

CONSORTIUM CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER

REGISTER TODAY! Our next Opioid Consortium Education Series will be an in-person roundtable event on **July 17** from 8:30-11:00.



Join us **July 17**
9:00AM - 11:00AM

WellLink Headquarters
1226 Huron Road East,
Cleveland, OH 44115

This event is geared toward physicians and other healthcare professionals, community leaders, and individuals who are dealing with chronic pain and want to learn more.

The Future of Pain Management: Perspectives, Progress, and Possibilities

Join us for an engaging forum dedicated to pain management, where innovation meets lived experience. This dynamic event brings together leading clinicians and individuals with personal journeys through pain to share cutting-edge treatments, including a strong focus on non-opioid approaches. Explore practical strategies, emerging therapies, and multidisciplinary perspectives that prioritize effective, sustainable, and person-centered care. Whether you're a healthcare professional or someone navigating life with pain, this forum offers a unique opportunity to connect, learn, and amplify the voices of those most affected.

SESSION 1

The Future of Pain Management: Cutting-Edge, Non-Opioid Solutions

- **Speaker:** Dawn Harris, Senior Medical Science Liaison, Vertex

SESSION 2

Chronic Pain: Bridging Clinical Insight and Lived Experience with Panel Conversation

- **Moderator:** Rachael Sommer, Consultant, NE Ohio Opioid Consortium
- **Speakers:** Jeff Janata, MD, Sihler Family Professor of Psychiatry and Director, Division of Psychology, University Hospitals
Kevin J. Smith, Ph.D., Director, Veterans Addiction Recovery Center (VARC), VA Northeast Ohio Healthcare System
David Streem, MD, Medical Director, Alcohol and Drug Recovery Center at the Cleveland Clinic
Individuals with Lived Experience



We hope to see you there! Space is limited and tickets are required, register today!

For questions contact Jodi Mitchell, Sr. Director, Government Relations & Policy at Jodi.Mitchell@MyWellLink.com

REGISTER NOW

Ohio to Receive Up to \$198M in Purdue Opioid Settlement

The state of Ohio is expected to receive up to \$198 million as part of a \$7.4 billion opioid settlement with Purdue Pharma and its owners, the Sackler family, Attorney General Dave Yost announced Monday. Forty-nine states, the District of Columbia and five U.S. territories signed on to the settlement, which will result in communities' receiving funding for 15 years to support addiction treatment, prevention and recovery services. Click [here](#) to view the Ohio Attorney General's press release

Opioid Reversal Legislation Considered by Senate Health Committee

S.B. 137 received its third hearing in June. The legislation requires hospitals to provide overdose reversal drugs, including naloxone or any other drug designated by the State Board of Pharmacy as being approved by the federal Food and Drug Administration for the reversal of opioid-related overdoses, to certain patients at the time of discharge from the hospital's emergency department. Generally, the patients to whom overdose reversal drugs must be provided include patients who presented to the emergency department with symptoms of an opioid overdose, opioid use disorder, or other adverse events related to opioid use. On June 4, [testimony in support of the legislation](#) was provided by American College of Emergency Physicians, Ohio Chapter, Ohio Naloxone Project, Ohio State Medical Association and The MetroHealth System. Sen Johnson's Sponsor Testimony is available [here](#).



The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities Foundation, in partnership with the Ohio Department of Mental Health and Addiction Services, hosted over 1,000 attendees at **Ohio's 2025 Mental Health and Addiction Conference: Advancing Care in Communities** on June 9-10, 2025 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Columbus, OH. This 15th annual, two-day conference focused on efforts that related to mental health and addiction prevention, education, intervention, treatment, recovery, family supports, community engagement, and more.

All conference materials, including breakout session presentations are available on OACBHA's website and can be accessed [here](#). WellLink's documentary, *Igniting Compassion*, was screened and discussed with by our panelists, Dr. Parran, Sara Szelagowski, and Ashley Rosser with over 105 attendees.

