

UK awarded \$7.2M to reduce overdose risk among justice-involved women

BY ELIZABETH CHAPIN
UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY

LEXINGTON — University of Kentucky researchers have been awarded a five-year grant, projected to total \$7.2 million, from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to test overdose prevention strategies for women transitioning from jail back into rural Kentucky communities.

The new project is supported by the NIH's National Institute on Drug Abuse as part of its Justice Community Overdose Innovation Network (JCOIN), a nationwide program that tests strategies to expand effective treatment, recovery and related services for individuals involved in the criminal legal system.

Women involved in the criminal legal system face elevated overdose risk during the vulnerable period of community re-entry due to factors including unaddressed trauma, mental health needs and relationship dynamics with substance use. Prevention approaches targeting these unique needs remain limited, especially in underserved rural areas.

The new study, co-led by Michele Staton, Ph.D., and Carrie Oser, Ph.D., aims to determine what approaches are most effective at preventing overdose and increasing treatment engagement during this high-risk reentry period.

The project is Phase II of the Kentucky Women's Justice Community Opioid Innovation Network. The first phase focused on connecting women in jail to medications for opioid use disorder through telehealth and peer navigation services.

"We are so grateful to be able to continue this research to serve some of the most vulnerable women in our state," said Staton, a professor in the UK College of Medicine Department of Behavioral Science and a faculty associate of the UK Center on Drug and Alcohol Research. "We had successes with JCOIN in linking women to treatment after release, but about 4% of our participants reported a nonfatal overdose

after release. This project allows the opportunity to more intensively target overdose prevention efforts for women in rural communities."

"Women with substance use disorders are at an elevated risk for an overdose when released from incarceration due to reduced tolerance, and building up access to treatment and supportive networks will reduce harm and keep them safe," said Oser, Di Silvestro Endowed Professor and University Research Professor in the UK College of Arts and Sciences Department of Sociology. "Our overall goal is to prevent overdoses. We can't get someone into treatment or reunify them with their family if they've had a fatal overdose. Preventing overdoses is the critical first step."

The five-year clinical trial will enroll 300 women with opioid or stimulant use disorders from three jails in rural Appalachian Kentucky. The study will test three evidence-based interventions — recovery coaching, support person engagement and contingency management — in different combinations.

All women will receive recovery coaching, which connects them with trained mentors with lived experience with substance use recovery and criminal legal involvement, employed by Voices of Hope, a recovery community center in Lexington, Kentucky. Recovery coaches provide personalized support, helping individuals access treatment and recovery resources.

Before their release from jail, women will be randomly assigned to receive recovery coaching alone or recovery coaching combined with support person engagement, which involves identifying and involving a trusted friend or family member in the individual's overdose prevention plan. After release, some women will also receive contingency management — a behavioral therapy that provides rewards or incentives for meeting overdose prevention goals.

The team will follow participants for one year after release to measure overdose risk and treatment outcomes. The study will also assess how acceptable and practical the interventions are by gathering input from both

the women and the providers working with them.

The interdisciplinary UK team includes co-investigators from the colleges of Arts and Sciences, Medicine, Nursing and Pharmacy. Study partners include

the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy and the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services. Van Ingram, executive director of the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, will serve as the justice partner, and Sarah

Johnson, substance use treatment director at the Kentucky Cabinet for Health and Family Services, will serve as the treatment partner. The project will partner with Voices of Hope to provide recovery coaching services.

**LAUREL CIRCUIT COURT
MASTER COMMISSIONER SALE
www.laurelcountymastercommissioner.com
WHEN - FRIDAY, JULY 10, 2026 at 1:00 PM
WHERE - LAUREL COUNTY JUDICIAL CENTER, 2ND FLOOR, ROOM 201
TERMS OF SALE - 10% DOWN DAY OF SALE (CHECK'S ONLY)
BALANCE WITHIN THIRTY (30) DAYS**

Sale #1 Vanderbilt Mortgage and Finance, Inc. v. Brandon D. Hayes, et al.,
Division II, 25-CI-973
Plaintiff's Attorney: G. Michael Cain (502)226-6100
Property Location: 92 River Hill Road, London
Map ID: 034-00-00-025.01 APPRAISEMENT: \$40,000.00

