

# RARC DIGEST

Dear RARC Community,

Please see below for our weekly round-up of addiction-related news and events across Rutgers. Have news or events you'd like us to highlight in an upcoming digest? Send the details to RARC Communication Specialist, Ricki Arvesen ([ricki.arvesen@rutgers.edu](mailto:ricki.arvesen@rutgers.edu)).

## RARC News

- **Visit the RARC Table at Rutgers Day (April 27<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. EST):** Don't miss this opportunity to learn and engage with the RARC at this year's Rutgers Day on Busch Campus. Challenge yourself with our trivia game, "Friendly Family Fun Facts," to test your knowledge of current substance use and behavioral addiction trends. Take advantage of the opportunity to collect valuable educational resources and guides on drug and alcohol awareness to bring home with you. Stay tuned for more details!
- **RARC Distinguished Guest Presentation with Jeff Brown, Executive Director of the New Jersey Cannabis Regulatory Commission (NJCRC) (May 9<sup>th</sup> at 1:00 p.m. EST):** Hosted by the RARC Interest Group on Cannabis, this presentation features Jeff Brown, as he provides insights into NJCRC initiatives and explores avenues for research and collaboration. Following the presentation, there will be a networking session for attendees to exchange ideas, expand connections, and explore opportunities. For more information, [click here](#).
- **RARC Year in Review and Social Event (May 10<sup>th</sup> at 4:00 p.m. EST):** Please save the date for an evening of food and drinks at the Rutgers Addiction Research Center's annual Year in Review and Social Event, held at the Rutgers Club. This gathering presents a wonderful opportunity to connect with fellow colleagues from Rutgers engaged in addiction research, as well as our clinical and community partners. For more information, [click here](#).
- **RARC Mock Grant Review Program:** We are excited to announce our revamped Mock Grant Review Program, now open on a rolling basis! The primary objective of this program is to increase the success of grant proposals submitted to NIH by Rutgers investigators connected to the BHI and/or the RARC. For more information, [click here](#).
- Congratulations to **Dr. Gary Aston-Jones, director of the Brain Health Institute**, for being named a fellow of the **American Association for the Advancement of Science** for his contributions to neuroscience! His pioneering work in circuit and behavioral neuroscience, particularly in understanding brain mechanisms involved in human mental function, has far-reaching implications for disorders like Alzheimer's disease, addiction, and depression. Dr. Aston-Jones's research on the orexin brain system has led to innovative approaches for treating reward disorders and addiction,

demonstrating his commitment to advancing precision therapeutics in neuropsychiatric disorders. For more information, [click here](#).

- **BHI and CAHBIR New Pilot Funding:** The Brain Health Institute and Center for Advanced Human Brain Imaging Research are pleased to announce the availability of funds for pilot grants. Separate mechanisms are available for RU-NB and RBHS faculty. The application due date is **April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2024**. Please see the RFP for details, [click here](#).

### RARC Resource Spotlight

- **Research With Rutgers University Portal:** Research at Rutgers is at the cutting edge of science and technology. To stimulate new research partnerships that drive the economic engine for progress, this innovative tool allows you to search our expansive research network for available expertise, competencies, and capabilities in STEM-related fields across Rutgers University. To view this resource, [click here](#). To check out our other addiction-related resources, [click here!](#)

### RARC DEI Spotlight

- Congratulations this year's [twelve recipients](#) of the **2024-25 Cheryl Wall Faculty Fellowships**, from across all four chancellor-led units, for their exemplary representation of the university's commitment to fostering diversity, equity, and inclusion. The fellowships pay tribute to Dr. Cheryl Wall, who was a champion of these efforts, pioneered cluster hiring at Rutgers and helped guide various diversity projects, including the Rutgers AAUP-AFT's work on race and gender equity.

### Rutgers News

- **Dr. Morgan James**, an executive board member of the RARC and assistant professor of psychiatry at **Robert Wood Johnson Medical School** has teamed up with Vanessa Zhang, a local high school student, to build a machine-learning approach for screening current and existing drugs to determine which have the potential to become effective treatments for addiction-related disorders. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Dr. Lia Nower**, director of the **Center for Gambling Studies**, sheds light on the challenges of promoting responsible gambling, particularly among young sports bettors. Despite available tools like time and deposit limits, a mere fraction of the fastest-growing cohort of bettors, ages 21 to 24, utilize these resources. Nower's research underscores the need for enhanced public education and more effective prevention strategies to address the growing issue of problem gambling among Americans. For more information, [click here](#).
- Congratulations to the recipients of the **2023-24 University-wide Faculty Year-End Excellence Awards!** A special acknowledgment goes to RARC researchers, **Colleen Berryessa** from the **School of Criminal Justice**, who received The Board of Trustees Research Fellowship for Scholarly Excellence Award, and **N. Andrew Peterson** from the **Center for Prevention Science**, who received

The Board of Trustees Award for Excellence in Research. For more information, click [here](#).

