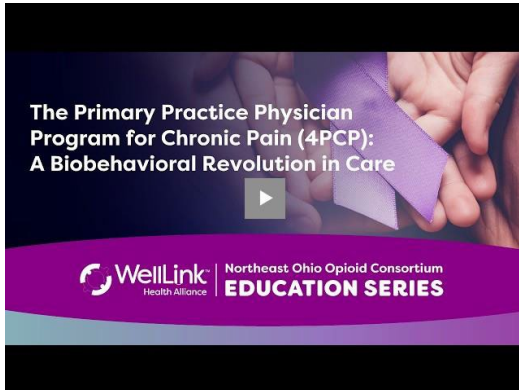


CONSORTIUM CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER



ICYMI: NEOOC Education Series | The Primary Practice Physician Program for Chronic Pain (4PCP)

Managing chronic pain is one of the most significant challenges in primary care, often described as a "heart-sink" experience that contributes to practitioner burnout. Through the support of our CDC Overdose Data to Action (OD2A) LOCAL grant, WellLink Health Alliance is proud to present a transformative educational session centered on The Primary Practice Physician Program for Chronic Pain (4PCP). Click the video to [watch now](#).



The banner features a background image of hands holding a purple ribbon. In the top right corner, the WellLink Health Alliance logo is displayed, along with the text "Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium EDUCATION SERIES". A purple box on the right contains the word "WEBINAR". The main title "Access to Non-Opioid Pain Management" is in large, bold, teal letters. Below it, a paragraph of text describes the event. To the right, a white box with a purple border contains the text "Join Us Online JUN 25 12:00PM - 1:30PM Virtual: Microsoft Teams".

WellLink™
Health Alliance

Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium
EDUCATION SERIES

WEBINAR

Access to Non-Opioid Pain Management

Join the Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium for our next virtual Opioid Education Series Event, focused on the evolving landscape of federal pain management policy. As we continue our work to mitigate the overdose crisis, expanding access to safe, non-addictive pain management alternatives is a critical prevention strategy. This session will feature presentations from three experts highlighting current federal legislative efforts aimed at removing barriers to non-opioid treatments and preventing addiction and supporting recovery.

Join Us Online
JUN 25
12:00PM - 1:30PM
Virtual: Microsoft Teams

Join us on June 25, 2026 for our next Opioid Education Series Event. This event is focused on the evolving landscape of federal pain management policy. Keep an eye out for more information and panelist details in the coming days.

[Register Here](#)

State / Local Updates

ADAMHS Board of Cuyahoga County RFP

The ADAMHS Board hosted a bidder's conference on Wednesday, May 13 to provide an overview of the RFP process, key timelines and submission expectations. This session provided an opportunity for prospective applicants to ask questions and gain additional clarity on funding priorities and requirements. This RFP is open to current Board-contracted providers and eligible nonprofit organizations not currently under contract with the Board. Respondents must be authorized to do business in Ohio, be in good standing with the Ohio Secretary of State, and possess all licenses, certifications, and approvals required for the services.

Ohio Department Of Commerce And The OneOhio Recovery Foundation Announce \$20 Million Statewide Public Education Campaign On Marijuana Risks

The Ohio Department of Commerce and the OneOhio Recovery Foundation today announced a new statewide public education campaign to help Ohioans better understand the health and safety risks of marijuana use. The launch comes as

new statewide polling shows marijuana use is increasing across Ohio while perceptions of risk are declining for certain behaviors, including use during pregnancy and among youth. The initiative includes multiple statewide campaigns designed to support targeted prevention and education efforts for key populations, including expectant and prospective mothers, youth and Ohio's workforce. The first phase, set to launch this summer, will focus on maternal health, followed by expanded efforts centered on youth prevention and employer partnerships to educate Ohio's workforce. The largest investment will be dedicated to preventing youth marijuana use. Click [HERE](#) for announcement.

OneOhio Board Advances Work On Statewide Cannabis Public Education Campaign

Directors of the OneOhio Recovery Foundation held their May public board meeting on May 13, recognizing Mental Health Month, electing new board leadership, and reviewing the research and strategy behind Ohio's [newly announced](#) statewide cannabis-risk education campaign.

