

 Northeast Ohio
OPIOID CONSORTIUM

Consortium Chronicle NEWSLETTER



We were honored to host Dr. Dietra Hawkins from BothAnd Partners for a session on Appreciative Inquiry: Moving from Medical Dominance to Relational Recovery on January 22. The medical model views person as broken, needs to be “fixed” or cured and is deficit focused. The Recovery Oriented Systems of Care (ROSC) model is primarily focused on the integration of recovery support services and a group of providers that increase their collaboration to improve coordination of care. Click the thumbnail on the left to watch the recording of the webinar or click [HERE](#).

Up Next in Our Education Series

We hope you'll join us for our next webinar! Click the flyer below or [register here](#).

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Demystifying Buprenorphine Treatment in the *Outpatient Clinic Setting*

This session is designed to expand knowledge and confidence to integrate buprenorphine treatment into outpatient practices. The focus will be on evidence-based approaches that can help improve patient care and outcomes for those with opioid use disorder. The webinar will provide valuable insights to help providers feel more confident and capable in offering buprenorphine as part of your treatment options.

Topics include:

Buprenorphine Induction Protocols:
A detailed review of both low and high-dose buprenorphine inductions for out-of-office settings, helping you navigate different treatment pathways.

Incorporating Buprenorphine into Your Practice: Practical strategies for adding buprenorphine treatment to your existing care model, with a focus on enhancing patient access and outcomes.

Harm Reduction in Practice:
A discussion on how to apply harm reduction principles effectively in your treatment approach, ensuring compassionate, patient-centered care.

State / Local Updates

Cuyahoga County Dashboard Shares Data on Drug Testing

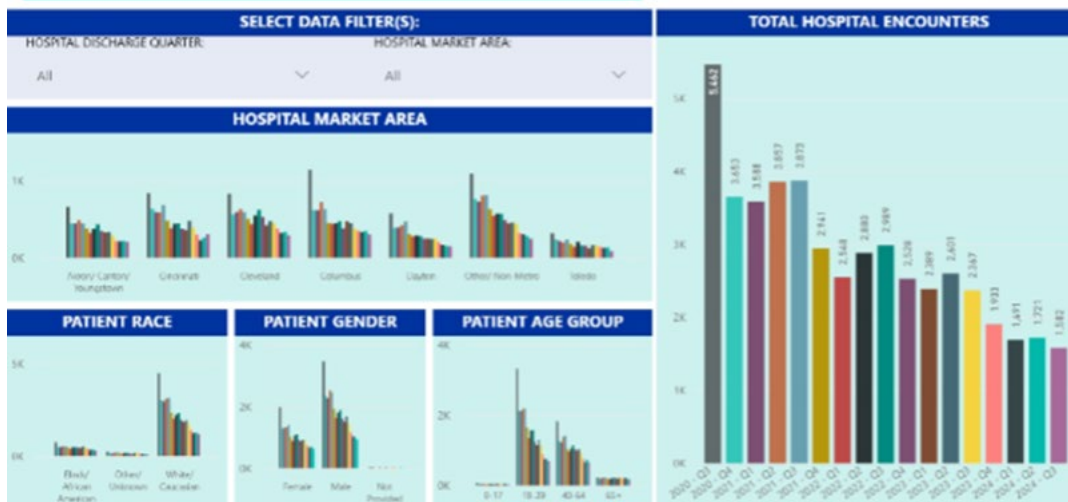
The Cuyahoga County Medical Examiner's Office (CCMEO), in partnership with the Cuyahoga County Board of Health (CCBH) and The Begun Center for Violence Prevention Research and Education at Case Western Reserve University (The Begun Center), The Centers, and the MetroHealth System launched a [new dashboard](#) on the CCMEO's website. The dashboard shares data collected from a pilot drug testing program initiated in August of last year, where syringes are collected from seven local Syringe Service Programs (SSPs) and then tested at CCMEO for drugs.

Over 300 syringes have been collected since the start of the initiative, and that data is now available via a dashboard. This dashboard visualizes the top 10 major drugs tested in these syringes, perceived substances the participants expected in their syringes, and much more. Understanding trends of drug use among people who participate in SSPs may be valuable in designing lifesaving intervention strategies for Cuyahoga County and improving our understanding of drug use patterns. Link to dashboard: <https://cuyahogacounty.gov/medical-examiner/resources/pilot-drug-checking-program>

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OHA DATA RELEASE: OPIOID OVERDOSES

QUARTERLY DATA



OHA Opioid Dashboard Updated with Q3 2024 Data

OHA's [Opioid Overdose Dashboard](#) has been updated with data through the third quarter of 2024. The data is derived from the nearly 38 million annual coded hospital encounters in Ohio. The release of per-capita rates by county as well as by market area are intended to assist health policymakers, funders and local collaboratives in their work.

