



June 2026 Newsletter

From The Executive Director by Kevin Rich

It is hard for me to believe that summer is here, kids out of school, pools open, and summer family vacations typically a very busy time of the year. I hope everyone has stayed safe during the numerous springtime storms and not suffered any physical loss or property damage. If you are or know a pharmacist, student pharmacist, or pharmacy technician suffering from substance use disorder (SUD) or mental health issue alone or co-occurring with SUD, call OPHP for assistance now, since left alone the problem will not go away and will get progressively worse. I challenge everyone during this spring season to be aware there are some that struggle during this time of the year either due to loneliness or mental health issues and I hope you are willing to reach out and offer support during this difficult time for those struggling, making a difference. If you are missing a loved one or someone close to you, please know that Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) extends our heartfelt condolences.

Enterhealth a Dallas based treatment center has contributed an article in this issue “Can You Trust Online Health Advise? How to spot Misinformation & Know When to Seek Help”. Since the internet is readily available to all and considering the explosion of artificial intelligence it is extremely important to understand the limitation of the internet and information provided especially when it involves your health and wellbeing. I hope everyone enjoys this article.

Enterhealth also contributed another article for this issue “When Are Anti-Addiction Medications Necessary. Medication assisted treatment (MAT) certainly is controversial but has its place considering harm reduction in individuals who suffer from substance use disorder. These medications should not be overlooked and have been considered safe/effective in

individuals in the health care profession who also suffer from a substance use disorder. I hope you enjoy this article.

When a pharmacist, student pharmacist or pharmacy technician enters the OPHP program, and begins their road to personal recovery from a substance use disorder (SUD) and/or co-occurring issue often the family, friends or colleagues may not understand the vital role they may play in the OPHP participant's recovery. They may even verbalize that they knew something was wrong but couldn't identify it and were shocked to find that their loved one, friend or colleague suffered from a SUD or co-occurring issue. In this issue OPHP will include an article "Identifying the Problem" in hopes to help loved ones identify the issues in those suffering and what they can do to support their loved ones. Also, it is important for friends, family members or colleagues to get assistance since they also are impacted by this insidious disease.

OPHP has a free-standing website at www.ophp.us Please visit our website to learn more about the services OPHP provides the pharmacy profession regarding assistance with a personal substance use disorder and/or mental health issues. Contact OPHP if you have any questions or need assistance.

Don't forget, take time for self-care, and if you are struggling with SUD or other mental health issues, or you know another pharmacist or student pharmacist who you think maybe suffering call the (OPHP) Helpline immediately. There are those who struggle or have a hard time dealing with life on life's terms daily. Can I challenge everyone to recognize these struggles either in themselves or others and reach out for help or be willing to help if needed? If you find yourself struggling don't hesitate to reach out to (OPHP) for help that is readily available if needed. If you know someone struggling during this time, I hope you will be willing to be available for them if needed. If you are a pharmacist or student pharmacist and you are struggling personally with the substance use disorder or other mental health issues, I would encourage you to call OPHP today and self-report your issues now. The advantages of self-reporting your own issues of substance use disorder or mental health issues are that you can get well or get in recovery, and if there are no legal issues or complaint the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy does not get involved. This is a tremendous opportunity, so don't let it slip away if you are suffering from substance use disorder or other mental health issues call OPHP before it is too late, resulting in disciplinary action on your intern/pharmacy license or other legal consequences.

I encourage any pharmacist or student pharmacist that may be struggling with substance use disorder or any other mental health issue, or if you know a pharmacist or student pharmacist you think may be struggling, to call the OPHP Help Line now.

OPHP Helpline:
1-800-260-7574 (statewide)
405-557-5773 (local)

All calls are confidential and OPHP is readily available for help.

I assure you it is the best thing you could do for a family member, friend, colleague or yourself. If there is no legal action, the pharmacist or student pharmacist can get the help and treatment they need for their disease and remain anonymous to the Oklahoma State Board of Pharmacy as long as they comply with the recovery recommendations of OPHP.

If you haven't already contributed to OPHP this year, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. These contributions help OPHP continue to assist pharmacists/pharmacy students with the recovery process. To donate, please use the form below or click [here](#) to donate online. For those who have contributed this year, please accept our sincere thanks.

