WellLink | Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium

CONSORTIUM CHRONICLE

NEWSLETTER



WellLink Health Alliance

Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium

EDUCATION SERIES

WEBINAR

Building a Recovery-Ready Workforce: Behavioral Health Support in the Construction Industry

The Northeast Ohio Opioid Consortium is hosting a 90-minute educational webinar to address the disproportionate impact of Substance Use Disorder (SUD) within the construction industry. This session will feature a panel discussion highlighting the scope of the issue, existing gaps in care, and actionable solutions—ranging from peer support to state-sponsored employer incentives.

Join Us Online

NOV 19

12:00PM - 1:30PM

Virtual: Microsoft Teams

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

- Understand how the physical demands, injuries, and stressors of the construction industry contribute to Substance Use Disorder (SUD) and overdose risk.
- Learn strategies to destigmatize Substance Use Disorder (SUD), foster an environment of psychological safety, and shift jobsite culture.
- Identify actionable and scalable solutions to support members of the construction industry.

FEATURED SPEAKER:



MODERATOR
Christine Robinson
CEO, Stella Maris



Dave Wondolowski
Executive Director, Cleveland Building and Construction Trades Council



Jamie F. Becker
Director, Health Promotion, Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America (LHSFNA)



Karen Snyder
Partnerships Director, 2nd Act



Karl Jefferson
Tri-Fund Field Coordinator, Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America (LHSFNA)



Lisa M. Sabitoni
Executive Director, Laborers' Health & Safety Fund of North America and Special Assistant to the General Secretary-Treasurer, Laborers' International Union of North America (LiUNA!)



Marty Williams
Superintendent for Chieftain Trucking and Excavating, PWLE



For Questions:

Rachael Sommer, Consultant,
WellLink Health Alliance
rachael.sommer@MyWellLink.com

Registration

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

SIGN UP NOW

OD2A Local Grant Support

This panel is supported by the Cuyahoga County Board of Health's Overdose Data to Action (LOCAL) grant, which aims to build strong partnerships across public health, health systems, and community organizations.

WellLinkHealthAlliance.com
1226 Huron Road East, Cleveland, OH 44115
216.696.6900

Register Here

State / Local Updates

Shifting Trends and New Resources: What Recent Overdose Reports Reveal for Cuyahoga County

Cuyahoga County is witnessing a transformative moment in the overdose epidemic. Through the combined efforts of first responders, healthcare providers, harm reduction advocates, and community organizations, fatal overdoses continue to decline across our region. Following a **35.8% decrease** in unintentional drug overdose deaths in 2024 (*2025 DOIEP*), preliminary data from Q2 2026 shows **fatal overdoses** dropping by an additional **29.8%** (*Q2 2026 Surveillance Bulletin*).

However, four newly released data reports—the *2025 Drug Overdose Integrated Epidemiologic Profile (DOIEP)*, the *2025 Overdose Fatality Review (CCOFR) Annual Report*, the *Q2 2026 Overdose Surveillance Bulletin*, and the *Component C Cascade of Care Data Brief*—emphasize that our education and prevention efforts must rapidly adapt to a changing illicit drug supply.

A Changing Drug Supply: Cocaine and Medetomidine

While fentanyl has historically driven fatal overdoses, recent findings from the *CCOFR Annual Report* and *DOIEP* show that cocaine has become the leading drug type identified in local overdose fatalities. Forensic lab testing from Q2 2026 confirms this shift, with **cocaine accounting for 1,242 lab submissions**—more than **double that of fentanyl** (*Q2 2026 Surveillance Bulletin*).

Simultaneously, local drug checking programs report that medetomidine, a potent veterinary sedative, is displacing xylazine in the local supply (*DOIEP* & *CCOFR*). These shifts underscore the urgent need for expanded provider and community education surrounding Stimulant Use Disorder (StUD), Contingency Management, and harm reduction strategies for non-opioid substances.

System Touchpoints and What Works

Behind the numbers are critical opportunities to save lives. The *DOIEP* highlights that **83% of overdose decedents had at least one contact with a healthcare or**

social system prior to their death. The *CCOFR Report* further revealed that **92%** of reviewed decedents lived with **acute or chronic pain**, and **81%** had a **diagnosed mental health condition**.

