



Vermont Center on Behavior & Health

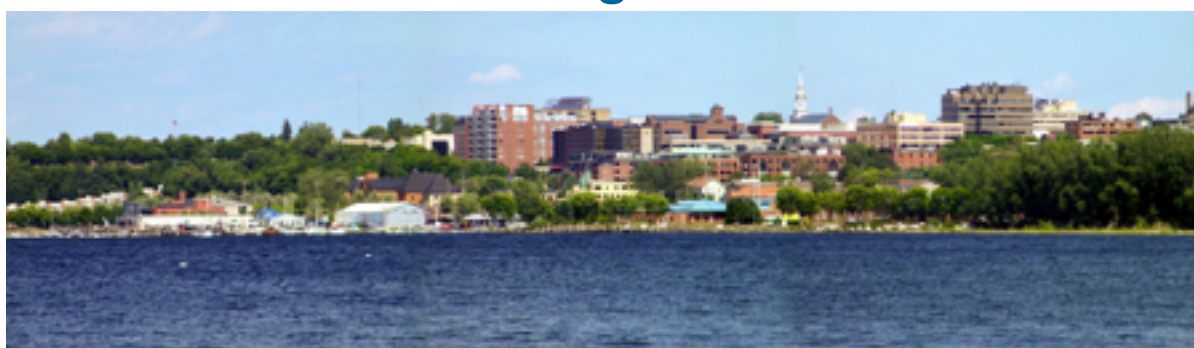
The University of Vermont

Issue 8, July 2018

NEWS & VIEWS from the VCBH

*Investigating the relationships between behavior and
the risk for chronic disease & premature death.*

VCBH Conference Registration now OPEN!



The 2018 VCBH Conference, located in beautiful [Burlington, Vermont](#), will focus on the nation's **opioid epidemic, improving access to treatment, and effective paid/addiction management**. This year's keynote speaker is **Sharon Walsh, Ph.D.**, Director of the Center on Drug and Alcohol Research and Professor of Behavioral Science at the University of Kentucky.

We are now accepting **poster abstract submissions** focused on **research related to the opioid dependence epidemic**. Abstracts will be evaluated on the basis of scientific merit. Please send submissions (including title, authors, affiliations, and 250-word abstract) to

The conference will be **live-streamed** for those of you who cannot attend in person. The link to the live stream is: <https://livestream.com/VCBH/Conference2018>

Please visit our [website](#) to view the conference program and register for the event! We look forward to seeing you there!

VCBH Trainees and Faculty's Recent Pilot Study Examines Promoting Smoking Abstinence Among COPD Patients

VCBH predoctoral trainees, **Joanna Streck, B.A.** and **Taylor Ochalek, M.A.**, along with their mentor **Stacey Sigmon, Ph.D.** and VCBH Director, **Stephen Higgins, Ph.D.**, have published a paper on their recent pilot study promoting smoking abstinence among patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD). COPD is the third leading cause of death in the U.S., with the majority of the of COPD deaths attributable to cigarette smoking. Despite this, those with COPD have a higher prevalence of smoking, poorer quit rates, and higher relapse rates compared to smokers without COPD. Their paper, currently in-press in *Preventive Medicine Reports*, examines the feasibility of an incentives-based intervention for producing an initial period of smoking abstinence among daily COPD smokers. Results from this study support the potential efficacy of an incentives-based approach for reducing cigarette smoking within this vulnerable population.

Garavan Receives T32 Award Focused on Training in the Neurobiology of Substance Abuse

VCBH Investigator, [Hugh Garavan, Ph.D.](#), has been awarded a 5-year T32 pre and post-doctoral training program, making this the second T32 training program within the VCBH. The purpose of this program is to train pre- and post-doctoral scholars in the application of complex systems approaches to the neurobiology of substance abuse. The core curriculum will incorporate: (1) the established complex systems graduate certificate at the University of Vermont; (2) course work in neuroscience, psychology and addiction, including classes focused on developing human subjects research skills; as well as (3) specialized courses designed to directly and

effectively bridge the gap between the core disciplines. The overarching aim of the program is to produce researchers poised to apply state-of-the-art analytic tools to understand the neurobiology of drug abuse.

Dr. Garavan says his team is, “very excited to extend VCBH activities in this direction. Bringing complex systems methodologies to bear on the rich data sets routinely collected by VCBH researchers will hopefully yield new insights into the mechanisms and processes underlying health-related behaviors.”



Sigmon Invited to Speak in Addiction Medicine 2018 Symposium

VCBH faculty and investigator, [Stacey Sigmon, Ph.D.](#), was invited to be a part of the [7th Annual Translational Science Symposium](#) titled: "**Addiction Medicine 2018: Translational Science at the Cutting Edge**". This symposium, co-sponsored by the Boston University Clinical & Translational Science Institute and the Boston Medical Center Grayken Center for Addiction, featured ground breaking addiction medicine research and new policy initiatives being explored in addiction treatment. Dr. Sigmon presented on her novel Interim Buprenorphine Treatment system which uses technology-assisted interim buprenorphine medication dosing for those who are on a wait list to enroll in opioid use treatment. This dosing regimen supports the delivery of pharmacotherapy while minimizing non-adherence and other individual and societal risks that are present during treatment delays.

