

CONSORTIUM CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER



On February 19, WellLink Health Alliance and Thrive for Change hosted community members, families, and healthcare partners to a vital conversation addressing the rising impact of stimulants on our community's health featuring Manreet Bhullar from the Medical Examiners Office and Dr. Robert Bales, Cleveland Clinic South Pointe Hospital. According to the Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner, cocaine is now the leading cause of drug overdose deaths, after almost a 40% decrease in fentanyl-related overdose deaths in the past two years. While much attention is placed on opioids, the intersection of stimulant use (such as cocaine and methamphetamine) and cardiovascular disease pose a significant, often overlooked risk. This session combined medical data and community action, providing attendees with life-saving knowledge and harm-reduction strategies.





[Register Here](#)

Hybrid Event - Rooted in Wellness: Community Voices on Substance Use and Well-Being

April 11, 2026 | 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m. Cleveland Public Library - South Branch or online option.

We are gathering to look at local data from the 44109 and 44102 zip codes to understand how recent changes in drug use and overdose trends are affecting the health of our neighbors and families.

[Learn More](#) | [View Flyer](#)



[Register Here](#)

The Primary Practice Physician Program for Chronic Pain (4PCP): A Biobehavioral Revolution in Care

April 16, 2026 12 p.m. - 1:30 p.m.

Join us for the next education series webinar, focusing on The Primary Practice Physician Program for Chronic Pain (4PCP.) Featuring Dr. Jeffrey Janata from University Hospitals, this free webinar will provide an overview of the 4PCP framework, giving your team the tools to implement it.

[Learn More](#) | [View Flyer](#)

PUBLIC HEALTH ADVISORY - Increase in Emergency Department Visits for Suspected Drug Overdose in Cuyahoga County

March 14, 2026

The Cuyahoga County Board of Health issued an alert on March 14, 2026 to notify partners, providers, and the public of an increase in emergency department visits for suspected drug overdose. Based on EpiCenter data, 21 patients presented to EDs for unintentional drug-related injuries from March 12 at 1:00 p.m. through March 13 at 8:00pm, compared to an average of approximately 8 daily. Data analyses showed cases included both males and females of various age groups and races. Drug type information was limited. The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office has not seen an increase in overdose deaths during this period but saw an increase over last weekend. For community resource information visit <https://thrive4change.org/odalertresources/>.

Roads to Recovery 2026 Call for Proposals Now Open

The ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County is accepting proposals for presentations, workshops and panel discussions for Roads to Recovery 2026. All proposals must be submitted by the close of business on April 3. Click [here](#) to access the submission form or visit adamhsc.org/rtr.

Governor Signs Naloxone Bill

On March 10, Governor Mike DeWine signed into law [Senate Bill 137](#), sponsored by State Senator Terry Johnson (R-McDermott), to require hospitals to provide overdose reversal drugs under certain circumstances. SB 137 will expand access to overdose reversal medication by requiring hospitals to provide naloxone upon discharge of a patient with one or more symptoms of an opioid overdose or opioid use disorder (OUD). The initiative was championed by the Naloxone Project and supported by Ohio ACEP.

ROUNDTABLE

ORN Community Discussion: Diversion and Deflection

March 19, 12:00-1:00 pm ET

Register



Opioid
Response
Network



Join the ORN Diversion and Deflection Community Roundtable!

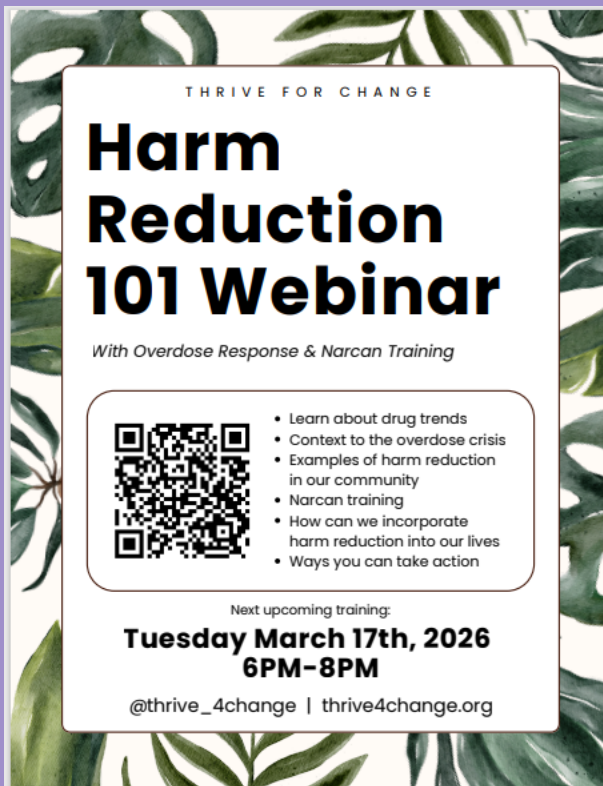
Meet up with ORN's Justice and Public Safety Interest Group for a roundtable discussion focused on diversion and deflection. It will be an opportunity to learn about innovative approaches to diversion and deflection programs across the country, current problems encountered and how they are being solved. Free educational resources will be introduced that are available to support community-led efforts.