The data does not reflect overdoses that did not present for care at a hospital or overdoses that occurred among Ohio residents who were cared for at hospitals outside the state. The opioid overdose dashboard is made available by OHA to help local communities, organizations and local health offices do their research. OHA will release annual and quarterly rates of opioid overdose encounters at our member hospitals.



The Ohio Association of County Behavioral Health Authorities (OACBHA) will host the **2025 Mental Health & Addiction Conference: Advancing Care in Communities** on June 9-10 at the Hyatt Regency in downtown Columbus, OH. OACBHA is pleased to continue to expand on the successes of prior conferences attracting over 1,200 attendees and continues to have a broad focus on addressing mental health and addiction topics. This 15th 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. We are excited to host a screening of "Igniting Compassion" followed by an interactive panel discussion at the conference on June 9. If you have questions about the conference please contact Shelby Embrey at sembrey@oacbha.org

NEOMED to Launch Mental Health Assistant Program

NEOMED will introduce a certified mental health assistant program in Rootstown, aiming to address Ohio's mental health provider shortage. The two-year training will prepare students to work under physician supervision, expanding access to care. Gov. Mike DeWine signed the legislation creating the program, which is expected to launch by late 2026. [Read more](#)

Thrive For Change Promoting Harm Reduction

Fentanyl has been involved in more than 6,500 overdose fatalities in Cuyahoga County since 2014, either by itself or when mixed with cocaine or heroin, according to [data from the medical examiner's office](#). Fentanyl test strips are an important tool in the fight against overdose deaths. A local nonprofit is working to stop drug overdoses by [promoting fentanyl test strips](#).

FDA Approves Non-Opioid Pain Medication

The Food and Drug Administration this week approved a new type of painkiller that doesn't carry the risk of addiction or overdose associated with opioid medications. The drug, suzetrigine, will be sold under the brand name Journavx and is the first new class of pain medicine approved in more than 20 years. "Today's approval is an important public health milestone in acute pain management," Jacqueline Corrigan-Curay, the acting director of the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, said in a [statement](#). "A new non-opioid analgesic therapeutic class for acute pain offers an opportunity to mitigate certain risks associated with using an opioid for pain and provides patients with another treatment option." The approval is considered a major breakthrough in treating acute pain without opioid medications like Vicodin and OxyContin. Reliance on opioids can lead to addiction.

"Today's approval is a historic milestone for the 80 million people in America who are prescribed a medicine for moderate-to-severe acute pain each year," Reshma Kewalramani, CEO and president of Vertex, said in a [statement](#). "With the approval of JOURNAVX, a non-opioid, pain signal inhibitor and the first new class of pain medicine approved in more than 20 years, we have the opportunity to change the paradigm of acute pain management and establish a new standard of care."

Congress Returns To Fentanyl

On February 6, the U.S. House of Representatives overwhelmingly approved, through a bipartisan vote of 312 to 108, the Halt All Lethal Trafficking of (HALT) Fentanyl Act, legislation led by Congressman Bob Latta (R-OH). The bill would make the temporary class-wide scheduling order for fentanyl-related substances (FRS) permanent.

Background on the HALT Fentanyl Act:

- Currently, fentanyl and fentanyl analogues temporarily fall under Schedule I of the Controlled Substances Act (CSA) due to a temporary scheduling order that runs through March 31, 2025.
- The HALT Fentanyl Act would permanently place fentanyl analogues into Schedule I of the CSA, simplify registration processes for certain research with Schedule I substances, remove barriers that currently impede such work, and provide for exemption of individual analogues from Schedule I when evidence demonstrates it is appropriate.
- The bill also ensures practitioners can research fentanyl-related substances to better understand their overall effects on human health.

