Office of Research publicizes faculty who have been awarded external grants of \$100,000/yr. or more and recently featured **Michael Lyons**, MD, Associate Professor, Department of Emergency Medicine (**CAR Member**)

Award: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Project Title: UC Early Intervention Program (EIP)

Project Period: 3/1/2021- 8/31/2022

Summary: The UC EIP is a nationally renowned health services intervention initiative continuously supported by health department funding since 1998. The EIP mission is to implement longitudinal health promotion initiatives in emergency departments and other health care settings, and reduce fragmentation separating community, public health, and healthcare service entities.

Award: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Project Title: HIV Prevention Activities Grant

Project Period: 1/1/2021- 12/31/2021

Summary: This project will continue its long-standing, high-quality, and critically important counseling, testing, and referral activities at University of Cincinnati Medical Center emergency department and expand CTR services

Award: Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services Award  
Project Title: Peer Intervention and Linkage to Care for Substance Use Disorder in the Emergency Department

Project Period: 9/30/2020- 9/29/2021

Summary: The purpose of this research is to address health disparities related to the syndemic involving substance use, mental health disorders, and overdose deaths. Researchers will identify individuals with substance use disorder (SUD) and co-occurring mental disorders, particularly among ethnic minority individuals, and provide intensive and sustained efforts to link these individuals to culturally tailored SUD/COD treatment and other community-based resources including harm reduction, HIV/HCV treatment, and housing.

### **NIH grant gives underrepresented students insight into the neurosciences at UC**

Read about participants in UC's new program, called RISE UP or Research Innovation in NeuroScience Education for Underserved Populations. The program, funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), provides underrepresented undergraduates from across the country the opportunity to come to Cincinnati and be mentored by top researchers in the neurosciences — at either the University of Cincinnati or at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center. **Teresa Reyes (CAR member)** is a Co-Director of the program. "We've been so fortunate to have the enthusiastic participation of the mentors. We couldn't do it without them. It's a community effort," says Reyes. The bulk of the research training falls to the primary lab mentors, who introduce students to lab procedures, research methodology and analysis. **Jayne McReynolds (CAR member)** is also a mentor to program participants, most recently, Gabrielle Allen. McReynolds, who joined the UC faculty in 2019, is a veteran at bringing undergraduates under her wing and into the research lab. She's mentored over 50 undergraduates, "basically since I was a lab technician myself" and considers teaching "one of the most rewarding aspects of my job." Read more about the program in UC News by clicking on the article title above.

### **Ohio set to reach \$808 million opioid settlement after more counties, cities sign on**

The state of Ohio took a major step forward this week in reaching a massive settlement deal with distributors sued over their role in the opioid epidemic. The "OneOhio" opioid settlement now has been agreed to by more than 99% of litigating local governments – 142 of the 143 entities said yes as of Wednesday – above the absolute minimum of 96% for any deal to be considered. "This overwhelming level of support from local leaders is a victory for...

### **Awareness: A Good Step In The Right Direction.**

The [Steubenville \(OH\) Herald Star](#) (8/23, 31K) reports, “Recovery Ohio, the Ohio Department of Health and Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, [have] partnered to bring awareness to Opioid Overdose Awareness Day, Aug. 31 and September’s Recovery Month.” In 2020, “90,000 naloxone kits were distributed, and 15,000 people’s lives were saved by naloxone, Gov. Mike DeWine advises in a public service announcement.” The article mentions NIDA and the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration.

### **National News**

#### **No Change In Adolescent Drug, Alcohol Use During Pandemic.**

[HealthDay](#) (8/24, Murez, 11K) reports that the COVID-19 pandemic “did not appear to drive U.S. preteens and young teens to drugs.” Healthday adds, “Repeated surveys of more than 7,800 10- to 14-year-olds between September 2019 and August 2020 found the overall rate of drug use remained stable, according to the U.S. National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA).” However, while alcohol use fell, “use of prescription drugs and tobacco products rose.” NIDA Director Dr. Nora Volkow said, “Adolescents have experienced a year of turmoil and stress in precarious space between childhood and adulthood. ... Recognizing how the stress of the past year translates into substance use has profound implications into adulthood, because drinking and drug use at these ages are associated with a substantially higher risk of long-term alcohol and drug use disorders and related harms.” According to the article, “The new study piggybacked on an ongoing, long-term of U.S. study of brain development and child health known as the ABCD Study, short for Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development.”

