

CONSORTIUM CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER



WEBINAR

Identifying Vulnerable Populations: The Intersection of Human Trafficking, Substance Use Disorder, and Emerging Drug Trends

Join the WellLink Health Alliance and the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium for our January Education Series. This session, supported by the Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) grant, tackles the critical and complex challenges at the intersection of human trafficking (HT) and substance use disorder (SUD).

We will explore how to identify human trafficking within harm reduction settings, featuring a new training video from the Ohio Attorney General's Office. Our guest expert will also discuss emerging drug trends, including the increasing prevalence of cocaine with opioids, and analyze the impact these shifts are having on our community's most vulnerable populations.

Join us

Jan 22

12:00PM - 1:30PM

This event provides vital insights for professionals working to build a more cohesive system of care, and is designed for those in behavioral health, criminal justice, public safety, and harm reduction.

Featured Speakers:



Kristin J. Hess,
RN, BSN, CARN, CCHP, EMT-P
Clinical Education
Specialist, Office of Opioid
Safety, MetroHealth



Anna Becks,
BSN, RN, SANE-A
Forensic Unit Manager,
The MetroHealth System



FOR QUESTIONS
Contact Jodi Mitchell, Sr. Director,
Government Relations & Policy
| Jodi.Mitchell@MyWellLink.com



REGISTRATION
Please scan the QR code or click
the button below to register.

SIGN UP NOW



This panel is supported by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) LOCAL grant, which aims to build strong partnerships across public health, health systems, and community organizations. By bringing together leading experts from emergency medicine, public health, and community-based recovery services, this session will address the crisis head-on, exploring innovative, evidence-based solutions.

Upcoming Webinar: January 22, 2026 | See info above and [register here](#).

Igniting Compassion Screening at Ohio Deflection Association Conference

On January 22, the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium and WellLink will be facilitating a screening of *Igniting Compassion* at the Ohio Deflection Association annual conference in Cincinnati. Joining WellLink will be Project White Butterfly and Thrive for Change, both featured in the award-winning documentary.

WellLink Launches SPEAK Bureau

Substance Use Prevention, Education, Advocacy & Knowledge (SPEAK) Bureau is a collaborative training and technical assistance network facilitated by Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium. Our mission is to connect organizations across Northeast Ohio with leading local experts to expand knowledge, enhance skills, and improve service delivery on complex and emerging issues in polysubstance use and substance use disorder treatment and recovery. We serve as a centralized resource for organizations seeking customized, expert-led education to better address the challenges of substance use in our community. The types of groups and organizations we hope to connect to this form of education include hospitals, clinics, social service agencies, nonprofits and more. Access SPEAK [here](#).

State / Local Updates

[Cuyahoga County's leading overdose killer is now cocaine. How do we treat it?](#)

The county's Medical Examiner is calling to pivot addiction prevention and treatment efforts to address rising cocaine overdose deaths, but experts say it could be tricky, because they don't have the same kind of tools for stimulants as they do opioids. Click [HERE](#) for the Cleveland.com article.

Provider Training Offered for Response, Care for Patients Using Psychedelics

The Ohio Department of Behavioral Health and Ohio State University are collaborating on a training session for licensed behavioral health providers focusing on the response and care management procedures for patients who have or currently are using psychedelic substances. This no-cost event will be held from 5:30-9 p.m. Jan. 12, 2026 on the Ohio State campus. Learn more [here](#).

Ohio task forces seize \$75M in drugs, 440 firearms, \$4M+ in cash in 2025

Ohio task forces seized more than \$75 million in illegal drugs, 440 firearms and \$4.1 million in cash this year. The seizures came from task forces run through the Ohio Organized Crime Investigations Commission, a statewide program created in 1986 to help law enforcement go after criminal networks that cross city and county lines. The commission, chaired by the attorney general, forms temporary task forces from local, state and federal agencies. Those teams investigate crimes like drug trafficking, human trafficking, illegal gambling, organized retail theft and bulk cash smuggling.

OneOhio Releases RFP

The OneOhio Recovery Foundation announced a new statewide grant opportunity making up to \$45.7 million available to support prevention, treatment and recovery. Organizations working to address substance use disorder are invited to prepare for the upcoming Funding Inquiry window, which opens on Wednesday, January 14. The full Regional Grant Cycle 2 Request for Proposals is available on the grant headquarters webpage at OneOhioFoundation.com/Grants.

Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace

Supporting employees in their recovery journey by becoming a recovery-friendly workplace benefits everyone. It not only aids your team but also improves your bottom line, boosts productivity and reduces turnover. To explore becoming an Ohio Recovery Friendly Workplace, review the benefits to your organization, discover practical steps to foster a supportive environment and get a designation through the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health. Click [HERE](#) for more information.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

FREE COMMUNITY DINNER at | The Recovery Collective

Made possible with help from



Neighborhood Leadership Development Program
A Connection for Community Change

- **Where:** 6400 Memphis Ave, Cleveland 44144
- **When:** EVERY SATURDAY AT 6:00pm
- **What:** Join us for a free meal and socializing
- **Who:** Open to everyone - people in recovery, recovery allies, community members, and children welcome!