Presenters: Vicky Butler, Executive Director of Plymouth County Outreach; Michael Reid Davenport, Commander of the Hamilton County, Ohio Heroin Task Force and Quick Response Team; and Meagan Guthrie, Director of Addiction Response for Hamilton County, Ohio.

Thursday, March 19, 12:00-1:00 PM ET - Register: <https://bit.ly/4b8vNJV>

This ORN Justice and Public Safety Interest Group Roundtable Discussion is the first in a new monthly series. This effort brings together partner organizations to share expertise, resources and best practices that strengthen justice and public safety responses to the opioid and stimulant crisis. Questions? Email orn@aaap.org.

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



Policy & News Updates

From the Voices for Non-Opioid Choices Coalition...

NOPAIN for Vets Update

This legislation is aimed at ensuring access to non-opioid approaches on the Veterans Affairs National Formulary (VANF). In January, the health subcommittee of the House Veterans Affairs Committee (HVAC) held a hearing on member priorities for the committee. Rep. Landsman (D-OH) appeared before the committee to talk about the NOPAIN for Veterans Act.

Staff continue to work to build support for this legislation. The Senate version of the legislation has 21 cosponsors while the House version has 19. Advocacy is needed to increase support in both the House and Senate for these measures.

Alternatives to PAIN Act (S. 475/H.R. 1227) and State Pain Parity Updates

The Alternatives to Prevent Addiction in the Nation Act (“Alternatives to PAIN”) continues to gain traction in both the House and the Senate. The Senate bill (S. 475) has 32 cosponsors. The House version of the legislation (H.R. 1227) has 76 cosponsors. Staff will continue to seek additional support for this measure. There

is also some hope that the legislation will be subject to a hearing – perhaps first in the House of Representatives – at some point in 2026.

At the state level,Voices has been active in a number of states trying to enhance patient access to non-opioids among state health plans. Already, Voices has been active in 5 state legislatures who are considering legislation to level access to non-opioid pain management approaches. (TN, UT, KS, AZ).

Regulatory Advocacy

On the regulatory front, CMS requested comments on improvements to Medicare Advantage and Medicare Part D plans. Voices provided the following comments:

- As it related to Medicare Advantage plans, Voices urged CMS to push these plans to follow CMS’ lead on making available non-opioids during outpatient surgical procedures. Voices noted that Medicare plans already do this as a result of the NOPAIN Act that went into effect in 2025, but that more could be done to ensure that MA plan participants enjoyed similar access
- With respect to Medicare Part D, Voices urged CMS to do more to limit plans’ ability to steer patients towards opioids. Voices noted that plans have great flexibilities afforded to them to manage costs and do so via prescription opioids. By doing so, these plans risks exacerbating the opioid addiction crisis. Instead, Voices urged CMS to promulgate guidance prohibiting utilization management practices regarding non-opioid acute pain products.

Advocacy Opportunities:

- Tell Congress to support our Veterans and pass the NOPAIN for Veterans Act (S. 3209/H.R. 4509)! [Click here](#)
- Help Medicare patients avoid opioid addiction. Urge Congress to pass the Alternatives to PAIN Act (S. 475/H.R. 1227)! [Click here.](#)

[HHS announces program to protect confidentiality of SUD patient records](#)

The Department of Health and Human Services Office for Civil Rights Feb. 13 announced the launch of a program to implement and enforce statutory and regulatory requirements under 42 CFR Part 2, which protect the confidentiality of substance use disorder patient records.

ASPR to invest in domestic production of ingredient for pain management, overdose reversal medications

The Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response [announced](#) March 5 that it will invest in the domestic production of thebaine, an ingredient used to manufacture medications for pain management, alcohol use disorder and the reversal of opioid overdose. ASPR said Antheia, Inc., based in Menlo Park, Calif., will receive funding to produce the ingredient. The investment is the latest effort by ASPR and the Department of Health and Human Services to reduce reliance on foreign resources and increase the domestic production of essential medications and their active pharmaceutical ingredients.

