COLLEGE OF
SCIENCE & ENGINEERING

INSTITUTE OF BEHAVIORAL RESEARCH

# Research and News Worth Repeating

*Issue 12*, November 10, 2020

## Substance Use

**NIH study tests a comprehensive model intervention to reduce opioid overdose deaths in hard-hit communities**

*National Institutes of Health*--October 19, 2020

The National Institutes of Health (NIH) is investing $350 million to support the multi-year HEALing Communities Study in 67 communities across four states supporting data-driven, community-based approaches to implement evidence-based practices with the goal of reducing opioid-related overdose deaths by 40% in the next three years. In 2019, an estimated 1.6 million people had opioid use disorder (OUD), and of these, only 18.1% received medication treatment for opioid misuse. The Healing Communities studies will test the impact in these hard-hit communities of an integrated set of evidence-based practices in a variety of settings and the impact of engaging various community groups.

https://www.nih.gov/news-events/news-releases/nih-study-tests-comprehensive-model-intervention-reduce-opioid-overdose-deaths-hard-hit-communities

**Realizing the Cost Saving and Public Health Benefits of Medication-Assisted Treatment in Jails and Prisons**

*Policy Research Associates*--October 21, 2020

The treatment of COVID-19 in jails and prisons has demonstrated the public health benefits of treating people while they are incarcerated. These include prevention of spread to the community when people are released from incarceration and treating conditions early before they require more expensive treatment after return to the community. Although there are barriers to treatment for substance use disorders in prison, such as cost, beliefs held about opioid disorder, lack of access, and federal regulations, treating substance use in jails and prisons can return up to five-fold in savings in terms of decreased crime and use of the criminal justice system and increased employment.

https://www.prainc.com/gains-realizing-cost-savings-public-health-benefit-mat/

**Substance Use Disorders and Addiction: Mechanisms, Trends, and Treatment Implications**

*American Journal of Psychiatry*--November 1, 2020

Data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health in 2018 showed that over 20.3 million people age 12 or older had substance use disorders. Stress is associated with an increase in the use of alcohol and other substances and this has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic. Recent findings relevant to

understanding, treating and developing policies to better treat addictions include the relatively low amounts of prenatal alcohol intake that can be associated with neurodevelopmental effects in preadolescent children, shorter alcohol abstinence periods linked to greater alterations in response to stress which was a predictor of treatment relapse, and increased morbidity between substance use and psychiatric disorders in sexual identity minorities.

https://ajp.psychiatryonline.org/doi/10.1176/appi.ajp.2020.20091382

## Mobile Health Clinics Traverse COVID-19's Access to Care Gaps

*Patient Engagement HIT*--October 23, 2020

COVID-19 brought to light many of the health inequities across the United States such as access to care. As a result, many communities are employing mobile health units (MHU) with a community-based health model to ensure underserved populations are reached. Communities such as Philadelphia, PA, Tucson, AZ, and Worcestor, MA have utilized MHUs to provide COVID-19 screening and testing as well as other medical and behavioral services to high need, neighborhoods.

https://patientengagementhit.com/features/mobile-health-clinics-traverse-covid-19s-access-to-care-gaps

## Mindfulness-based programs for substance use disorders: a systematic review of manualized treatments

*Substance Abuse Treatment, Prevention, and Policy*--July 29, 2020

Mindfulness-based interventions (MBIs) have been increasingly sought after and developed now for the use of substance use disorders (SUD). Mindfulness has been defined as paying attention in the present moment in a particular way: on purpose and without judgment. Mindfulness-based stress reduction (MBSR) was developed in the 1980's and was the first mindfulness-based practice brought to the west. In a literature search of 902 publications and 30 studies, it was found that MBIs seem to be effective as evidence-based treatment for SUD such as reducing frequency and quantity of alcohol and drug use.

https://substanceabusepolicy.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s13011-020-00293-3

# Telehealth

## Telehealth Pilot to Combine Substance Abuse, Behavioral Health Care

*mHealthIntelligence*--October 28,2020

The Indiana University School of Medicine and Regenstrief Institute are launching a four-year, $4 million pilot to study the effectiveness of the MI-CARE (More Individualized Care: Assessment and Recovery through Engagement) program. The goal of this project is to determine whether primary care providers can combine and use telehealth with substance abuse treatment, including medication-assisted treatment and behavioral health treatment to improve health outcomes. Backed by the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH), outcomes from 200 volunteers using the nurse-supported connected health platform will be compared to 200 patients receiving traditional treatment from their primary care doctor.

https://mhealthintelligence.com/news/telehealth-pilot-to-combine-substance-abuse-behavioral-health-care

## DEA proposes New mHealth Rule for Substance Abuse Treatment

*mHealthIntelligence*--March 4, 2020

As a result of the opioids and substance use epidemics, the US Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) is proposing a rule that would ease some of the restrictions on the use of mHealth in substance abuse programs. The proposed rule will allow narcotic treatment programs (NTP) to operate a mobile component in the state in which they are registered without being required to obtain a separate registration for the mobile unit. This regulation is intended to make treatments more widely available while ensuring safeguards are in place to prevent diversion.

https://mhealthintelligence.com/news/dea-proposes-new-mhealth-rule-for-substance-abuse-treatment

## CDC: Telehealth visits more than doubled in March 2020

*HealthcareIT News*--November 2, 2020

Using data collected from Amwell, Teladoc Health, MDLive and Doctor on Demand, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) reported that 1.6 million telehealth encounters occurred during the early pandemic period of January through March 2020. This was about 50% higher than the same period in 2019. The report notes that overall rise in telehealth may be attributed to relaxations of federal regulations around virtual care, including out-of-state licensures, reimbursement guidance and originating site specifications.

https://www.healthcareitnews.com/news/cdc-telehealth-visits-more-doubled-march-2020

## CMS adds 11 new telehealth services to Medicare coverage

*Becker's Hospital Review*--October 16th, 2020

The Center for Medicare Services (CMS) recently added 11 new telehealth services to the list that Medicare will reimburse during the COVID-19 pandemic. CMS will temporarily pay physicians to provide clinical services via telehealth during the pandemic. Since the pandemic began, CMS has added 135 services to the Medicare telehealth list including emergency department visits and initial patient visits.

https://www.beckershospitalreview.com/telehealth/cms-adds-11-new-telehealth-services-to-medicare-coverage.html

## AMA Coalition to Help Doctors Use Telehealth for Mental Health Services

*mHealthIntelligence*--October 13, 2020

The American Medical Association (AMA) will be launching a new collaborative aimed at helping healthcare providers use telehealth to integrate mental health services. The Behavioral Health Integration (BHI) Collaborative will bring together experts from various organizations such as the AMA, American Academy of Family Physicians, and American Academy of Pediatrics. The collaborative is building an online database of resources for providers to integrate mental health into primary care, such as webinars and virtual learning.

https://mhealthintelligence.com/news/ama-coalition-to-help-doctors-use-telehealth-for-mental-health-services