#### **California Governor, HHS Officials Looking Into Question Of Medical Marijuana Access For Terminally Ill Hospital Patients.**

[Filter \(NY\)](#) (8/25, Jaeger) reports that the US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) and the governor of California’s office “are looking into whether hospitals and other health care facilities in legal-marijuana states can allow terminally ill patients to use medical cannabis without jeopardizing federal funding.” The moves “come in response to a request from a state lawmaker who is pursuing legislation on the issue.” California Senator Ben Hueso (D) “is sponsoring a bill meant to codify that California hospitals can permit such treatment.” And after he “sent letters to state and federal officials last month inquiring about cannabis access for patients, he’s received calls from representatives of both HHS Secretary Xavier Becerra and Governor Gavin Newsom (D) saying that their offices were looking into the matter, according to a local media outlet.”

### **FDA Rejects Application Forms From Companies Seeking Approval For Full-Spectrum CBD As Dietary Supplement.**

[Forbes](#) (8/24, Sabaghi, 10.33M) reports that the FDA has “reaffirmed that CBD can’t be marketed as a dietary supplement.” The agency “objected to two application forms from CBD companies Charlotte’s Web and Irwin Naturals in August” after they “filed New Dietary Ingredient (NDI) notifications for full-spectrum CBD extracts to FDA in early 2021.” According to Forbes, the “FDA has rejected the two notifications as CBD is the active ingredient in the approved drug product Epidiolex [cannabidiol], and it can’t be marketed as a dietary supplement.”

### **Nicotine, Prescription Drug Misuse Climbed Among American Youth Amid Pandemic: Study.**

[Fox News](#) (8/25, Rivas, 23.99M) reports new [study](#) published in the Journal of Adolescent Health suggests that “overall rates of drug use among American adolescents held stable six months into COVID-19 pandemic,” but “shifting trends indicated an uptick in nicotine and prescription drug misuse while alcohol use fell.” The research “drew from surveys of over 7,800 kids aged 10-14 enrolled in the Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development study (ABCD), said to be the largest-ever long-term U.S. study of brain development and pediatric health.” According to Fox News, “Results also suggested young teens who experienced severe stress, anxiety or depression, or familial economic hardship were at highest risk of using substances.” National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Nora Volkow said, “The past year has been difficult, and adolescents have experienced a year of turmoil and stress in precarious space between childhood and adulthood. ... Recognizing how the stress of the past year translates into substance use has profound implications into adulthood, because drinking and drug use at these ages are associated with a substantially higher risk of long-term alcohol and drug use disorders and related harms.”

### **Report: Many Hospitals Don’t Take Measures Necessary To Properly Treat Addiction In ERs.**

[Kaiser Health News](#) (8/25, Pattani) reports, “A recent report from the Legal Action Center and the Bloomberg American Health Initiative found that despite widespread consensus on the importance of addiction treatment in the ER and an unprecedented rise in overdose deaths, many hospitals fail to screen for substance use, offer medications to treat opioid use disorder or connect patients to follow-up care.” Many patients “who don’t receive those services die shortly after discharge or within a year of their ER visit, the report said.” But a “growing number of emergency rooms and health professionals are trying to change that by developing new approaches to address the missed treatment opportunity in ERs.”

### **Pandemic Tied To Rising Number Of Fatal Opioid ODs.**

[HealthDay](#) (8/24, Preidt, 11K) reports, “[Opioid overdose deaths rose in several states during the coronavirus pandemic](#), according to” a new [study](#) posted on the preprint server medRxiv. The authors “say their findings may help identify and assist at-risk people.” Harvard Medical School Assistant Professor Mohammad Jalali, the study’s senior author said, “Our work represents the first multi-state report with detailed analyses.” The National Institute on Drug Abuse is mentioned.