2025 Peer Recovery Summit *The Power of Hope: Transforming Lives & Communities*

Ohio Peer Recovery Organizations (OhioPRO), in partnership with OhioMHAS, will host the [2025 Peer Recovery Summit *The Power of Hope: Transforming Lives & Communities*](#) on July 21-22 at the Hilton Columbus - Polaris. With nearly 600 attendees, the Summit provides a dedicated space for connection, growth, and learning – all centered around recovery and the advancement of peer recovery support in Ohio. Register [here](#) to attend the Summit!

We've made inroads with opioid epidemic. Proposed Medicaid cuts threaten that *Opinion by John Bartlett (reprint)*

Should Medicaid be cut, nearly half [of people receiving treatment for OUD](#) nationally will not receive it. Cuts to Medicaid could potentially lead to fewer people receiving medications like methadone and buprenorphine that help them stay sober and regaining function as contributing members of society. Losing access to their medications and other sources of treatment will place this population at increased risk of relapse and overdose.

Medicaid cuts would also leave health care systems with a greater burden of uncompensated care because Medicaid is no longer paying for the care of these patients. To offset the increased burden of uncompensated care, health care systems will charge patients with commercial health insurance more, thereby increasing health care costs and decreasing health care access for everyone.

Medicaid has enabled millions of people addicted to drugs or alcohol to get care for their addiction. Politicians need to carefully consider the consequences of cutting the health care coverage of this vulnerable patient population, many of whom are now functioning and contributing members of society. Nurses and other health care professionals need to educate the political decision makers on the science of addiction, and how addiction treatment, even if it is paid for by the taxpayers, is well worth the investment.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT: DATA TO INFORM COMMUNITY STRATEGIES

Overdose Surveillance Quarterly Bulletin
2025 Q1

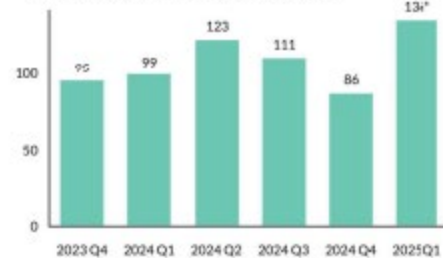
Overdose Data to Action Cuyahoga County, Ohio



Overdose data surveillance is intended to generate insight to drive more effective prevention and response activities by providing timely dissemination of drug overdose related trends.

Overdose Deaths Total Drug Related OD Deaths Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office Records

↑ 58.1%



*These data are preliminary and subject to change.

Emergency Room Visits Suspected Drug ODs in ERs

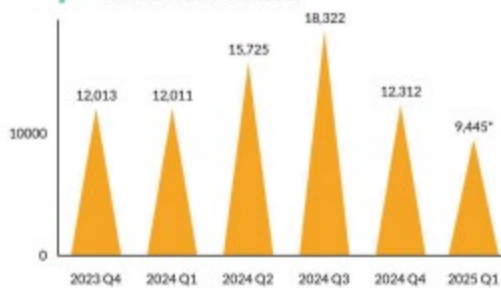
↑ 15.3%



Underreporting may exist due to facilities temporarily out of surveillance.

Project DAWN Naloxone Kits Distributed

↓ 23.2%



These data represent state registered Project DAWN programs distributing naloxone in Cuyahoga County. It is not required to register as a Project DAWN program to distribute naloxone in Ohio. Data is preliminary and subject to change.

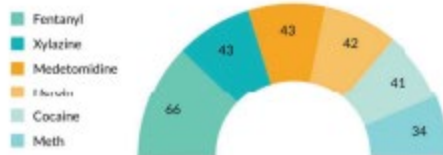
EMS Naloxone Number of Naloxone Doses Administered

↓ 11.3%



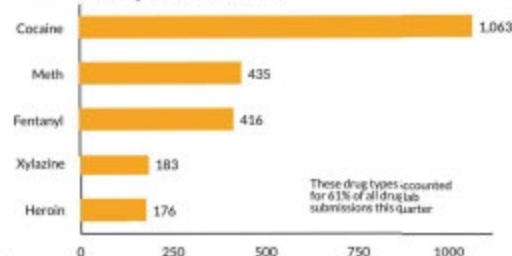
EMS Naloxone administrations are provided by agencies reporting to Ohio EMS

Syringe Testing Number of Major Drugs found upon testing (N= 114) from January 2025-March 2025



Results from pilot drug checking program. Syringes are collected from The Centers and The MetroHealth System's Syringe Service Programs (SSP). A sample may test positive for one or more substances. Figure shows top 5 drug types present in collected syringes.

