

December 2019 Newsletter
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BUPRENORPHINE PRESCRIBERS IN RURAL AREAS INCREASED SINCE 2016

According to a study published in Health Affairs, the number of clinicians with waivers to prescribe buprenorphine surged following the implementation of the Comprehensive Addiction and Recovery Act. Read more [here](#).

STATE RULES VARY ON WHO CAN GUIDE PATIENTS ON MARIJUANA PRODUCTS

Doctors green-light patients for medical marijuana, but in more than half the states it's often "budtenders" and "marijuana consultants" at dispensaries who actually help advise patients on what they should try resulting in a messy landscape even as medical marijuana becomes widely accepted by the public. Read more [here](#).

FDA SCOLDS OPIOID TREATMENT MAKER OVER ADS

The FDA sent a warning letter to the maker of Vivitrol for excluding warnings on promotional materials about the medication-assisted treatment drug's "most serious" risks. Read more [here](#).

TWO COMPANIES WIN OPIOID GRANT CHALLENGE FUNDS

The initiative spearheaded by the White House Office of National Drug Control Policy will award \$500,000 to IDSS and \$250,000 to One Resonance, officials announced December 12. The effort is designed to develop non-intrusive detection tools to help find illicit opioids in international mail. Read more here. Read more [here](#).

MARIJUANA CRIMINALIZATION COULD BE CLOUDING INFO ON VAPING DEATHS

In late October, as the number of people sickened with a mysterious vaping-related illness grew, federal officials turned to the nation's leading academic researchers for help, but researchers told the NIH, CDC and FDA that although they wanted to help with the outbreak they are constricted by the government's own rules. Read more [here](#).

VAPING OF MARIJUANA ON RISE AMONG TEENS

Findings from the 2019 Monitoring the Future (MTF) survey demonstrate the appeal of vaping to teens, as seen in the increased prevalence of marijuana use as well as nicotine vaping. Read more [here](#).

PRESCRIPTION OPIOID MISUSE AMONG HIGH SCHOOLERS AT HISTORIC LOW

The rate of high school students misusing prescription opioids dropped significantly over the past five years and hit a historic low in 2019 amid national efforts to address the opioid crisis. Read more [here](#).

ONDCP NOT HITTING GOALS ACCORDING TO GAO

According to a report from the Government Accountability Office (GAO), the Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) hasn't met certain requirements set forth in a federal opioid law that Trump signed into law last year. Read more [here](#).

TEENS, YOUNG ADULTS DON'T FULLY UNDERSTAND VAPING RISKS

According to a new American Academy of Family Physicians survey, the epidemic of vaping-related lung disease has made young people more cautious about vaping, but they are still hazy about the risks of e-cigarettes. Read more [here](#).

MARIJUANA IMPAIRED DRIVING GROWING PUBLIC HEALTH CONCERN

According to the CDC, driving under the influence of marijuana and illicit drugs is a growing public health concern, alongside alcohol, that kills thousands of Americans each year. Read more [here](#).

STATE-BASED SURVEY FINDS MARIJUANA USE RISING IN LEGAL STATES

On December 19, state-level data from the National Survey on Drug Use and Health found that marijuana use in "legal" states among youth, young adults, and the general population continued its multi-year upward trend in several categories. Read more [here](#).

OPIOIDS PRESCRIBED TOO MUCH ACCORDING TO FDA REPORT

According to a report from the National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, patients are still getting too many opioids to treat acute pain because of inconsistent prescribing guidelines despite a push to significantly lower pain pill prescribing in the US. Read more [here](#).

CMS AWARDS FUNDING TO COMBAT OPIOID MISUSE AMONG EXPECTANT MOTHERS

On December 19, the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS) announced ten states selected to receive funding under the Maternal Opioid Misuse (MOM) Model to combat opioid misuse among expectant mothers and improve care for children impacted by the crisis. Read more [here](#).

FDA AND DEA SEIZE WEBSITES OVER ILLEGAL THC VAPES

The FDA and the DEA announced on December 20 that they have seized 44 websites advertising the sale of illicit vaping cartridges containing THC as part of Operation Vapor Lock and the ongoing work by federal, state and local authorities to investigate the supply chain of vaping products associated with recent lung injuries. Read more [here](#).