Please enjoy the newsletter

Can You Trust Online Health Advice? How to Spot Misinformation & Know When to Seek Help

May 13, 2026

By Abigail Daudelin, LCSW, LCDC, Enterhealth Therapist

Health information has never been more accessible, making it increasingly important to evaluate health advice online before acting on it. Access to information can be empowering, but it also introduces risk, especially when it comes to mental health and substance use, where misinformation can reinforce harmful coping patterns or delay appropriate care.

In some cases, online health advice can unintentionally reinforce the very patterns someone is trying to change.

Not all health advice shared online is accurate, evidence-based, or safe to follow. In some cases, misleading information can delay proper care, reinforce unhealthy patterns, or make complex behavioral health concerns seem easier to manage alone than they really are.

The Most Common Mistake When Evaluating Health Advice Online

When it comes to evaluating online health information, recognizing confirmation bias is a major challenge. Confirmation bias occurs when people seek out or accept information that supports what they already believe, while dismissing evidence that challenges those beliefs. This pattern often happens subtly and without conscious awareness.

For example, confirmation bias can lead someone to:

- **Compare their drinking or substance use to people with more severe symptoms**
- **Focus on stories that make their behavior seem manageable**
- **Ignore signs that alcohol or drug use has started to affect their health, relationships, work, or daily functioning**
- **Search for less concerning explanations for anxiety, depression, mood changes, or sleep problems**
- **Overlook information that suggests a need for professional support**

To make more balanced decisions, people need to review information from multiple credible sources, consider alternative explanations, and avoid drawing conclusions from limited data.

Most importantly, online research should not replace professional medical or behavioral health evaluation when symptoms persist, worsen, or interfere with daily life.

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How to Identify Reliable Online Health Advice & Information

Evaluating the credibility of a source is one of the most important steps in assessing online health information. Articles or recommendations from licensed medical professionals or credentialed specialists are more likely to reflect current standards of care. Reliable sources typically identify the author's training, credentials, and area of expertise.

Transparency is another important factor. Credible sources explain how they developed the information, often referencing research studies, clinical data, or review from qualified experts. This matters especially when evaluating advice related to substance use, mental health symptoms, medications, supplements, or treatment options.

People should also consider the purpose behind the information. Sources that heavily promote a specific product, program, or supplement as a universal solution should raise concern. Health information that presents one product or approach as the only answer to complex behavioral health concerns often lacks scientific support.

Cross-checking information across multiple reputable sources provides an additional safeguard. When several independent sources report similar findings, confidence in the information increases.

Claims supported only by personal testimonials deserve careful review. Individual experiences can be meaningful, but they do not replace structured testing, clinical evidence, or professional evaluation.

Why Quick-Fix Online Health Advice Is So Appealing

Many people feel drawn to simplified solutions when facing health concerns. Human behavior often favors the path of least resistance, especially when someone feels anxious, overwhelmed, discouraged, or physically uncomfortable.

For people struggling with substance use or mental health symptoms, quick-fix advice can feel especially appealing because it promises relief without the discomfort of deeper change.

Content that promotes “natural detox,” instant mood support, at-home treatment, or one-step solutions often feels easier than speaking with a professional, changing long-standing patterns, or addressing the underlying causes of symptoms. This can include detox programs, supplement protocols, or trending treatments that may seem promising online but still require careful evaluation, clinical oversight, and support that fits the person’s needs.

In contrast, sustainable health improvements—such as improving sleep, building healthier coping skills, reducing substance use, addressing trauma, or managing stress—require ongoing effort and consistency. These changes can feel overwhelming, especially when symptoms are persistent.

While the idea of an easy solution is attractive, meaningful health improvements rarely occur overnight. Sustainable progress typically requires gradual changes, professional guidance, and support tailored to the person’s needs.

Are Viral Health Trends Online Safe or Effective?

Viral health trends can spread rapidly, often before experts fully understand their safety or effectiveness. However, viral popularity does not equal scientific accuracy.

One important consideration is individual variation. Every person's health history, lifestyle, genetics, environment, mental health, and substance use history can affect how they respond to a product, supplement, routine, or treatment approach. A strategy that appears effective for one person may not produce the same results for another.