- In 2015, **Pat Roos**, then a professor of sociology at **Rutgers University**, lost her 25-year-old son Alex to a heroin overdose. She's releasing her story, **Surviving Alex: A Mother's Story of Love, Loss, and Addiction** (Rutgers University Press, May 17, 2024) to help other families. She calls for a community of action that would improve care for substance users and reduce addiction, realigning public health policy to focus on health rather than criminal justice solutions. To learn more about the book and pre-order from amazon, [click here](#).

## Opportunities

- **Shared Instrumentation Grant / Small Animal Irradiator – Users Needed:** To upgrade and extend RUMIC/CMR services, they are submitting an S10 grant (Shared Instrumentation Grant, SIG, due June 1) to support the purchase of an irradiator to replace an existing outdated unit. The new irradiator will be able to deliver focused radiation to tumors/organs of rats and mice and can administer metered whole-body radiation to induce immunosuppression or to evaluate the efficacy of radiation-mitigating agents. RUMIC/CMR invites your participation as a major or minor user of the system. Contributors to the application will be able to utilize their support services to arrange and conduct exposures. If this opportunity aligns with your research interests, please reach out to Executive Director, Ed Yurkow ([yurkow@vpr.rutgers.edu](mailto:yurkow@vpr.rutgers.edu)) to discuss your project, and explore potential collaborations.
- **Call for Proposal 2024 Opioid Summit:** DMHAS is holding its fifth annual Opioid Summit to address the stigma and misinformation surrounding Opioid Use Disorder (OUD) and to enhance the understanding of harm reduction, prevention, treatment and recovery options. The event will be held on Wednesday, September 18, 2024 through a virtual platform. The Summit aims to provide various stakeholders the opportunity to participate in panels and breakout sessions that assist individuals with navigating addiction and recovery pathways. **Submission Deadline: May 1, 2024.** For more information, [click here](#).
- **Innovations for Substance Use Disorders: Application for the 2024 cohort is now open!** I4SUD is an executive education certificate program offered to select applicants for free through Johns Hopkins Carey Business School (JHU CBS). The program will enroll 30 researchers who are motivated to solve challenges related to substance use disorders (SUDs). During the program, participants will work individually or with their team to assess if their pharmaceutical, digital health, or medical device-related inventions can be transformed into innovations to address challenges in SUDs. Applications are open now until **June 30, 2024**. For more information, [click here](#).

## Funding Opportunities

- **PAR-23-244: Population Approaches to Reducing Alcohol-related Cancer Risk:** This Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) aims to support research on interdisciplinary population approaches to increasing awareness of the relationship between alcohol and cancer risk, understanding and changing social norms related to alcohol consumption, and developing and/or evaluating alcohol

policy approaches. Further, it calls for the development, testing, and implementation of population-level interventions to reduce alcohol-related cancer risk. For more information, [click here](#).

- **PAR-23-122: Research With Activities Related to Diversity (ReWARD) (R01 Clinical Trial Optional):** This program's overarching goal is to enhance the breadth and geographical location of research and research-related activities supported by NIH. The ReWARD program provides support for the health-related research of scientists who are making a significant contribution to Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Accessibility (DEIA) and who have no current NIH research project grant funding. The next application for this program is **June 5, 2024**.
- **RFA-DA-24-038 R41/42 STTR: Developing Regulated Therapeutic and Diagnostic Solutions for Patients Affected by Opioid and/or Stimulants use Disorders (OUD/StUD):** This NOFO encourages Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) applications from small business concerns (SBCs) proposing research projects, directed towards commercialization, for the development of novel, evidence-based, FDA-regulated medical products addressing the needs of patients suffering from opioid use disorders (OUD) and/or stimulant use disorders (StUD). **Due dates: August 13, 2024; February 14, 2025.** For more information, [click here](#).
- **RFA-DA-25-053 R41/42 STTR: Harnessing Artificial Intelligence and Polypharmacology to Discover Pharmacotherapeutics for Substance Use Disorders:** This NOFO encourages Small Business Technology Transfer (STTR) applications from small business concerns (SBCs) proposing research projects directed towards commercialization to harness artificial intelligence (AI), including machine learning (ML), tools, and polypharmacology to identify pharmacotherapeutics with lower toxicity and higher efficacy to prevent or treat substance use disorders (SUDs). **Due date: July 25, 2024.** For more information, [click here](#).
- **PAR-20-249: NIDA Mentored Clinical Scientist Development Program Award in Substance Use and Substance Use Disorder Research (K12 Clinical Trial Optional):** This NOFO encourages applications for institutional research career development (K12) programs that propose to support intensive, supervised research and career development experiences leading to research independence for clinician scientists (Scholars) conducting substance use and substance use disorder (SUD) research. For more information, [click here](#).
- **RFA-DA-25-032: NIH Mechanistic Studies on Social Behavior in Substance Use Disorder (R01 Clinical Trial Optional):** This NOFO is to solicit applications proposing mechanistic, transdisciplinary research on social behavior and its relationships with the onset, trajectory, and impact of Substance Use Disorders (SUDs) and comorbidities. LOI due July 14, 2024. For more information, [click here](#).
- **RARC Funding Opportunities:** The RARC keeps a running list of funding announcements from multiple organizations, including the NIH, that may be of interest to Rutgers addiction researchers. To view this resource, [click here](#).