When low-threshold, compassionate care is made available; individuals engage. MetroHealth's walk-in Motivation & Engagement Clinic (MEC) achieved a **100% linkage rate** to Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD) and behavioral health treatment, **retaining 51% of patients at six months**. Similarly, MetroHealth's ExAM program at County Corrections achieved an 84% treatment linkage rate for individuals re-entering the community from jail (*Component C Report*).

Next Steps for Our Community

Recommendations range from targeted grassroots efforts to community awareness campaigns and education at the provider level.

- **Provider Training:** Enhancing education for clinicians on managing co-occurring pain, mental health, and substance use disorders, as well as stimulant treatment protocols.
- **Grassroots Awareness:** Increasing peer support and harm reduction outreach in high-burden Cleveland ZIP codes (including **44109, 44103, 44114, 44115, and 44127**).
- **Tolerance Education:** Warning individuals in recovery and their families about the heightened risk of fatal overdose due to reduced opioid tolerance after leaving treatment or correctional facilities.

To read the complete reports, review detailed data breakdowns, or access interactive county dashboards, please visit the Cuyahoga County Board of Health Overdose Data Dashboard.

Help Shape Overdose Response Practices: The Safeguarding Children Study

The Ohio State University, with funding from the National Institute of Justice, is conducting the Safeguarding Children Study to better understand current overdose response practices when children are present on the scene.

Researchers invite local overdose response professionals to participate in this voluntary and confidential 15-to-30-minute survey. Your input will provide critical insights into field practices and help improve systemic support for children impacted by the overdose crisis.

How to Participate

Please select the link that best matches your current role:

- **Department Heads & Team Leads:** If you direct an overdose response team or lead a police, fire, or EMS department, please take the survey HERE.
- **First & Secondary Responders:** If you are a member of an overdose response team (such as deflection, QRT, RRT, or CIT) or actively respond to overdose scenes (including EMS, law enforcement, fire, and social work), please take the survey HERE.

Questions or Concerns? For more information about the SparkOhio team or this study, please contact Krystel Tossone, PhD, at SparkOhio@osu.edu or call 614.293.8873.

Upcoming Layperson Naloxone Trainings

The Cleveland Department of Public Health has made Layperson Naloxone Training available at locations on the East and West sides of the city. See the fliers below for more details.





LOCAL SPOTLIGHT

Feature Spotlight: Accessing Care at the Glick Recovery Campus

The Glick Recovery Campus provides 24/7, walk-in care for adults (18+) who are experiencing a mental health or addiction-related emergencies. To ensure care is accessible at the moment it is needed; no appointment, referral, or insurance is required, and a sliding fee scale ensures no one is turned away.

How to Navigate Campus Services:

- **Floor 1: Crisis Center** – Offers 24/7 walk-in access for immediate crisis intervention and 24-hour observation.
- **Floor 2: Rosary Hall Stabilization & Recovery Unit** – Provides short-term residential care to stabilize patients following an initial crisis.
- **Floor 3: Primary Care & Outpatient Services** – Integrates physical and behavioral health for ongoing recovery. *This is the only floor that requires an appointment.* Call **216-325-WELL** to schedule.

Coming Soon: Rosary Hall Withdrawal Management Unit (January 2027)
Created in partnership with the Sisters of Charity Health System, this new 12-bed unit will provide 24/7, medically supervised care for acute intoxication and active withdrawal from alcohol, opioids, stimulants, and novel substances. A multidisciplinary team of medical providers, therapists, and peer support specialists will safely manage withdrawals, initiate Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD), and seamlessly transition patients directly into residential or outpatient recovery programs.

Location & Resources

- **Address:** 2322 E. 22nd Street, Cleveland, OH 44115
- **Campus Video Overview:** Watch here to learn more about our integrated care model

Policy & News Updates



Monthly Policy Watch! We are sharing our next policy segment from WellLink Health Alliance's Daniel Lettenberger-Klein. Each month, Daniel breaks down the latest legislative trends and explains exactly what they mean for our local behavioral health community.