Social media also rarely presents the full picture. Influencers or content creators may highlight a specific product or intervention without fully disclosing other contributing factors, such as long-term lifestyle changes, medical supervision, substance use, medication interactions, or financial incentives.

In some cases, individuals promoting products or programs may receive compensation or benefits tied to sales or engagement. This creates potential bias, particularly when they do not clearly discuss risks, side effects, or limitations.

Another important concept to understand is that correlation does not equal causation. Improvements seen after trying a product or method may result from several factors happening at the same time, not from a single change. This applies not only to social media content, but also to automated tools or AI-generated health advice, which people should review carefully and verify through trusted sources.

When to Trust Online Health Advice & When to Seek Help

Online health advice and health research can be valuable, but they have important limitations.

When symptoms persist, worsen, or represent a noticeable change from normal functioning, people should speak with a qualified professional.

Continuing to search for answers online rather than consulting a provider can delay diagnosis and allow symptoms to worsen. Early intervention and accurate diagnosis can significantly impact long-term outcomes.

This is especially important when substance use, mood changes, anxiety, depression, sleep problems, withdrawal symptoms, or changes in behavior begin to affect daily life. Licensed professionals can provide individualized evaluation that considers medical history, mental health, substance use history, risk factors, and current health status—factors that online resources cannot fully assess.

Online information should support informed conversations with professionals, not replace them.

When Are Anti-Addiction Medications Necessary?

July 20, 2023

Addiction is a complex and challenging issue that affects millions of people worldwide. And while traditional approaches to addiction treatment – such as therapy and support groups (e.g., 12-step) – have proven successful, the landscape of addiction treatment has evolved to embrace a more comprehensive and integrated approach. In particular, the use of medication-assisted treatment (MAT), which combines anti-addiction medications with behavioral therapy and other interventions, has gained widespread recognition and adoption in recent years.

In fact, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) [performed extensive research on MAT](#) that highlights its effectiveness in reducing drug use, decreasing overdose deaths, improving treatment retention rates, and preventing the spread of infectious diseases.

Understanding addiction, dependence, and withdrawal

Addiction and dependence are two interrelated, but distinct aspects of substance use disorders. Understanding the physical and mental dimensions is crucial to addressing the symptoms and challenges associated with withdrawal.

Physical aspects of addiction & dependence

The physical aspect of addiction and dependence involves changes that occur in the body due to prolonged substance abuse. With repeated exposure to addictive substances, the brain undergoes adaptations that cause neurochemical imbalances and alter brain circuitry. These changes contribute to the development of tolerance and physical dependence.

Tolerance occurs when the body gets used to the presence of a substance and requires larger doses to achieve the same effects. This typically leads users to escalate their substance use, further increasing the risk of harmful consequences.

Physical dependence occurs when the body “depends” on the substance to function normally and leads to withdrawal symptoms when the person stops taking the substance or significantly decreases their dose. Note that dependence can occur without addiction, as addiction encompasses both physical and psychological components.

Mental aspects of addiction & dependence

The mental aspect of addiction and dependence involves the psychological and behavioral components of substance use disorders. Addiction is marked by compulsive drug-seeking and drug-taking behaviors despite negative consequences. It is a complex interplay of reward pathways, motivational systems, and cognitive processes in the brain.

The mental aspect of addiction encompasses cravings, psychological dependence, and the psychological impact of withdrawal. Cravings are intense desires or urges to use a substance, triggered by cues associated with substance use. Psychological dependence refers to the emotional reliance on a substance to cope with negative emotions, stress, or other challenges. Addiction often involves distorted thinking patterns, impaired judgment, and difficulties in controlling substance use.

Withdrawal symptoms and challenges

Withdrawal occurs when a person who is dependent on a substance discontinues or significantly reduces their intake, leading to a range of physical and psychological symptoms.