### **A Vaccine Against Opioid Addiction? Researchers At Virginia Tech Are Working On It.**

The [Hampton Roads \(VA\) Virginian-Pilot](#) (8/24, Hafner, 227K) reports “[researchers at Virginia Tech are working on](#)” a vaccine to combat opioid addiction, and “[hope that by training the body to form antibodies against opioids, a shot could not only help people already hooked on the drugs but also prevent others from becoming addicted](#),” said Mike Zhang, a professor of biological systems engineering who’s leading the project.” The NIH “awarded the project a \$3 million grant in 2019, which can jump to \$8.7 million if the researchers hit certain milestones in the next year.” The researchers are “currently testing its vaccine, which centers around oxycodone, on mice.”

### **UAMS Researchers Get \$2.5M For Opioid Abuse-Fighting App.**

[Arkansas Business](#) (8/23, 27K) reports that the [National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) has awarded a team of University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences researchers “[a five-year, \\$2.5 million grant to determine if a smartphone app can reduce the relapse rate in people with opioid use disorder.](#)”

*Additional Source.* [KTHV-TV](#) Little Rock, AR (8/23, 125K) reports, “[The app will provide brief interventions, like messages of reinforcement, as well as a GPS in an effort to prevent a relapse.](#)”

### **SC Professor Receives Grant To Study Medicaid Programs For Substance Use Disorders.**

[WIS-TV](#) Columbia, SC (8/21, Neville, 78K) reported that University of South Carolina Department of Health Services Policy and Management Associate Professor Christina Andrews “[said the pandemic played a part in](#)” [South Carolina seeing drug overdose deaths rise 50% in 2020 compared to the previous year](#). Andrews said, “In a way, unfortunately, the coronavirus has really been a perfect storm for worsening of this opioid epidemic that we’ve been dealing with.” [The National Institute on Drug Abuse](#) in July awarded Andrews a \$2.5 million grant “[to study Medicaid-covered treatment of opioid use disorder.](#)” Andrews “[said Medicaid covers about 40 percent of people with an opioid use disorder](#), so they’re ‘an important policy lever’ in helping people get the treatment that they need.”

### **Columnist: California's Orange County Has Not Been Spared From Opioid Addiction.**

[Costa Mesa \(CA\) Daily Pilot](#) (8/18, 50K) columnist Patrice Apodaca said “opioid addiction is a public health crisis that has grown so big and become so widespread that it touches virtually every one of us in some way.” According to Apodaca, Orange County, California “has not been spared.” The death toll “for opioid overdoses in the county rose to nearly 500 last year, a shocking increase from 2019’s count of 272, according to the Orange County Health Care Agency.” She asserted, “A comprehensive, coordinated approach throughout the county – encompassing an all-out campaign by government agencies, the healthcare establishment, educational institutions and others in our community – is the only way we’ll make significant progress toward turning back the scourge of opioid addiction.”

### **Most Overdose Deaths Involve Multiple Substances.**

The [Kendallville \(IN\) News Sun](#) (8/20, Sickafoose, 23K) reports, “More than 93,000 people in the United States died from a drug overdose in 2020, an increase of almost 30% from the previous year, The Washington Post reports.” According to National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow, “70% of cocaine overdose deaths and 50% of methamphetamine overdose deaths also involved fentanyl.”

### **Probing The Sleep-Deprived Brain.**

[Thrive Global](#) (8/19, Crabtree) reports that National Institute on Drug Abuse Director Dr. Nora Volkow “gave a talk at Radcliffe’s Knafel Center Thursday titled ‘The Sleep-Deprived Human Brain.’” Volkow “was a pioneer in positron emission tomography (PET) brain imaging, and helped carry out early studies confirming the toxic effects of cocaine.” During her time at Harvard, Volkow “reported on two sets of brain-imaging studies that shed light on the way sleep deprivation interferes with cognition, as well as its possible links to dementia and Alzheimer’s disease.” According to the article, “Her work in drug research, she said, led to an investigation of sleep patterns. One toxic property of cocaine is that it interferes with sleep.” Volkow said, “If you give cocaine to an animal, it is the only drug that will cause it to forgo sleep, and the animals ultimately died because they did not survive this.”