Drug Seizure & Lab Testing Number of Lab Submissions by Drug Types from January 2025-March 2025



These drug types accounted for 61% of all drug lab submissions this quarter

Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office Reporting. Figures show top 5 drug types present in drug seizures and lab testing.

Overdose Data to Action, Cuyahoga County - Overdose Deaths, Emergency Room Visits, Project DAWN, EMS Naloxone, Syringe Testing, Drug Seizure/Lab Testing 2025Q1 Bulletin: <https://ccbh.net/wp-content/uploads/2025/06/OD2A-2025-Q1-OD-Surveillance-Bulletin.pdf>

Dashboard: <https://ccbh.net/overdose-data-dashboard/>

Overdose Data Dashboard | CCBH

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Policy & News Updates

What the One Big Beautiful Bill Means for Medicaid and Addiction Medicine

The US House passed its budget reconciliation bill last month, which includes sweeping reforms to Medicaid that will reduce federal spending on the program and decrease its rolls by the millions. Under the House passed bill, people with SUD are exempt from proposed work and cost-sharing requirements. Advocates are concerned that new bureaucratic systems could cause people with addiction to experience a lapse in coverage or fall off Medicaid altogether.

What's next: The Senate is hashing out its version. Some Senators are calling for steeper Medicaid cuts while others are digging in to protect the program.

[Read ASAM's blog post recapping key health provisions in the House bill.](#)

SUPPORT Act Passes in the House

The U.S. House voted 366-57 on June 4 to reauthorize the SUPPORT Act to prevent and treat illicit opioid use through FY2026 and modifies various programs and activities to address the opioid use disorder. The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) must award grants to states, Indian tribes, and localities to support prevention, treatment, and recovery efforts. SAMHSA must also establish a grant program to support the development and implementation of a first responder training program for first responders to respond to an opioid-related trauma. The legislation now heads to the Senate, where the HELP Committee in 2023 advanced a version of the bill in a 19-1 vote.

HALT Fentanyl Act Moves to the President's Desk

On Thursday June 12, the House passed the HALT Fentanyl Act sending the bill to the President's desk. This legislation would permanently place fentanyl-related substances (FRS) into Schedule 1 of the Controlled Substances Act, giving law enforcement a critical tool to help stop the flow of these dangerous drugs into our

country. To watch Rep. Joyce (R-OH), Co-Chair of the Addiction, Treatment, and Recovery Caucus, speech on the House floor in support of this bill, click [here](#).

Pain in the Nation 2025 Released

On May 28, 2025, [*Trust for America's Health released Pain in the Nation 2025: The Epidemics of Alcohol, Drug, and Suicide Deaths*](#), which highlights the value of investment in mental health and substance use prevention programs – such as ensuring adequate mental health, substance use, and crisis intervention services, access to overdose reversal drugs, and investing in data systems that allow for real time drug trends tracking and tailored interventions – but also show that much more needs to be done.

New SAMHSA Resources

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) has announced the release of four new publications (listed below).

- **Advisory: Expanding Access to Methadone Treatment in Hospital Settings.** This Advisory provides comprehensive information for hospitals and associated healthcare facilities about best practices and recommendations for implementing and expanding treatment of opioid use disorder with methadone in these settings. [Expanding Access to Methadone Treatment in Hospital Settings](#)
- **Naloxone Saturation Policy Academy Retrospective Report:** This Report summarizes the materials from the Naloxone Saturation Policy Academy's (NSPA) three cohorts of 26 states, DC, and Puerto Rico into a single summary report that can be shared with state and other leaders. It includes six state spotlights highlighting work done since the policy academy. [Naloxone Saturation Policy Academy Retrospective Report](#)
- **Advisory: Clinical Considerations for Methadone Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder in Correctional Facilities.** This Advisory highlights the importance of methadone as a tool for treating incarcerated people with opioid use disorder (OUD). The Advisory describes different institutional arrangements for providing methadone in correctional settings. [Clinical Considerations for Methadone Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder in Correctional Facilities](#)
- The SAMHSA has released a Dear Colleague Letter offering guidance on benzodiazepine (BZD) use in older adults. Benzodiazepines are commonly prescribed for anxiety and insomnia, but older adults face higher risks of adverse events from long-term use, including falls, cognitive decline, and

drug interactions. The letter highlights the public health importance of reducing long-term benzodiazepine use among older adults and promotes patient-centered, evidence-informed strategies for evaluating ongoing BZD use. Click [here](#) to view the publication