[Despite Their Successes, Some Mobile Crisis Response Teams Are in Crisis](#)

Mobile crisis units are trained to respond to emergency calls when people are experiencing delusions or hallucinations. But unlike police departments, which are generally funded by local taxpayers, mobile crisis teams don't have a single, reliable funding source. As a result, some are closing down, despite successful operations and local support. (Aaron Bolton, MTPR, 3/4)

New Video Highlights Vital Role Community-Based Organizations Play in Rural Opioid Response Efforts

In their applications for a stake of the \$50 billion federal [Rural Health Transformation Program](#) fund, nearly all states signaled they plan to make expanding access to behavioral health and substance use treatment services in rural communities a priority. As they develop implementation plans, we hope they will consider the outsized role that community-based organizations (CBOs) play in identifying and meeting local needs, particularly in rural and frontier areas where health care providers are often in short supply.

A new video of [Simply Hope Family Services](#), a FORE grantee in rural Burley, ID, demonstrates how CBOs can form the connective tissue between schools, government agencies, and treatment providers that share an interest in preventing and treating opioid use disorder and supporting families affected by it. The nonprofit was launched a decade ago by Nancy Winmill and Sheri Allred, two mothers whose sons have survived opioid overdoses. Both wanted to reduce the stigma facing families affected by substance use disorders in rural communities and foster resiliency in youth by offering a continuum of supports. "We wanted to create the space and center that we needed when our kids were in crisis," Winmill says.

[Read More and Watch Video](#)

Webinar: Opportunities to Improve Rural Responses to Opioid Use Disorder and Overdose (March 26, 2026)

Many rural Americans have less access to addiction treatment and recovery services for opioid use disorder (OUD) than those living in suburbs or cities, due to increased stigma, a dearth of trained providers, and a lack of non-medical supports. With the authorization of the Rural Health Transformation Program, a \$50 billion federal initiative to empower states to strengthen rural health systems across America, there is a prime opportunity to expand and improve access to OUD treatment and responses to overdose in rural America as part of the broader challenges facing rural communities today.

FORE grantees are finding innovative ways to reach those affected by OUD and overdose in rural communities and are overcoming the barriers that can keep them from getting treatment and recovery services.

Join the webinar on **Thursday, March 26 at 2-3 pm EST** as FORE grantees, state leaders, and others will discuss the current barriers and opportunities on the horizon for rural communities to strengthen access to OUD treatment and overdose services.

[Register for Webinar Here](#)

Training Opportunities

Integrating Addiction Medicine with Treatment Courts

Wednesday, May 6, 2026 | 1:00 pm – 5:30 pm ET | Live-Virtual

This 4-hour course is designed for medical providers practicing addiction medicine who interact with treatment courts and the justice system. Clinicians will explore the complexities of treating justice-involved individuals and apply practical strategies through case-based learning to enhance collaboration, advocate for evidence-based care, and improve coordination with community resources.

The target audience for this course includes: physicians, physician assistants, nurses, and nurse practitioners who engage with or seek to better understand treatment court systems.

This activity addresses the following ACGME Competencies: Patient Care, Medical Based Knowledge, Practice-Based Learning, Interpersonal and Communication Skills, Professionalism, and Systems-based Practice.

[Learn More & Register](#)

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](#).



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.

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](#)"

March 24 | Women and Substance Use Disorder: Treatment Success and Barriers for Care

Historically, women's treatment approaches were based on the experiences of men in treatment. There are unique needs that women carry that must be acknowledged and addressed to be successful in treatment. Psychological, biological, and socioeconomic experiences must be considered and integrated into gender-based treatment for women with substance use disorder (SUD). In this training, participants will explore how stigma, fear of child welfare involvement, and systemic inequities can create barriers to treatment access and continuity of care. The training underscores the growing body of evidence supporting integrated treatment approaches that combine SUD services with mental health care, trauma-specific interventions, and primary healthcare, demonstrating improved outcomes in treatment retention, maternal-child health and recovery stability.

Attendees of this training will earn 1.0 hour CEU, CNE, and CME credit. The training is designed for physicians, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and others involved in providing medical care to individuals with substance use disorders and organizations across behavioral health, physical health and allied health settings that are interested in—or currently implementing—evidence-based, community-based care models.

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Additional training sessions:

- [April 14](#)
- [April 24](#)

[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](#)



[Register Here](#)

Platinum Sponsors:  

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](#)
- [Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Education Series: Human Trafficking, SUD, and Emerging Drug Trends](#)
- [Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Education Series: Stimulant Use & Heart Health](#)



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