Some common withdrawal symptoms and challenges associated with substance withdrawal include:

Physical Symptoms:

- Nausea, vomiting, and gastrointestinal disturbances
- Muscle aches, tremors, and restlessness
- Sweating, chills, and fluctuations in body temperature
- Fatigue, lethargy, and sleep disturbances
- Headaches and dizziness

Psychological Symptoms:

- Anxiety, irritability, and agitation
- Depression, mood swings, and emotional instability
- Difficulty concentrating and impaired cognitive function
- Intense cravings and strong urges to use the substance
- Increased sensitivity to stress and emotional triggers

Withdrawal symptoms can be highly distressing and may lead to relapse if not properly managed. Medical supervision, support from healthcare professionals, and appropriate medications can help alleviate these symptoms and ensure a safer and more comfortable withdrawal process.

How anti-addiction medications assist in addiction treatment

Anti-addiction medications play a crucial role in supporting addiction treatment by addressing the physiological and neurochemical aspects of addiction. They work in conjunction with counseling and behavioral therapy to enhance the chances of successful recovery.

Here are some ways anti-addiction medications assist in addiction treatment:

1. Reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms

One of the primary benefits of anti-addiction medications is their ability to reduce cravings and alleviate withdrawal symptoms. These medications target specific receptors in the brain associated with the addictive substance, either by mimicking its effects or blocking its action. By doing so, they help stabilize brain chemistry and reduce the intense urges to use drugs or alcohol. This can significantly enhance an individual's ability to resist relapse and maintain abstinence.

2. Increasing treatment retention rates

Addiction is a chronic condition that often requires long-term treatment and support. However, many individuals struggle to stay engaged in treatment programs due to the overwhelming cravings and distressing withdrawal symptoms. Anti-addiction medications can increase treatment retention rates by providing individuals with a greater sense of control over their addiction. By alleviating the physical discomfort associated with withdrawal, these medications enhance a person's motivation to continue with therapy and other supportive interventions.

3. Improving overall treatment outcomes

The integration of anti-addiction medications into comprehensive treatment plans has shown promising results in improving overall treatment outcomes. Research suggests that medication-assisted treatment (MAT) can lead to reduced drug use, decreased risk of relapse, and improved social functioning. By addressing the physiological aspects of addiction, these medications create a more solid foundation for individuals to engage in therapy, learn coping strategies, and make positive lifestyle changes.

4. Reducing the risk of relapse.

Relapse is a common challenge in addiction recovery. Anti-addiction medications can help mitigate the risk of relapse by reducing cravings and withdrawal symptoms, which are major triggers for resuming substance use. By providing stability and support during the early stages of recovery, these medications give individuals a better chance of maintaining abstinence and transitioning into a healthier, drug-free life.

What medications may be used to treat addiction?

There are a number of medications approved by regulatory authorities for the treatment of addiction to specific substances.

Here are some examples of medications commonly used to treat addiction:

Opioid addiction medications:

- Buprenorphine: A partial opioid agonist that activates the same receptors as opioids but with a milder effect, helping to alleviate withdrawal symptoms and cravings.
- Naltrexone: An opioid antagonist that blocks the effects of opioids, reducing the rewarding effects and preventing relapse.

Alcohol addiction medications:

- Disulfiram: Creates unpleasant physical reactions (such as nausea and flushing) when alcohol is consumed, acting as a deterrent for individuals with alcohol use disorder.
- Acamprosate: Helps stabilize the brain's balance of chemicals disrupted by chronic alcohol use, reducing cravings and promoting abstinence.
- Naltrexone: Also used for alcohol addiction, it reduces the rewarding effects of alcohol and helps prevent relapse.

While there are no approved medications designed specifically for the treatment of addiction to certain classes of drugs such as sedatives (like benzodiazepines) and stimulants (like methamphetamine), there are MAT interventions that can help.

For example, a medical professional may prescribe a longer-acting substitute and slowly taper down the dose to ease unpleasant symptoms, keeping the patient stable and allowing them to participate in their treatment program. Other medications, such as anti-depressants, non-addicting sleep aids, etc. may also be prescribed to manage short-term physical and mental issues.

Ultimately, the selection of medications depends on individual circumstances, the specific substance of abuse, and the assessment(s) of healthcare professionals. Different medications may be used in combination and tailored to meet the unique needs of each person in their recovery journey. Additionally, ongoing medical supervision and regular monitoring are essential to ensure the safe and effective use of any medications.