### **NIDA Chief Says Drug Criminalization Is Bad News.**

[Vaping Post \(CHE\)](#) (8/25, McGrady) reports that the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) “and its leadership [have] officially adopted a position that drug criminalization stigmatizes drug use and users.” In a [commentary](#) for STAT, NIDA Director Dr. “Nora Volkow argues that harsh penalties around use would reduce harm and facilitate access to treatment.” Volkow wrote, “Societal norms surrounding drug use and addiction continue to be informed by myths and misconceptions. ... Among the most harmful of these is the scientifically unfounded

belief that compulsive drug-taking by individuals with addiction reflects deliberate antisocial or deviant choices. This belief contributes to the continued criminalization of drug use and addiction.” The piece “argues that stigma caused by criminalization against drug users could have ‘major negative impacts on health and well-being’ and further explains why ‘only 18 percent of people with drug use disorders receive treatment for their addiction.’”

### **COVID-19 Pandemic Highlights Worsening Suicide Crisis For Communities Of Color.**

[Kaiser Health News](#) (8/23, Pattani) reports during the pandemic last year, “suicides among white residents decreased compared with previous years, while they increased among Black residents.” Conversations “with a dozen suicide researchers, data collected from states across the country and a review of decades of research revealed that suicide is a growing crisis for communities of color – one that plagued them well before the pandemic and has only been exacerbated since.” The latest “decades have been marked by growing economic instability, a widening racial wealth gap and more public attention on police killings of unarmed Black and brown people, said Michael Lindsey, executive director of the New York University McSilver Institute for Poverty Policy and Research.”

### **Ketamine For Depression Could Help Relieve Some Of The Mental Health Burden Caused By Pandemic, Experts Say.**

The [Boston Herald](#) (8/21, Cohan, 327K) reported “ketamine, the medication originally used as an anesthetic and later a party drug, has taken on a new form to provide ‘transformative’ results in certain patients with depression, and it could help relieve some of the mental health burden caused by the coronavirus pandemic.” However, ketamine “only works in certain patients who have not responded well to previous psychiatric treatments, and a lot of unknowns remain about the drug.” The use of ketamine is “attracting funding dollars from the National Institute of Mental Health.” In April, the institute “announced eight new research projects that focus on novel treatments to reduce suicidal thoughts in youth and adults,” and “six of the projects involve ketamine.”

### **Growing Number Of Health Professionals Trying New Approaches To Treating Addiction In ERs.**

[NPR](#) (8/21, Pattani, 3.69M) reported that a recent report from the Legal Action Center and the Bloomberg American Health Initiative “found that despite widespread consensus on the importance of addiction treatment in the ER and an unprecedented rise in overdose deaths, many hospitals fail to screen for substance use, offer medications to treat opioid use disorder or connect patients to follow-up care.” Many patients “who don’t receive those services die shortly after discharge or within a year of their ER visit, the report says.” But a “growing number of emergency

rooms and health professionals are trying to change that by developing new approaches that address the missed treatment opportunity in ERs.”

### **Abuse Subtypes Affect Suicide Risk Among Military Psychiatric Inpatients.**

[Healio](#) (8/19, Gramigna, 40K) reports, “Co-occurrence of multiple abuse subtypes across childhood and adulthood was linked to higher psycho-social risk and suicide attempt history among military service members hospitalized due to suicide risk,” investigators concluded in a “latent class analysis” that sought “to elucidate how these abuse subtypes co-occur during childhood and adulthood among a high-risk sample of 115 military service members and adult beneficiaries who underwent psychiatric hospitalization after a suicide-related crisis.” NIAAA clinical psychologist Jeremy W. Luk, PhD, and colleagues wrote, “In the Army Study to Assess Risk and Resilience in Servicemembers (Army STARRS), childhood maltreatment was found in nearly 1 in 5 new soldiers and was associated with increased odds of lifetime suicidal ideation, plan, attempt and progression from ideation to plan/attempt. To further explore the associations between childhood abuse and suicide attempt in a psychiatric inpatient sample, it would be informative to differentiate between types of attempts.”

### **Covid Sets Stage For Biden To Tackle Addiction Treatment Access.**

[Bloomberg Law](#) (8/23, Subscription Publication, 4K) reports the Biden Administration “is sinking millions of dollars into treatment efforts and has requested over \$10 billion from Congress to continue the fight [against America’s addiction crisis] into the next year, emphasizing its push to meet treatment needs specific to American Indians and other populations.” However, the pandemic complicated Biden’s “health equity efforts” as “overdose deaths jumped about 30% in 2020, marking the highest spike in a single year according to provisional data from the [CDC], increasing the urgency for treatment focused on communities in need.” NIDA Director Nora Volkow said, “We’ve never seen anything like this. ... It’s a moment we have to take advantage of to modify our systems.” The article also mentions the NIH.