Policy & News Updates

Fourth Extension of Telehealth Flexibilities for Controlled Substances

On December 30, The Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) extended the Pandemic-era rules that enable telemedicine prescribing of controlled substances that was set to expire on Dec. 31. These flexibilities allow healthcare practitioners to prescribe controlled substances via telemedicine without an initial in-person visit. An extension is crucial for patients and providers who have come to rely on this access, providing much-needed certainty in an otherwise highly uncertain regulatory environment. An extension of current policies would allow additional time for stakeholders to engage with policymakers on the future of telemedicine prescribing. Click [HERE](https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2025/12/31/dea-extends-telemedicine-flexibilities-ensure-continued-access-care) for more information. (<https://www.dea.gov/press-releases/2025/12/31/dea-extends-telemedicine-flexibilities-ensure-continued-access-care>)

Carter Confirmed as Drug Czar

The Senate confirmed journalist Sara Carter to oversee federal drug policy by a 52-48 vote on January 6. A former Fox News contributor who has reported on drug trafficking, Carter will lead the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy as President Donald Trump's top drug policy adviser. As head of ONDCP, Carter will play a crucial role in overseeing federal policy and funding related to drug trafficking, substance use prevention, treatment and recovery.

New Resources Available to Support Implementation of the NOPAIN Act

The NOPAIN Law mandates that Medicare provide additional reimbursement for qualifying non-opioid options across hospital outpatient departments and ambulatory surgical centers. The NOPAIN Act increases patient and provider access to non-opioid pain management options to manage postsurgical pain by removing barriers associated with reimbursement. Providers can now provide certain qualifying non-opioids to your Medicare patients to help manage their pain without relying solely on prescription opioids. The product must be FDA-approved to reduce postoperative pain or produce postsurgical or regional analgesia and not act on the body's opioid receptors.

The NOPAIN law should result in increased accessibility and adoption of qualifying non-opioid products to help tailor pain management, reduce opioid exposure, and support safe recovery. Reimbursement is now clear and consistent. Fact sheets for clinicians, patient/families, individuals in recovery, etc are available [HERE](#).



[Treatment Works - Find Your Path to Treatment](#)

In recognition of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Month, SAMHSA is emphasizing the multiple pathways to treatment and recovery for SUD. Different people may find success through different types of treatment. Some people may find recovery with medication, and others might overcome an SUD with the assistance of counseling or self-help meetings; the understanding and encouragement of a peer worker; or through the substance-free environment of recovery housing. Other people will find their resilience by tapping into the strength of religious faith and practices.

You can find more information about SUD prevention, treatment, and recovery support and at SAMHSA's free [library](#) (type a search term and click appropriate boxes, such as "General Public, specific to your needs). Visit findtreatment.gov for more information on treatment providers near you, and share resources from

the Treatment Month Toolkit to help others find the path that works for them. Access the Treatment Month Toolkit [HERE](#).

Preventing Substance Use and Exploitation in Adolescence

Futures Without Violence and the School-Based Health Alliance hosted a webinar in December on Preventing Substance Use and Exploitation in Adolescence. The recording and slides can be found [here](#) (English and Spanish versions).

- To access resources related to intimate partner violence and human trafficking, see <https://healthpartnersipve.org/general-resources/> and <https://healthpartnersipve.org/adolescent-health/>.
- If you are interested in learning more about partnering with youth, [youth development resources](#) from the School-Based Health Alliance might be helpful.
- For those who would like to learn more about how school-based health centers can prevent and respond to adolescent substance use, please consider exploring the School-Based Health Alliance's toolkit on [Adolescent Substance Use Prevention in School-Based Health Centers](#).

Productivity Losses From Substance Use Disorder in the US in 2023

American Journal of Preventive Medicine

Information on morbidity-related productivity losses attributable to substance use disorder (SUD) is limited. This study estimates such losses among US adults in 2023. Researchers found that total morbidity-related productivity losses attributable to SUD in the US are substantial, amounting to \$92.65 billion in 2023. Inability to work cost accounted for \$45.25 billion, followed by absenteeism cost of \$25.65 billion, presenteeism cost of \$12.06 billion, and cost of household productivity loss of \$9.68 billion. Given that these estimates depend on the prevalence of SUD and the amount of lost productive time, evidence-based prevention efforts and policies addressing them can help reduce these losses.

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988 Fact Sheet

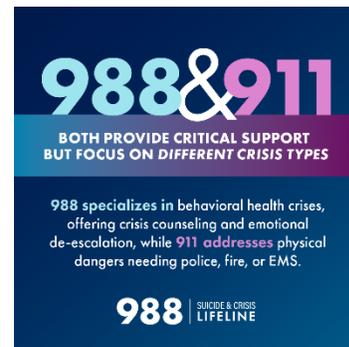
The refreshed [988 Fact Sheet](#) is now available in the SAMHSA 988 Partner Toolkit.

This updated version offers an easy-to-share overview of what 988 is and what people can expect when contacting 988. It also features testimonials from people who have used 988, along with answers to frequently asked questions.