In partnership with the State of Ohio and supported by \$20 million appropriated in the current operating budget, the campaign—which will focus on youth, women who are pregnant or may become pregnant, and Ohio's workforce—will provide Ohioans with clear, science-based information as cannabis and cannabis products become more available, visible and socially accepted. Directors focused much of the meeting on research, planning tools and implementation strategies designed to ensure the effort is targeted, credible and effective.

Research presented by Public Opinion Strategies showed cannabis use is increasing in Ohio while perceptions of risk are declining, especially around youth use and use during pregnancy. [Polling](#) commissioned by the OneOhio Recovery Foundation found that 41% of Ohioans report currently using cannabis, up from 35% in 2024, and more than two-thirds say cannabis has become more socially acceptable since legalization. The research also found that 51% of surveyed women who are pregnant or hope to become pregnant report using cannabis, underscoring the need for targeted, supportive public education.

In other business, and as part of the Foundation's Biennial Meeting, the Board elected new officers and Executive Committee members:

- Julie Ehemann, Region 15 representative, Chair
- Don Mason, Region 12 representative, Immediate Past Chair

- Keith Hochadel, Region 6 representative, Vice Chair
- Greta Mayer, Region 14 representative, Secretary
- Michael Roizen, statewide representative, Treasurer
- Rachel Baker, statewide representative, At-Large Executive Committee Member
- James “Jim” White, statewide representative, At-Large Executive Committee Member

To learn more about the Foundation’s work and sign up for important updates, [visit the OneOhio Recovery Foundation website](#).



Mental Health & Addiction Conference Attendee Registration - Now Live – June 1-2, 2026

Attendee registration is now open for Ohio’s 2026 Mental Health and Addiction Conference: *Inspiring a Stronger Tomorrow* on June 1-2, 2026 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Columbus, OH.

In partnership with the Ohio Department of Behavioral Health, the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation & Correction, and the Ohio Department of Health, OACBHA is pleased to build on the successes of our prior conferences and further expand our focus on the full continuum of mental health and addiction issues.

This 16th annual, two-day conference will focus on efforts related to mental health and addiction prevention, education, intervention, treatment, recovery,

family supports, community engagement, and more. The conference will help advance the resources and knowledge essential for communities to provide support to those in need. If you have questions about the conference, please contact Shelby Stutzman at [sstutzman@oacbha.org](mailto:ssutzman@oacbha.org).

[Click here to learn more and register to attend](#)

Free Naloxone Kits Available for Delivery in Lorain County

Residents in Lorain County can receive free naloxone overdose rescue kits delivered to their homes through an initiative led by Lorain County Public Health. Naloxone, commonly known as Narcan, is a medication that can reverse opioid overdoses and can be safely administered by bystanders in an emergency. Kits, which include training, can be ordered online or picked up in person. Additional harm-reduction resources, including fentanyl test strips and syringe exchange services, are also available through local programs. Learn more [here](#).

[Federal government continues to undermine harm reduction progress](#)

Harm reduction policies have consistently been under attack under the current federal administration. Over the past few years, opioid-related deaths dropped about 42 percent nationwide; in Ohio, deaths fell approximately 45 percent. Ohio's progress is due, in some part, to the state's acceptance and implementation of harm reduction. [Learn more about the regressive policies.](#) (Center for Community Solutions)

LOCAL SPOTLIGHT



We want to hear from you!

Join us for a meal and a conversation about your substance use, treatment and recovery experience.

When and Where?



Friday, May 22, 2026



5:00 PM- 7:00 PM



Ethan Crossing Addiction Treatment of Cleveland



20611 Euclid Ave, Euclid, OH 44117



**Have Questions?
Contact Us Today !**

Phone: (216) 368-4741

Email: od2alocal@case.edu

The Conversation:

- What fears, challenges, or motivations have shaped your journey?
- What do you think about treatment options in our community?
- How can our community better support you?

Why Attend?

- Your Voice matters!
- Your participation is confidential
- Free food
- Receive a gift card for participating

Proudly hosted by:



This work was supported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) of the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) as part of the Overdose Data to Action: LOCAL (CDC-RFA-CE-23-0003) award totaling \$2,851,407 with 100% funded by CDC/HHS. The contents are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily represent the official views of, nor an endorsement by, CDC/HHS or the U.S. Government.