Background on the fentanyl crisis:

- In 2023, more than [107,000 people died](#) of drug overdoses; roughly 75,000 whom died from synthetic opioids - including illicit fentanyl or fentanyl-related substances.
- Illicit fentanyl poisoning deaths among teens accounted for [77% of adolescent overdose deaths](#) in 2021.
- Illicit fentanyl poisonings are now the [number one cause of death among adults 18-49](#) - more than cancer, heart disease, and car accidents.
- Fentanyl and fentanyl-related substances can be [50-100 times more potent than morphine](#). Just a few milligrams, which can fit in the ear of Lincoln on a penny, can be lethal.

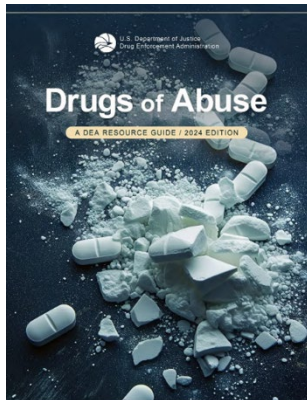
President Trump has threatened countries he accuses of helping to bring fentanyl into the U.S. — like neighboring Mexico and Canada — with high import tariffs over the issue.

HHS, DEA rules on prescribing of controlled substances via telemedicine

A new AHA member advisory provides details on rules published Jan. 15 by the Department of Health and Human Services and the Drug Enforcement Administration related to prescribing controlled substances via telemedicine, including a special registration proposed rule and a final rule on telemedicine prescribing of buprenorphine. Comments on the special registration proposed rule are due to the DEA by March 15. [READ MORE](#)

CMS Provider Updates: Opioid Treatment Programs

Visit [Opioid Treatment Programs \(OTP\)](#) and [OTP Billing & Payment](#) for updates, including: Coverage, Claims, Billing, Payment codes & rates and Telecommunications



DEA Releases Updated Drugs of Abuse Resource Guide

The U.S. Drug Enforcement Administration recently announced the release of the 2024 edition of Drugs of Abuse, A DEA Resource Guide, which is designed to be a reliable resource on the most commonly used and misused drugs in the U.S. The guide provides important science-based information about the harms and consequences of drug use, describing a drug's effects on the body and mind, overdose potential, origin, legal status, and other key factors. In addition, the guide outlines U.S. drug regulation, including drug scheduling and chemical controls. The 2024 edition updates the 2022 Drugs of Abuse publication with the most current information on new and emerging trends in drug misuse and abuse, including fentanyl, methamphetamine, marijuana concentrates, vaping, stimulant drugs, and fake pills. [Click here](#) to view the guide.

[The public health risks of counterfeit pills](#) *The Lancet Public Health*

Illicit fentanyl in the form of counterfeit pills has increased from 10% of seizures in 2017 to 49% in 2023. Counterfeit pills are often indistinguishable from legitimate pills and can appeal to users, such as adolescents, who would reject drugs in powder form. Overdose deaths are increasing among adolescents, doubling between 2019 and 2020. Counterfeit pills can be purchased in Mexico from pharmacies that appear legitimate. In Canada, 20% of pills with fentanyl also contained a benzodiazepine, increasing overdose risk. Recommendations include public education about counterfeit pills, particularly directed at younger age groups. Drug checking services should be available. Information about new substances should be broadcast and obtained from drug checking, drug seizures, and overdose toxicology. Also, efforts to prevent diversion of pharmaceuticals should consider that demand may be diverted to counterfeit pills.

Beyond Buprenorphine in the ED: Leveraging Lessons From 10 Years of Implementation *Nikki Bozinoff, MD, MS, Elizabeth Schoenfeld, MD, MS, Csilla Kalocsai, MPhil, PhD*

The opioid toxicity crisis remains an urgent public health priority across the US and Canada. Since the seminal randomized controlled trial published in 2015 found that buprenorphine initiation in the emergency department (ED) was superior compared with referral to treatment alone, buprenorphine initiation in the ED has been hailed as an important mechanism for addressing the overdose crisis. However, now, nearly 10 years after the initial publication, the use of medications for opioid use disorder following an ED visit for overdose remains low with only 3-15% of individuals filling a prescription across diverse jurisdictions. [Read the full editorial here.](#)

US overdose deaths far outpace other countries: Report

The United States has the highest rate of drug overdose deaths out of 30 countries, according to [a report](#) from the health nonprofit the Commonwealth Fund. The report ranks 30 countries and one U.S. territory from lowest to highest overdose death rate based on 2022 mortality data. The U.S. had the highest rate — 324 overdose deaths per 1 million residents — that year, followed by Puerto Rico, which was categorized separately and had 246 overdose deaths per 1 million people. See Article [HERE](#).

