



RARC Community Newsletter

addiction.rutgers.edu

DIRECTOR'S CORNER

As the largest addiction research center in the world, we take seriously the charge to **translate research advances into real world impact**.

Inside this issue of the RARC Community Newsletter, you'll find information about new projects, emerging findings, and partnerships that showcase how Rutgers research is advancing prevention, intervention, and treatment. We include ways you can learn more and get access to these new cutting-edge programs.

Warmly,

Danielle M. Dick

Danielle M. Dick, PhD
Director, Rutgers Addiction Research Center



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Preventing Problems Before They Start

How *All About U* is bringing personalized prevention to incoming students.



Bringing Prevention Into Clinical Care

How CARES is being tested in pediatric emergency care.



New Findings, Real-World Impact

Research on Medicaid expansion, genetics, opioid outcomes, and treatment access.



Building Better Treatment Through Partnership

Partnering with providers across New Jersey to strengthen treatment research and care.



Join Our Community

Scan to join the RARC community for updates, events, resources, and opportunities to get involved.

NEW INITIATIVE

Preventing Problems Before They Start

This spring, RARC partnered with the Rutgers–New Brunswick Office of Student Affairs to launch All About U, a new online, evidence-based substance use prevention program for incoming first-year students.

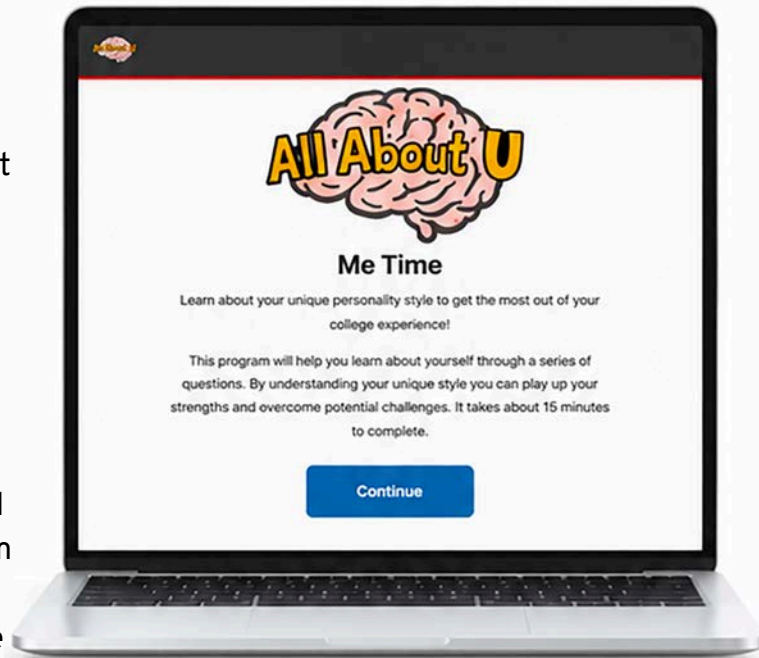
All About U is a new approach to substance use prevention because rather than focusing directly on alcohol/drug education, it is designed to help individuals understand their own risk characteristics and couple that information with psychoeducation and resources *tailored to their personal profile*. The program is a way for students to learn about themselves to get the most out of the college experience, integrating the latest brain science with principles of behavior change.

The program launched in May 2026 and will be completed by incoming first-year students throughout the summer.



~9,000

incoming students



Bring All About U to Your School

Interested in this brief, evidence-based program to support student success and well-being? Contact rarc@bhi.rutgers.edu

RESEARCH IN ACTION

Bringing Prevention Into Clinical Care

RARC researchers are studying how personalized addiction risk tools can be used in real-world health care settings.

A research study led by **Dr. Holly Poore** partnered with **RWJBarnabas Health** providers to prepare **CARES**, the **Comprehensive Addiction Risk Evaluation System**, for use in clinical care. CARES measures genetic and environmental risk factors and provides personalized feedback and resources to help individuals better understand and reduce their risk of developing substance use problems.



Pilot in the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital Pediatric Emergency Department

The team worked with providers to understand patient needs, identify barriers, and test how the platform could fit into real-world workflows. This included a pilot in the Robert Wood Johnson University Hospital pediatric emergency department, where providers shared CARES with patients and gave feedback to guide future improvements.

Interested in CARES?

To learn more about CARES and how to integrate it into your setting, visit addictionrisk.com.