Promoting Mental Health and Recovery: May is Mental Health Awareness Month, an observance that highlights the strong connection between mental health and substance use disorders. Raising awareness helps reduce stigma and encourages individuals to seek support. **National Prevention Week**—May 10 through May 16—promotes strategies that prevent substance misuse and support mental health before challenges escalate. Community-based prevention efforts are key to building healthier, more resilient populations.

Rep. Taylor Introduces Nitazene Response Act

Congressman Dave Taylor (OH-02) introduced the Nitazene Response Act, which will provide nationwide guidance to improve life-saving nitazene overdose response efforts. “Being 10 to 40 times more potent than fentanyl, nitazenes have slipped relatively unnoticed into Ohio and are endangering our communities,” said Congressman Taylor. “We must get dangerous drugs like these off our streets and ensure first responders have the most up-to-date information about nitazenes to inform their life-saving overdose response efforts.”

The Nitazene Response Act would require the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to issue evidence-based clinical guidelines for responding to nitazene overdoses. This guidance would contain a description of best practices for emergency departments, hospitals, and rural volunteer emergency medical services systems responding to suspected nitazene overdoses.

Nitazenes are a class of synthetic opioids that can be 10 to 40 times stronger than fentanyl and hundreds of times more potent than heroin. Initially developed in the 1950s as an experimental alternative to morphine, nitazenes were ultimately determined to be too powerful and dangerous for medical use. Since 2019, nitazenes have emerged in the U.S. drug supply and are growing in prevalence, both across the nation and the globe. Cheap and powerful nitazenes have been increasingly discovered mixed with other opioids, stimulants, or benzodiazepines in the U.S. to extend the supply of a drug.

Reporting by state and local forensic drug laboratories of the National Forensic Laboratory Information System showed a 5x increase in nitazenes across the U.S. since 2020. From 2020 to 2023, the number of yearly nitazene deaths in Ohio rose from 3 to 77. Most discovered nitazenes have been shipped to the U.S. from adversaries like China, making the emerging nitazene crisis both a public health and national security concern.

When an individual is having a nitazene-involved overdose, their symptoms present similarly to other types of opioid overdoses. However, because nitazenes are so strong, sometimes it can take several rounds of naloxone and prolonged reversal efforts to revive someone. The Nitazene Response Act will provide needed clarity for responders to ultimately save lives. The full bill text of this bill is available [here](#).

National Fentanyl Awareness Day Recognized

The National Fentanyl Awareness Day resolutions were introduced on April 29, 2026 in Congress ([H.Res.1234](#) / [S.Res.704](#)) to increase individual and public awareness of the impact of fake or counterfeit fentanyl pills on families and young people.

[SAMHSA Publishes Dear Colleague Letters With Updated Agency Guidance for Grantees](#)

[Updated Funding Guidance for Grantees on Supplies and Services](#) clarifies supplies and services previously defined under harm reduction that can be supported with SAMHSA funding. The letter also includes updated guidance on supplies and services that cannot be supported with SAMHSA funds. This letter furthers the agency's clear shift away from harm reduction and practices that facilitate illicit drug use and are incompatible with Federal laws, consistent with President Trump's Executive Order on Ending Crime and Disorder on America's Streets and SAMHSA's Strategic Priorities.

[Updated Guidance on Medication Assisted Treatment/Medication for Opioid Use Disorder](#) ensures SAMHSA funding and training and technical assistance advances holistic care models where medications are used as a component of comprehensive care that address the complex psychosocial needs of individuals with opioid use disorder, rather than medication-only models. This letter outlines core clinical tenets and provides new language that will be included in updated terms and conditions for current grantees and new FY2026 funding announcements for all relevant treatment services and training and technical assistance funding announcements from SAMHSA.