GAO Recommends CMS Target Behavioral Health Services in Prior Auth Audits

A new Government Accountability Office (GAO) report on the use of prior authorization (PA) for behavioral health services in Medicare Advantage (MA) found that of the 9 MA organizations reviewed, most required PA for inpatient and partial hospitalization care. Nearly all MA plans under review used internal coverage criteria for PA decisions, especially for inpatient care. GAO recommends that CMS target behavioral health services in its program audit reviews of PA denials and planned reviews of internal coverage criteria, scheduled to begin in 2026. [Read the report.](#)

Apply Now: Substance Use Disorder Treatment and Recovery Loan Repayment Program (STAR-LRP)

HRSA has opened applications for STAR-LRP, which offers up to \$250,000 in student loan repayment for behavioral health clinicians, clinical support staff, or other providers trained in SUD treatment. Recipients must commit to six years of full-time service in a high-need area. **Deadline for applications:** July 10, 2025 | Apply [here](#)

Training Opportunities

ASAM Practice Pearls: Sickle Cell Disease: Intersection of Pain and Addiction

In recognition of Sickle Cell Awareness Day, this episode of ASAM Practice Pearls features host Dr. Peter Selby and expert Dr. Andrew Smith as they explore the complex intersection of sickle cell disease (SCD), pain, and addiction.

This episode highlights the challenges individuals with SCD face in accessing effective pain management, often compounded by stigma and opioid-related concerns. The episode provides insights into evidence-based treatments, the balance between pain relief and opioid dependence risks, and strategies for compassionate, patient-centered care.

Check out the show notes for more information and additional resources! [Sickle Cell Disease: Intersection of Pain and Addiction | ASAM Practice Pearls](#)

Addiction Medicine Advocacy Conference (AMAC)

Join ASAM on Capitol Hill to advocate for policies that will advance the field of addiction medicine. Register today! Sept. 15-16 | Washington, DC | Register [here](#)

Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder for Pregnant Patients (8 Credits)

The ASAM Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder for Pregnant Patients Course provides the education essential for providers to identify, assess, diagnose, and manage pregnant and postpartum patients with opioid use disorder (OUD).

As an accredited organization named in Section 1263 of the Consolidated Appropriations Act of 2023, ASAM certifies that completion of this course meets the DEA requirement for 8 hours of education on substance use disorder(s).

See [ASAM eLearning: Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder for Pregnant Patients](#) for registration information.

Benzodiazepine Tapering Webinar Series

Registration is now open for ASAM's Benzodiazepine Tapering Webinar Series, which was designed to support implementation of the [Joint Clinical Practice Guideline on Benzodiazepine Tapering: Considerations When Risks Outweigh Benefits](#).

Buprenorphine Implementation: Addressing Common Challenges in Hospital and Clinic Settings

This 1-hour advanced-level course is designed for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants, nurses, pharmacists, and other clinicians working in primary care, emergency/urgent care, psychiatry, or addiction treatment settings. Using engaging, case-based scenarios, you'll explore real-world challenges in buprenorphine prescribing—from clinical and patient-related issues to legal, regulatory, cost, and organizational barriers. You'll learn practical, evidence-based strategies to address these obstacles and improve outcomes across a range of healthcare environments.

Register HERE: [ASAM eLearning: Buprenorphine Implementation: Addressing Common Challenges in Hospital and Clinic Settings](#)

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 has added the [May calendar](#) with new trainings available.

CWRU Opioid Response Network (ORN) Trainings

[Opioid Response Network \(ORN\) Trainings | Center for Evidence-Based Practices | Case Western Reserve University](#)

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.



California Bridge has an online academy with many valuable resources. Their Navigator Training resources are foundational and provide entry level education to explain many different topics.

[Learn more here.](#)

Other Resources



Educational Resources Available 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](#)

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



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