UVM Accomplishments in Opioid Research Featured in Vermont Medicine

Over the past 5 years, Vermont has become a national leader in combating the opioid epidemic that has shook the U.S. Vermont is specifically known for their "hub and spoke" system of care, developed by UVM Clinical Assistant Professor, **John Brooklyn, M.D.** This system incorporates addiction treatment into primary care. The "spokes" are a network of

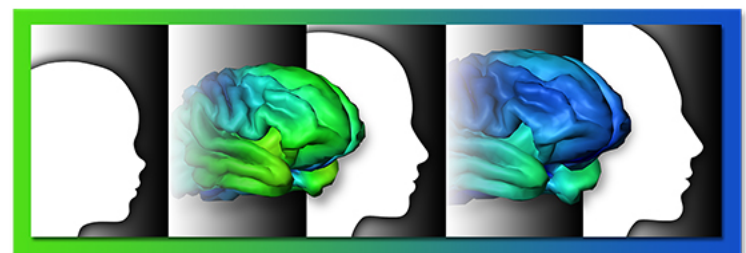
physicians who will administrate medication assisted treatment and the "hubs" are centers in which addiction specialists provide more intensive treatment for patients that require a higher level of support. UVM Researchers, **Stacey Sigmon, Ph.D.** and **Richard Rawson, Ph.D.**, are leaders in opioid research and evaluating the effectiveness of the hub and spoke system. Dr. Rawson's 2017 assessment of the hub and spoke system, and Dr. Sigmon's work in innovative treatment options to support and expand capacity within treatment centers, were both featured in the summer 2018



[Vermont Medicine](#) magazine. This issue features in an in depth article on the hub and spoke system and the key UVM players involved in making this such a success.

Garavan and Potter Speak to Progress of Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development Study

The [Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development](#) (ABCD) study is the largest long-term brain development and child health study in the United States. Funded by the National Institutes of Health (NIH), researchers in the fields of neuroscience and adolescent development from 21 research sites across the country coordinate and conduct the project. Together, they track biological and development of 10,000 participants through adolescence into young adulthood.



Adolescent Brain Cognitive Development®
Teen Brains. Today's Science. Brighter Future.

[Hugh Garavan, Ph.D.](#) and [Alexi Potter, Ph.D.](#), UVM ABCD Principal Investigators and VCBH Researchers, reported on the progress of the study, both nationwide and in Vermont. Dr. Garavan presented initial results describing the national and Vermont sample focusing on behaviors such as levels of exercise, hours of sleep, and extracurricular activities. Dr. Garavan stated the main take home message in this early stage of the study is, “the level of variation in all of these measures in the sample. This sets the state of longitudinal element of this study which will entail following the sample over the next ten years in order to map their neuro-developmental trajectories.”

[Image credit](#)

Former UVM Pre-doctoral Fellow Hired as FDA Social Scientist



Mollie Miller, Ph.D., former UVM Predoctoral Trainee and UVM TCORS Postdoctoral trainee at Brown University, has been hired as a Social Scientist at the FDA Center for Tobacco Products. Dr. Miller previously participated in a 1-year National Academy of Medicine sponsored Tobacco Regulatory Fellowship at the FDA. Dr. Miller earned her Masters and Doctoral degrees in Experimental Psychology from the University of Vermont.

NOTEWORTHY

VCBH TCORS postdoctoral fellow, **Irene Pericot-Valverde, Ph.D.**, accepted a position as the Research Program Director with a faculty appointment at Clemson University.

VCBH T32 predoctoral fellow, **Heidi Melbostad, M.S.**, received the 2018 NIDA Young Investigator Travel Award.

John Hughes, M.D., VCBH Researcher and UVM TCORS Associate Director discusses the present risk for losing funding for the Vermont Tobacco Control program, in [VT Digger](#).

VCBH Investigator, **Sarah Heil, Ph.D.** receives promotion to Full Professor on the Tenure Pathway. Congratulations, Dr. Heil!

TCORS predoctoral trainee, **Dianelle Davis, M.A.** has been awarded a COBRE pilot study that examines the association between maternal smoking and relative reinforcing value of food in infants.

Highlighted Publications

- Lofwall RM, Walsh SL, Nunes EV...**Sigmon SC.**, et al. (in-press). [Weekly and Monthly Subcutaneous Buprenorphine Depot Formulations vs Daily Sublingual Buprenorphine with Naloxone for Treatment of Opioid Use Disorder:](#)

[A Randomized Clinical Trial.](#) *JAMA Internal Medicine.*

- **Ades PA & Gaalema DE.** (2018). [Geographic Variations in Cardiac Rehabilitation Use: Regional Variations in Medical Care or Patient Behaviors?](#) *Circulation.*
- **Ahern TP,** Veres K, Jiang T., Farkas DK, et al. (in-press). [Adjustment Disorder and Type-specific Cancer Incidence: a Danish Cohort Study.](#) *Acta Oncologia*
- Taghavi T, Arger CA, **Heil SH, Higgins, ST,** Tyndale RF. (Accepted). Cigarette Consumption and Biomarkers of Nicotine Exposure during Pregnancy and Postpartum. *Addiction.*
- **Parker MA, Streck JM, Sigmon SC.** [Associations Between Opioid and Nicotine Dependence in Nationally Representative Samples of United States Daily Smokers.](#) *Drug & Alcohol Dependence.*

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