Schwartz Tapped to Lead the CDC

President Donald Trump has selected Erica Schwartz as his nominee to lead the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. Schwartz, who spent her career as a civil servant, served as deputy surgeon general during the first Trump administration and is considered an establishment pick for the role. Before her deputy surgeon general position, she served as chief medical officer and director of health, safety and work-life for the U.S. Coast Guard, overseeing its health care system. She got her medical degree from Brown University School of Medicine and was a rear admiral in the U.S. Public Health Service Commissioned Corps. She is considered a more traditional pick for the role, and does not have clear connections to the Make America Healthy Again movement.

Trump also announced three additional names who will serve in key CDC roles: Sean Slovenski, former president of Walmart Health, as the CDC Deputy Director and Chief Operating Officer; Jennifer Shuford, commissioner of the Texas Department of State Health Services, as the CDC Deputy Director and Chief Medical Officer; and Sara Brenner, FDA Principal Deputy Commissioner, as Senior Counselor for Public Health to HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr.

Mobile App Aids Substance Use Recovery in Vulnerable Populations

A recent study from Washington University School of Medicine highlights the success of uMAT-R, a mobile application designed to support individuals with substance use disorders who also experience housing insecurity. The app offers free, accessible tools, including a sobriety tracker, educational content on managing withdrawal, and a chat function that connects users with trained "e-coaches" for virtual peer support.

Researchers found highly promising results among this historically hard-to-reach population. After one month of use, participants who engaged with the app were 50% less likely to use non-opioid illicit drugs. Furthermore, those who utilized the messaging feature to speak with e-coaches were about 50% less likely to report opioid use compared to those who did not. Overall, the app was associated with reduced drug cravings, improved health literacy, and decreased feelings of social isolation. You can read the full article from WashU Medicine here: [App aids substance use recovery in vulnerable populations](#)

HHS Launches MAHA Action Plan to Curb Psychiatric Overprescribing

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) announced on May 4 efforts to curb psychiatric overprescribing at a MAHA Institute summit on mental health and overmedicalization. As the closing speaker, HHS Secretary Robert F. Kennedy, Jr. laid out a new action plan to promote appropriate psychiatric prescribing and drive deprescribing when clinically indicated. See release [HERE](#).

ONC Roundtable on Technology's Role in Making America Healthy Again

On April 20, the Office of the National Coordinator for Health IT (ONC) hosted a [roundtable](#) from 9:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m. ET titled "Technology's Role in Making America Healthy Again: A Discussion on Mental Health & Substance Use Care." The roundtable examined how expanded adoption of health IT can improve mental health and substance use care outcomes and advance the Administration's commitment to whole-person recovery.

New SAMHSA Resource: Community-Initiated Care in Behavioral Health: Exploring Funding Mechanisms for Substance Use Disorders

SAMHSA's Center for Financing Reform and Innovation (CFRI) released a new report on Community-Initiated Care in Behavioral Health: Exploring Funding Mechanisms for Substance Use Disorders. The report and webinar examine existing community-initiated care (CIC) organizations to better understand the strategies and funding mechanisms used to sustain substance use disorder (SUD) services in their communities. Leveraging existing resources and trained community members through CIC organizations can complement and extend SUD services and help mitigate service gaps. View the report, webinar, and webinar slides on [SAMHSA's CFRI web page](#).

[NIH researchers discover pain-relieving drug with minimal addictive properties](#)

Researchers at the National Institutes of Health (NIH) have identified a novel, highly potent opioid that shows potential as a therapy for both pain and opioid use disorder. In a study published in Nature, the team observed the new drug's effect in laboratory animals. They showed that it has high pain-relieving effects without causing respiratory depression, tolerance or other indicators of potential for addiction in humans.

Training Opportunities

AHA podcast: Three leaders from CommonSpirit Health explore how the organization is confronting stigma about substance use head on through education, storytelling and culture change. They also reveal how shifting language, training and grassroots efforts are helping patients feel seen and heard on their road to recovery. [LISTEN NOW](#)

ICYMI: Update from the Field: Crisis Response and Co-Response to Support Individuals Experiencing Mental and Substance Use Disorders

A better understanding of calls for service across communities has accelerated the adoption of novel approaches that enable responses based on the level of need, reducing burdens on law enforcement and engaging callers with timely behavioral health support. Two models—mobile crisis response, which relies on a professional team responding without law enforcement, and co-response, which

pairs behavioral health professionals with law enforcement—are demonstrating promising results in many communities.