PLEASE CONSIDER

If you haven't already contributed to OPHP this year, please consider making a tax-deductible contribution. These contributions help OPHP continue to assist pharmacists/pharmacy students with the recovery process. To donate, please use the form below or [click here to donate online](#). For those who have contributed this year, please accept our sincere thanks.

Please enjoy the newsletter

Donate by check or credit card

Contact

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WHAT DO YOU DO IF YOU SUSPECT A COLLEAGUE

HAS A PROBLEM WITH SUBSTANCE USE DISORDER Trust your instincts!!

Call Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP) immediately

at the OPHP Help Line 1-800-260-7574 statewide or

405-413-7657 locally

Do not confront alone

Left alone the problem will not go away.

If you or a pharmacist, student pharmacist, or pharmacy technician you care about is suffering from substance use disorder.

there is a solution



**AMERICAN PHARMACISTS
ASSOCIATION
(APhA) INSTITUTE ON SUBSTANCE
USE DISORDER**

May 27-31, 2026, the APhA Institute on Substance Use Disorder (SUD) was held at the University of Utah, Salt Lake City, UT. I encourage any pharmacist, student pharmacist or pharmacy technician to attend this institute.

Substance Use Disorder is such a scourge and impacts so many more than just the individual consuming the chemical and this institute offers support to all those impacted, friends, colleagues and family members. This institute offers five (5) days of education on the impact of SUD and solutions through counseling, 12-step meetings including alanon, etc. I assure everyone that attends this institute will have their life changed in a positive way forever.

OPHP sponsored eleven (11) student pharmacists from OU and one (1) student pharmacist from SWOSU based on an essay contest where the student pharmacists indicate why they are interested in attending this institute and what they plan to bring back to each of their perspective colleges of pharmacy to make a difference. Also, OPHP sponsored three (3) OPHP participants that wanted to attend as well as one (1) OPHP Board of Director member.

In an upcoming OPHP Newsletter in September 2026 watch for these student pharmacists and OPHP participants and OPHP Board of Director members share their experiences at this institute often referred to as their “Utah Experience”

If you are interested in attending this Institute in the future you can visit the following link:

<https://aphainstitute.pharmacist.com/>

OPHP Helpline

If anyone has questions or needs assistance with a chemical dependency problem either for a friend or themselves please call

Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists

(OPHP)

1-800-260-7574 (statewide) There is a solution.

All calls are confidential

(OPHP) 405-413-7657 (local)

1-800-260-7574 (statewide) There is a solution. All

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(OPHP)

1-800-260-7574 (statewide) There is a solution. All calls are confidential

Identifying the Problem

Substance Use Disorder is a cunning, baffling, miserable disease. Denial is a major factor involved stopping those with this disease from seeking help for themselves. So often concerned family members, friends and colleagues, express knowledge that a problem exists, but are unable to identify it. The following *Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory* may help to identify the problem, and get them the help that is so readily available before it is too late.

Impaired Pharmacist Symptom Inventory

- Overwork**
 - Disorganized schedule
 - Spasmodic work pace**
 - Unreasonable behavior
 - Inaccessible to patients and employer
 - Prescription errors**
 - Patient complaints
 - Frequent absences
 - Decreasing workload and tolerance
 - Frequent days off for vague reasons
 - Taking sexual advantage of coworkers or customers
 - Filling illegal prescriptions
 - Taking and/or using drugs from pharmacy without follow-up by physician**
 - Taking/selling drugs to others or giving them to family or friends
 - Often late, absent or ill
 - Decreasing work performance
 - "Pharmacy Gossip"
 - Incommunicative/unavailable
 - Alcohol on breath while in pharmacy
- **early signs

What do you do if you suspect a colleague has a problem with substance use disorder?

Trust your instincts!!

Call Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)

immediately OPHP Helpline 800-260-7574

Do not confront alone

Left alone the problem will not go away.

If you or a pharmacist you care about is suffering from substance use disorder

There is a solution

Oklahoma Pharmacists Helping Pharmacists (OPHP)

Is readily available for help

Call the OPHP Helpline 800-260-7574

All calls are confidential.