Sale #2 BG48, LLC., v. Eugene D. Burton, et al.,
Division II, 24-CI-595
Plaintiff's Attorney: R.Eric Craig (502)589-2200
Property Location: Birch Creek Lane, East Bernstadt
Map ID: 028-00-00-081.07 APPRAISEMENT: \$75,000.00

Sale #3 Lakeview Loan Servicing, LLC., v. Tazia Knox, et al.,
Division II, 25-CI-1056
Plaintiff's Attorney: Victoria M. Kadreva Holmes (317)264-5000
Property Location: 43 Homestead Lane, London
Map ID: 050-70-00-027.00 APPRAISEMENT: \$175,000.00

Sale #4 Kentucky Housing Corporation v. Larry F. Brummett, et al.,
Division II, 25-CI-716
Plaintiff's Attorney: Septtimous Taylor (270)684-1606
Property Location: 5459 Slate Lick Road, London
Map ID: 039-00-00-116.00 APPRAISEMENT: \$75,000.00

Sale #5 ADS Tax Lien Company, LLC. v. Jerry M. Smith, et al.,
Division II, 24-CI-44
Plaintiff's Attorney: Katy Lawrence (513)221-2509
Property Location: 6095 N. Highway 25, East Bernstadt
Map ID: 025-00-00-051.00 APPRAISEMENT: \$80,000.00

Sale #6 21st Mortgage Corporation v. Ronnie Dewayne Henson, et al.,
Division I, 24-CI-712
Plaintiff's Attorney: G. Michael Cain (502)226-6100
Property Location: 1256 Lick Fork Road, London
Map ID: 066-00-00-047.02
Map ID: 066-00-00-047.02M01 APPRAISEMENT: \$160,000.00

Sale #7 PennyMac Loan Services, LLC v. Caleb David Ingram, et al.,
Division I, 25-CI-169
Plaintiff's Attorney: Claire T. Morgan (636)537-0110
Property Location: 911 Corn Cemetery Road, London
Map ID: 105-00-00-128.01 APPRAISEMENT: \$85,000.00

Sale #8 RT Enterprises of Kentucky, LLC. v. Unknown Heirs of Thomas Strong, et al.,
Division I, 18-CI-366
Plaintiff's Attorney: Kay Hensley (606)877-2755
Property Location: Old Hare Road, East Bernstadt
Map ID: 026-00-00-071.00 APPRAISEMENT; \$104,000.00

Sale #9 Nationstar Mortgage, LLC., v. Lance Whitlatch
Division I, 25-CI-1112
Plaintiff's Attorney: Michael R. Brinkman (513)322-7000
Property Location: 349 Hollywood Drive, Corbin
Map ID: 120-00-00-258.76 APPRAISEMENT: \$225,000.00

A LAUREL COUNTY DEPUTY SHERIFF, BAILIFF, OR OTHER COURT SECURITY OFFICER(S) WILL BE PRESENT TO ENFORCE THE ORDERS OF THE KENTUCKY SUPREME COURT.

Douglas G. Bengé, Esquire
Master Commissioner
Laurel Circuit Court

WEDDLE

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Caperton for his careful consideration of this matter."

Weddle also thanked London residents for their support.

"Most importantly, I want to thank the people of London for the trust you have placed in me. Serving as your mayor has been one of the greatest honors of my life," he stated.

Looking ahead, Weddle said his focus remains on serving the city through the remainder of his term.

"My focus now is exactly where it has always been: serving this city. I intend to finish my term strong, continue working every day on behalf of our community, and keep doing the job the people elected me to do."

Weddle's attorney, Carmine G. Iaccarino, later released a statement saying

the mayor would accept the court's decision despite maintaining that he is a resident of the City of London.

"Mayor Weddle has dedicated his time, talent, and treasure to making city government work for the citizens of the City of London," Iaccarino said. "While he maintains that he is a resident of the City, Mayor Weddle will accept this decision, and expresses his thanks to Judge Caperton, and most importantly, the people of London. He intends to finish his term strong and will continue to do the work he was elected to do."

According to a report from WKYT, Weddle's attorney confirmed that he would not be filing for an appeal.

Attorney Brandon Voelker, who represented the petitioners, did not respond to requests for comment by press time.