Building Better Treatment Through Partnership

Proposed Center of Excellence

19

faculty investigators

4

schools

6

departments

Building the Future of Precision Treatment

RARC is helping lead major efforts to bring precision medicine into addiction treatment. Precision medicine means moving beyond one-size-fits-all care and toward treatment that better reflects each person's biology, experiences, environment, and needs.

In September 2025, a **Rutgers team** submitted a major federal grant application to create a new Center of Excellence focused on precision health in substance use disorder treatment. The proposed center brings together **19 faculty investigators** from **4 schools** and **6 departments**, with expertise in neuroscience, genetics, brain imaging, artificial intelligence, digital health, and clinical research.

The goal is to better understand why people respond differently to treatment and how care can be tailored to improve recovery.

Partnering With New Jersey Treatment Centers

RARC researchers are working with New Jersey treatment providers to better understand what helps people stay engaged in treatment and what factors may increase risk for relapse or leaving treatment early.

With support from the New Jersey Health Foundation, **Dr. Jill Rabinowitz** and collaborators are collecting information from individuals receiving care at **Discovery Institute** and **Integrity House**. The study includes surveys, follow-up assessments, focus groups, and saliva samples to explore how personal experiences, stress, genetics, and treatment progress may be connected.

So far, the team has collected saliva samples from **182 participants**, with approximately **130 samples processed**.



182

participants

130

samples processed

Join the Treatment Research Network



Is your clinic interested in partnering on substance use disorder research?

Scan the QR code

Building a Statewide Treatment Research Network

RARC is **developing a statewide roster of New Jersey substance use disorder treatment programs** interested in partnering on research.

The goal is to make it easier for Rutgers researchers and treatment providers to connect around shared priorities. By working directly with clinical leaders, RARC hopes to support research that reflects real-world treatment needs and can more quickly inform care.

New Findings, Real-World Impact

INFLUENCING POLICY

Impact of Insurance Coverage on Treatment Access



A new study published in *JAMA Network Open*, led by **Dr. Stephen Crystal**, Director of the Center for Health Services Research, found that **Medicaid expansions** between 2017 and 2023 **significantly increased access to buprenorphine treatment for opioid use disorder**.

The findings highlight the critical role of insurance coverage in expanding treatment access, particularly among low-income populations, and come as policymakers consider potential changes to Medicaid funding.



Scan to read
Rutgers Today
article

KEY TAKEAWAY: Medicaid expansion increased access to buprenorphine treatment.

GENETICS & RISK



A study led by **Drs. Holly Poore** of Robert Wood Johnson Medical School and **Danielle Dick**, Director of the RARC, published in *Nature Mental Health*, **analyzed genetic data from more than 2.2 million individuals** to better understand addiction risk.

The study found that much of the genetic risk for addiction is tied not to specific substances, but to genes involved in reward, impulse control, and decision-making, pointing to new opportunities for prevention and intervention.



Scan to read
Rutgers Today
article

KEY TAKEAWAY: Addiction risk may share genetic pathways across substances.

COMMUNITY IMPACT

Where You Live May Shape Opioid Outcomes



Research published in *Addictive Behaviors Reports*, led by **Dr. Jamey Lister** of the Rutgers School of Social Work, found that where people live may play a major role in opioid-related outcomes.

Analyzing data across all 21 New Jersey counties from 2014 to 2022, the study found that counties with higher social vulnerability had higher rates of treatment need and overdose deaths, underscoring the need for targeted, equitable public health strategies.



Scan to read
Rutgers Today
article

KEY TAKEAWAY: Social vulnerability shapes opioid-related outcomes.

Looking Ahead: RARC at the HELIX

The RARC headquarters will be moving to the new Rutgers Health building at the Health & Life Science Exchange, known as HELIX NJ.

The HELIX will bring together academia, health care, industry, and entrepreneurship in one space, creating new opportunities for collaboration, programming, and innovation.



HELIX NJ:

A hub for collaboration and innovation.



Explore Resources & Get Involved

Visit addiction.rutgers.edu to explore community-facing resources, including:



Addiction Facts and Figures

Evidence-based information on substance use, behavioral addictions, treatment, and recovery.



Participate in Research

Rutgers studies currently seeking participants. Many offer compensation.



Addiction in the News

Regularly updated addiction-related news and research developments.



Website

addiction.rutgers.edu



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