988 & 911 Fact Sheet and Social Media

Many people have questions about the difference between 988 and 911. We now have dedicated resources to help address them. The new [988 & 911 Key Difference Fact Sheet](#) provides a high-level overview to support clear communication about when each service is the right fit.

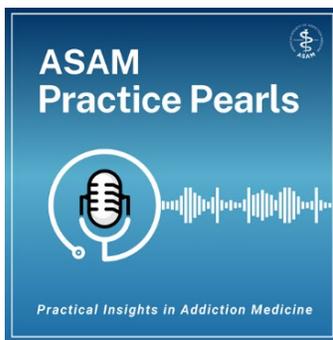
Complementary social media assets are also available in the [988 Partner Toolkit](#), making it easy to share accurate information across your channels.



Guidance for Investing the Opioid Settlement Funds

Communities across the country are deciding how to use opioid settlement funds and have an opportunity to invest in prevention today to protect future generations. Partnership to End Addiction is pleased to share a new resource, [Guidance for Investing the Opioid Settlement Funds in Primary Prevention](#), to help communities and leaders make informed, evidence-based decisions that strengthen prevention efforts. The guide summarizes the research on effective prevention strategies, highlights approved uses in the Settlement Agreement aligned with primary prevention and showcases real-world examples from states and communities already investing the funds in primary prevention-aligned strategies.

Training Opportunities



ASAM Practice Pearls features in-depth discussions on addiction prevention, treatment, and recovery. This series explores the latest evidence-based approaches to addiction medicine. Listen to interviews with leading experts as they delve into critical topics and share practical tools you can use to improve patient care and promote public health.

Recent Episodes:

- [Overdose Awareness: Preventing, Responding, and Intervening](#)
- [Perinatal Substance Use Care: Listening, Trust, and Treatment](#)
- [Listening First: The Future of Women's Addiction Treatment](#)

Listen Here - [ASAM Practice Pearls | ASAM Education](#)

The [Ohio Substance Use Disorders Center of Excellence](#) (SUD COE) at Case Western Reserve University's Jack, Joseph, and Morton Mandel School of Applied Social Sciences invites practitioners to deepen their understanding of substance use disorder (SUD) treatment. We are pleased to offer a series of training programs designed to equip professionals with the latest and most effective strategies in SUD treatment. Also, check out the SUD COE website for [free trainings](#) (with CEUs!), as well as a wealth of [other resources](#)"

[Clinical QuickNotes on Substance Use Disorders](#)

The Ohio Substance Use Disorders Center of Excellence (SUD COE) has developed "Clinical QuickNotes on Substance Use Disorders" as a tool to provide busy treatment providers with quick overviews of clinically relevant topics. These QuickNotes are designed to be easily digestible, offering essential information that can be reviewed in just a few minutes. Check out each topic below!

- [Cannabis and Mental Health: Navigating Clinical Realities in Ohio](#)
- [Treating Opioid Use Disorder During Pregnancy and the Postpartum Period](#)
- [Medications for Opioid Use Disorder \(MOUD\) in Adolescents and Young Adults](#)
- [What's Happened with Alcohol Use Disorder?](#)
- [Ohio Medical Board Amends Rules for Medication Treatment of Opioid Use Disorders](#)

- [Responding to Provider Trauma, Grief, and Loss Following Unintentional Lethal Overdose](#)
- [Family Grief and Loss Experiences Following Unintentional Lethal Overdose](#)

The **Opioid Response Network's (ORN)** mission is to reduce overdoses and address opioid and stimulant use disorders, and play a key role in tackling the current epidemic. For more information, go to www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org and learn how you and your organization can make a request for free training and education.

- [Hot Topics - On-Demand - AOAAM Learning Portal](#)

Other Resources

Educational Resources Available from WellLink

- [Igniting Compassion Documentary](#)
- [Igniting Compassion Shorts](#)
- [Opioid Consortium Education](#)
- [Naloxone Toolkit](#)
- [A Clinician's Guide: Dental Consequences of MOUD + Solutions](#)
- [Clinicians Guide: on Xylazine Wound Management](#)
- [A Clinician's Guide: The Intersection of Human Trafficking and Substance Use Disorders](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium - Beyond Narcan: Treating Opioid Use Disorder in the Field](#)
- [Opioid Roundtable: Using Collaboration to Address the Opioid Crisis in Northeast Ohio](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series: Effective Communication with Individuals with SUD](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series: Appreciative Approach: From Medical Dominancy to Relational Recovery](#)
- [NEO Opioid Education Series: Demystifying Buprenorphine Treatment in the Outpatient Clinic Setting](#)
- [NEO Opioid Education Series: Harnessing Health IT to Strengthen Opioid Stewardship](#)

- [Previous Issues of The Consortium Chronicle Newsletter](#)
- [NEO Opioid Education Series: The Future of Pain Management: Cutting-Edge, Non-Opioid Solutions](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series - Chronic Pain: Bridging Clinical Insight & Lived Experience](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series: SUD Understanding Addiction, Treatment & Recovery](#)



This newsletter is supported by the CDC OD2A LOCAL Grant to the Cuyahoga County Board of Health.



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