This month Daniel examines the latest federal and state developments, new behavioral health funding priorities, and what healthcare organizations should be preparing for as 2027 approaches.

Read the full update on our blog below.

Read Blog Here

Senate Passes Resolution Designating October as Substance Use & Misuse Prevention Month

On September 30, the U.S. Senate unanimously passed a bipartisan resolution designating October 2026 as Substance Use and Misuse Prevention Month. Introduced by Senator Pete Ricketts (R-NE) alongside Senator Adam Schiff (D-CA), the resolution (S. Res. 866) highlights the vast scope of the addiction crisis in the United States and calls for robust support for crucial prevention programs to combat the ongoing overdose epidemic.

The resolution draws attention to sobering national statistics from 2025:

- Over 69 million Americans aged 12 and older used an illicit drug, including cocaine and methamphetamine.
- An estimated 44.6 million individuals lived with a substance use disorder.
- More than 22.3 million adults were in recovery from a substance use problem.

"Substance use and misuse affect millions of Americans each year, from every community and of all ages," Senator Schiff noted, emphasizing the importance of dedicated prevention programs. Senator Ricketts echoed this urgency: "We can and must do more. This bipartisan resolution raises awareness of abuse and the need to support prevention efforts."

The full resolution can be read HERE.

Training Opportunities

Webinar: Overdose in Ohio: Understanding Where We Are and What Comes Next

Hosted by the Health Policy Institute of Ohio (HPIO), this webinar examines the key factors contributing to recent changes in Ohio's overdose death rates. While overdose deaths have declined in recent years, Ohio's rate remains higher than most states. This session will explore how evolving substance-use patterns, shifts in the drug supply, access to treatment and recovery services, and naloxone availability are impacting the state. Featured speakers from RecoveryOhio, the Ohio Narcotics Intelligence Center, and the Franklin County Coroner's Office will discuss actionable strategies for leaders across Ohio to sustain this progress and address substance use disorder effectively.

- **Date & Time:** Thursday, October 29, 2026 | 1:00 p.m. – 2:00 p.m. EDT
- **Registration Link:** Click here to register

SUD COE Training: Medical Professionals

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.

Upcoming Sessions:

- **Kratom in Ohio – What Every Clinician Needs to Know**
  - October 20th, 2026
- **Ethics and Boundaries: Maintaining Professional Integrity in Behavioral Healthcare**
  - October 21st, 2026

Check out the SUD COE calendar to register for these and other upcoming free trainings.

MACC (Multiethnic Advocates for Cultural Competency)

Adult Mental Health First Aid Certified Training - a 2-part virtual course

Training by: Rachael DuBose, M.S.Ed., LPCC-S, CCTP

Continuing Education Hours: 5.5 total

** Please note that BOTH sections must be completed to become certified. Approximately 1-2 hours of pre-coursework required.

Adult Mental Health First Aid (MHFA) is an evidence-based, nationally recognized training that prepares participants to support adults experiencing mental health or substance use challenges. Participants learn to recognize warning signs, reduce stigma, and use the MHFA Action Plan (ALGEE) to start supportive conversations, respond to concerns, and connect adults with professional help and community resources while respecting safety and privacy.

Part 1 - Wednesday, November 4 | 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Registration:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/G8Te9RRkT1K3lBb5kwSe3A

Or: https://shorturl.at/0DqQB

Part 2 - Tuesday, November 17 | 9:00 a.m.-12:00 p.m.

Registration:
https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/2cdTXZktSq69VfsTEw6msQ

Or: https://shorturl.at/I8CQj

WellLink 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.

Access at: ASAM Practice Pearls | ASAM Education

Listen to ASAM Practice Pearls':

Listen Here

Enhancing Addiction Care through Care Touchpoints
Stephen M. Taylor MD, MPH, DFAPA, DFASAM

Michael Fingerhood, MD, FACP, DFASAM

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.

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 Managerment
- 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)
- Northeast Ohio Opioid Education Series: Voices for Non-Opioid Choices

OD2A LOCAL Cuyahoga County

Local Data, Local Partners, Local Solutions

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