This webinar will highlight programs implemented in Denver, Colorado, and Durham, North Carolina, that support both mobile crisis response and co-response to ensure callers receive the level of support that is needed. The session will also examine current evidence on the outcomes and impacts of these promising programs.

[Register Now](#)

Presenters

- Leigh Mazur, LCSW, Assistant Director, 911 Response, Durham Community Safety Department
- Tandis Hashemi, LPC, ACS, Operations Manager, Denver Department of Public Health and Environment

ICYMI: ORN Complimentary Webinar – May 13

Join the ORN Spring 2026 Hot Topics in Addiction Medicine webinar, *Medetomidine Impacts on Clinical Management and Systems of Care*, presented by Michael Lynch, MD, on May 13, 2026 at 5 PM ET. Registration is required. *If you have not registered for one of AOAAM webinars in the past, [please subscribe to AOAAM](#), then login and register for the webinars.*

[Click Here to Register](#)

Medetomidine, a highly potent veterinary alpha-2 adrenergic agonist, has recently emerged as a significant adulterant within the U.S. illicit opioid supply. This presentation entitled will review the introduction of medetomidine in the U.S. drug supply, the pharmacology and clinical effects of medetomidine, and the distinguishing features of medetomidine toxicity and withdrawal. We will outline emerging treatment strategies emphasizing early, aggressive alpha-2 agonist therapy; nuanced antiemetic approaches; when and how to escalate to IV dexmedetomidine; and approaches to concurrent opioid withdrawal management. Participants will gain insight into diagnostic challenges, observation and disposition considerations, and strategies for system-level preparedness.

May 20, 2026 at 5:00 PM ET

**ORN Spring 2026 - Update on the diversification of kratom-derived products:
7-hydroxymitragynine, pseudoindoxyl, and beyond**

Kirsten Smith, Ph.D, L.M.S.W

REGISTER [HERE](#).

This talk will provide a background on traditional kratom and an overview of the recent proliferation of novel, kratom-derived products. Industry marketing, confused media coverage, and dynamic government policy will be described, as all influence public health responses. This activity has been planned and implemented in accordance with the accreditation requirements and policies of the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME) through the joint providership of the American Academy of Addiction Psychiatry (AAAP) and AOAAM.

Integrating Addiction Medicine with Treatment Courts

Friday, July 18, 2025 | 10:00 am - 2:30 pm ET Virtual-Live Course

This FREE 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.

Upon completion, you will be able to:

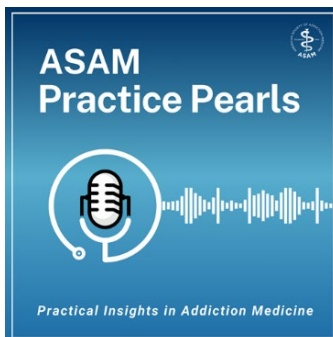
- Navigate the Treatment Court System– Understand the structure, purpose, and team roles within treatment courts.
- Enhance Collaborative Care– Build effective partnerships with court professionals and community resources.
- Deliver Compassionate, Evidence-Based Treatment– Communicate non-judgmentally with patients and advocate for appropriate care.
- Apply Practical Skills Through Case-Based Learning– Use real-life scenarios to reinforce best practices and clinical strategies.

[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 the SPEAK Bureau [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.

Access at: [ASAM Practice Pearls | ASAM Education](#)

Listen to ASAM Practice Pearls and Earn 0.5 CEs

Kratom and 7-OH: What Clinicians Need to Know

Experts: Kirsten Smith, PhD, LMSW and Katie Hill, MPH

Navigating Cannabis and Cannabinoid Use in Today's Clinical Practice

Expert: Takeo Toyoshima, MD

[Listen Here](#)

[Listen Here](#)

In support of improving patient care, ASAM is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

SUD COE Corner

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](#)
- [Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Education Series: Human Trafficking, SUD, and Emerging Drug Trends](#)
- [Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Education Series: Stimulant Use & Heart Health](#)
- [Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium Education Series: The Primary Practice Physician Program for Chronic Pain \(4PCP\)](#)



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