Opioid crisis renews focus on expanding access to methadone treatment

While the numbers are finally starting to decline, more than 74,000 Americans are still dying every year from opioid overdoses. Despite that, very few people who are struggling with addiction get treatment. See PBS News Hour coverage [HERE](#).

AHA podcast: Englewood Health's Strategies to Combat Rising Opioid Use in Post-Pandemic America

In this conversation, Vinnidhy Dave, D.O., hospice specialist and director of palliative medicine at Englewood Health Physician Network, and Lauren Savage, director of population health at Englewood Hospital, discuss what Englewood Health is doing to prevent opioid use in its communities and how an opioid risk tool provides guidance and protocols to protect higher-risk patients. [LISTEN NOW](#)



New SAMHSA Report – Office of Recovery Performance Report

This report highlights the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration's (SAMHSA) commitment to advancing behavioral health recovery across the nation. It underscores the importance of reducing barriers to recovery supports and driving systemic change through enhanced intra-agency coordination. This report details the OR's strategic partnerships with various stakeholders, working to ensure that all individuals can pursue recovery and achieve lives marked by home, health, community, and purpose. Click [HERE](#) to access the report.

Training Opportunities

Upcoming SUD COE Trainings

The Ohio Substance Use Disorder Coordinating Center of Excellence (SUD COE) has recently added a new series of training programs designed to equip professionals with the latest and most effective strategies in the provision of SUD treatment.

A variety of essential/core topics are continually available, as well as newly added content areas each month which include:

- Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)/Medication for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD)
- Stages of Change
- Motivating Behavior Change
- Clinical Documentation

All sessions are offered **free of charge** to ensure accessible professional development with **complimentary CEUs** with active participation. Click [HERE](#) to view a list of upcoming trainings.

Monday February 17 9:00 am - 11:00 am - [SUD COE: Medication Assisted Treatment Part 1: Contextual Foundation in Opiate Addiction and MAT - WEB \[2.17.25\]](#)

Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) has been proven effective in facilitating recovery for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder. Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder often experience co-occurring mental health disorders that require specialized interventions. Participants will be provided a historical context of medication assisted treatment program, the rise of opioid use in the U.S., the development of modern medicines for opioid use disorder, and acknowledge the stigma associated with addiction and the barriers this creates toward successful recovery.

2.0 CEUs

Tuesday February 25 9:00 am - 12:15 pm - [SUD COE: Overview of Harm Reduction for Substance Use - WEB \[2.25.25\]](#)

While historical substance use treatment models have emphasized abstinence as the goal, we have learned through research and from those with lived experience, about the complex relationship people have with substance use, beginning with their first use through many possible intervention points. Harm reduction acknowledges this complexity and offers ways to reduce the risk of mortality and other negative outcomes of substance use. **3.0 CEUs**

Tuesday February 25 2:00 pm - 4:00 pm - **SUD COE: Medication Assisted Treatment Part 2: Opiates, MAT and the Brain - WEB [2.25.25]**

Medication Assisted Treatment has been proven effective in facilitating recovery for individuals with Opioid Use Disorder. Individuals with Opioid Use Disorder often experience co-occurring mental health disorders that require specialized interventions. It is crucial to understand the neurobiological changes in the brain as a result of substance use in order to combat stigma, help those who suffer with addiction understand the symptoms of the disease of addiction, and to further our understanding of how medications for opioid use disorder can offset and reverse the changes in the brain associated with addiction. **2.0 CEUs**



Supporting Children and Families Impacted by Addiction

Sesame Workshop launched a new educational course for healthcare and social services providers called *Hand in Hand: Supporting Children and Families Impacted by Addiction*. Each year, more than two million children live in households with a parent or caregiver who has a substance use disorder, which can put them at increased risk of adverse childhood experiences (ACEs). The data underscores the need for a comprehensive approach to prevention that addresses the needs of the entire family. Click [HERE](#) to access recording of this webinar.

CWRU Opioid Response Network (ORN) Trainings

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



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 from The Center

- [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](#)
- [Previous Issues of The Consortium Chronic Newsletter](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series: Effective Communication with Individuals with SUD](#)
- [NEO Opioid Consortium Education Series: Appreciative Approach: From Medical Dominancy to Relational Recovery](#)

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Local Data, Local Partners, Local Solutions



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