### **South Carolina Sees Higher-Than-Average Increase In Overdose Deaths During Pandemic.**

The [Charleston \(SC\) Post and Courier](#) (8/19, Jeffries, 299K) reports, “During the first wave of the pandemic in 2020, the United States saw a 30 percent increase in the number of overdose deaths.” South Carolina “saw an increase of more than 50 percent, nearly 20 percent higher than the national average.” In fact, “the increase in overdose deaths observed in South Carolina last year was the third highest in the country, trailing only Vermont and Kentucky, according to numbers published in July by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.”



### **HHS Awards \$900K Grant To New Jersey Overdose Treatment Program.**

The [Providence \(RI\) Business News](#) (8/22, Graham, 14K) reports the Department of Health and Human Services has awarded a “nearly \$900,000 federal grant” to the Imani Breakthrough Recovery Project in New Jersey. The program “aims to equip community organizations and houses of worship with resources on how to engage with and offer help to people who are at risk of overdosing.” The article adds that “overdose deaths are continuing to increase in the state, health officials say, with accidental deaths involving the synthetic opioid fentanyl more than tripling since 2014.”

### **Introverts And Substance Abuse: What Makes Introverts Prone To Addiction?**

Contributor Hannah Bennett writes in [Thrive Global](#) (8/25) that introverts appear “more likely to develop an addiction versus their extroverted peers.” Bennett explores the reasons that this is the case. She explains that Dr. Sergi Ferré, a senior scientist and section chief at the National Institute on Drug Abuse, “noted that 7.7 million adults have co-occurring mental and substance use disorders (that’s about 38% of people with an addiction).”

### **Protecting Youth From The Dangers Of Abusing Over-The-Counter Medicine.**

[WSET-TV](#) Lynchburg, VA (8/23, Evans, 117K) reports that “according to the National Institute on Drug Abuse, one in 10 teens admitted to abusing cough or cold medicine to get high.” Teenagers “may abuse over-the-counter drugs like those to experiment and get high, according to Jan Davis with Horizon Behavioral Health.” According to WSET-TV, “parents should monitor the medications in their homes,” and “know what medicines and how much of them are in your home.”

### **Thailand Legalizes Kratom, A Plant With US Following For Its Pain-Relieving Qualities.**

The [AP](#) (8/24, Ekvitthayavechnukul) reports, “Thailand on Tuesday decriminalized the possession and sale of kratom, a plant...which has a following in the United States for its pain-relieving qualities.” According to the AP, “Justice Minister Somsak Thepsuthin said thousands of legal cases for the possession or sale of kratom were being dropped, and 121 inmates convicted in such cases would be released immediately.” This is Thailand’s “latest move to liberalize its drug laws.”

### **Opinion: FDA’s Position On Kratom Could Erode Agency’s Credibility.**

In an opinion piece for [STAT](#) (8/23, 262K), Mason Marks, a professor of law at the University of New Hampshire Franklin Pierce School of Law, says the FDA “is forging ahead with actions that may further erode its credibility.” One “example is its position on *Mitragyna speciosa*, commonly called kratom, a tree related to coffee plants.” A “year after the DEA announced its intention to prohibit kratom, the federal Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) responded with a letter

supporting the proposed ban.” Although “HHS rescinded its scheduling recommendation,” the FDA “doubled down” on kratom policy. Marks asserts that “if the FDA secures a global kratom ban, countless people could die by suicide and unintentional overdose.”

## Funding Opportunities



[RFA-AA-21-016](#)

[HIV Prevention and Alcohol \(R01 Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

[RFA-AA-21-017](#)

[HIV Prevention and Alcohol \(R34 Clinical Trials Optional\)](#)

[PAR-21-282](#)

[Blueprint Medtech: Small Business Translator \(U44 - Clinical Trial Optional\)](#)

[NOT-MH-21-330](#)

[Notice of Special Interest \(NOSI\): Social, Behavioral, and Economic Impact of COVID-19 in Underserved and Vulnerable Populations](#)

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