**News from the Journal of Studies on Alcohol and Drugs, a publication of the Center of Alcohol & Substance Use Studies:**

Just Accepted in JSAD:

- [Examining NSDUH's Assessment of Fentanyl Use: A Comparison of Trends in Fentanyl Use and Fentanyl Overdose Deaths from 2015-2020](#)  
James Aluri, Ramin Mojtabai, and Eric C. Strain
- [Daily Associations Between Injunctive Drinking Norms and Alcohol Consumption](#)  
Olivia M. Warner, Anna M. Porter, Timothy J. Trull, and Denis M. McCarthy
- [Text Messages Conveying Parent Drinking Limits: A Potential Avenue for Preventing and Reducing Alcohol Use in College Students](#)  
Bradley M. Trager, Oliver J. Hatch, Reed M. Morgan, Sarah C. Boyle, Frank T. Matera, and Joseph W. LaBrie

-Follow JSAD on Threads/Instagram/Twitter/Facebook: **@JSADjournal**

-For JSAD's free photo database of alcohol, tobacco, and other drug images, visit:

<https://www.jsad.com/photos>

### Save the Dates!

- **Empowering Excellence: Women in Biomedical Sciences and the Power of Sponsorship Event**  
**Wednesday, April 24<sup>th</sup> at 4:30 p.m. EST**  
Sponsored by the *Women and Gender Equity Faculty Council (WGEC)* the “Empowering Excellence: Women in Biomedical Sciences and the Power of Sponsorship,” offers a panel and networking event. Come hear career advice from RARC Director, Dr. Danielle Dick and network with colleagues! For more information, [click here](#).
- **RUSSW & NeC-ROTAC Webinar – Breaking the Cycle in Salem County: Substance Use and its Generational Impact**  
**Tuesday, April 30<sup>th</sup> at 10:00 a.m. EST**  
Please join for the April Community Conversation, which explores the broader context of substance use and young parents in Salem County. With a focus on families, this virtual conversation aims to unpack Salem County’s maternal and family health outcomes and substance use among young parents while promoting strength-based protective factors. For more information, [click here](#).
- **Center of Alcohol and Substance Use Studies Annual Scholar Virtual Poster Session**  
**Thursday, May 2<sup>nd</sup> at 10:00 a.m. EST**  
The *Center of Alcohol and Substance Use Studies* invites you to their 11th Annual Scholar Virtual Poster Session on Thursday, May 2nd, 2024, from 10 am - 12pm. The Poster Session will be virtual, but it will be followed at 1pm-2pm with an in-person awards ceremony and reception. For full details and to register to attend [click here](#).

### Addiction in the News

- [HHS Finalizes New Provisions to Enhance Integrated Care and Confidentiality for Patients with Substance Use Conditions](#) (HHS)
- [A Common Pathway in the Brain That Enables Addictive Drugs To Hijack Natural Reward Processing Identified](#) (Medical Xpress)
- [Ketamine Bladder: Special Clinics As Youth Addiction ‘Explodes’](#) (BBC)
- [Two-Drug Combo Curbs Drinking for People Battling Severe Alcoholism](#) (U.S. News)

**RARC Resources** - Don't forget the RARC has collated addiction-related resources for Rutgers addiction researchers.

- **Do you need administrative support?** – The RARC would be happy to work with you to budget part of the RARC Program Assistant, Priscille Myrthil-Harder's efforts into your grants as a project coordinator. If you are interested in exploring this option, please reach out to RARC Program Manager, Emily Balcke ([emily.balcke@rutgers.edu](mailto:emily.balcke@rutgers.edu)).
- **Appointments with Health Sciences Librarians:** Did you know that if you have research inquiries or require in-depth assistance from the library, you have the option to [Ask a Librarian](#) through chat or email. Additionally, you can request a [Systematic Review Consultation](#) and/or schedule an online meeting with a Health Sciences librarian at a time that suits your schedule! To check out our other addiction-related resources, [click here!](#)