Rutgers Addiction Research Center
Brain Health Institute

FALL EDITION

RARC COMMUNITY NEWSLETTER

DIRECTOR'S CORNER



This fall marks an exciting moment for the Rutgers Addiction Research Center within the Brain Health Institute as we celebrate five years of bringing together researchers, clinicians, trainees, and community partners to advance addiction science.

Since our founding, RARC has grown into a community of more than 120 affiliated researchers working across prevention, treatment, recovery, neuroscience, genetics, and policy. But scientific discovery is only one part of our mission. Our next chapter is focused on making sure that research reaches the people who can use it — families, health professionals, schools, communities, and individuals affected by substance use and behavioral addictions.

In this issue, we highlight several examples of that commitment in action, from a new collaboration with Partnership to End Addiction to the expansion of All About U across Rutgers–New Brunswick. We also look back at our fifth-anniversary Fall Symposium and share some of the ways RARC is making emerging addiction research more accessible to the public.

Thank you for being part of the RARC community.

Warmly,

Danielle M. Dick, PhD
Director, Rutgers Addiction Research Center within the Brain Health Institute

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

TURNING SCIENCE INTO SUPPORT
RARC and Partnership to End Addiction join forces to help research reach families and communities faster.
PAGE 2

FIVE YEARS OF RARC
Highlights from the 2026 Fall Symposium and RARC's next chapter.
PAGE 3

REIMAGINING PREVENTION
How All About U is bringing personalized, science-based prevention to Rutgers students.
PAGE 4

MAKING RESEARCH ACCESSIBLE
Explore new RARC stories translating addiction research into information you can use.
PAGE 5

TURNING SCIENCE INTO SUPPORT

RARC AND PARTNERSHIP TO END ADDICTION LAUNCH NEW COLLABORATION

The Rutgers Addiction Research Center (RARC) and Partnership to End Addiction, a national nonprofit dedicated to helping families, professionals, and communities prevent and address substance use among teens and young adults, have launched a new collaboration designed to bring addiction science into the real world more quickly.

Research can take years to make its way from scientific journals into everyday practice. RARC and Partnership to End Addiction are working to shorten that gap by bringing together Rutgers researchers with professionals who work directly with families, communities, educators, and health care providers.

The collaboration creates a two-way connection. RARC researchers can help translate new scientific findings into practical information and resources, while Partnership to End Addiction can share the questions, challenges, and needs it hears from families and professionals to help inform future research.



Daniele M. Dick and Creighton Drury at the launch of the RARC and Partnership to End Addiction collaboration.

drugfree.org →

> **"As we push for broader change, the research shows us where we need to go and lets us give feedback to researchers on where new research is needed."**
> Creighton Drury, CEO, Partnership to End Addiction

For families navigating substance use — whether concerned about a loved one, supporting someone in recovery, or simply trying to understand risk — the goal is to make trustworthy scientific information easy to find, understand, and use.

RESEARCH TO REAL-WORLD IMPACT

The collaboration reflects a central goal of RARC's next strategic chapter: ensuring that scientific discoveries do not remain within universities and journals, but ultimately improve prevention, treatment, recovery, and support in communities.

WHAT WILL THE COLLABORATION DO?

- Translate and share emerging addiction research with the public
- Develop educational resources and programming for families and professionals
- Identify opportunities for joint research based on real-world needs
- Create training and internship opportunities
- Connect researchers more directly with the communities their work is intended to serve

LEARN MORE

Scan the QR code to learn more about RARC, our collaboration with Partnership to End Addiction, and how this work is making a difference in communities.

CELEBRATING FIVE YEARS OF RESEARCH TO REAL-WORLD IMPACT

2026 RARC FALL SYMPOSIUM MARKS FIVE YEARS OF IMPACT

On September 16, researchers, clinicians, trainees, and community partners came together for the 2026 **RARC Fall Symposium**, marking the five-year anniversary of the Rutgers Addiction Research Center.

This year's theme, Research to Real-World Impact, reflected both how far RARC has come and where the Center is headed next: strengthening connections between scientific discovery and meaningful improvements in prevention, treatment, recovery, and public health.

The day brought together experts from across addiction science to share new research, exchange ideas, and explore how discoveries can be translated into better outcomes for individuals, families, and communities.





CONNECTING SCIENCE, EXPERIENCE, AND COMMUNITY

The symposium featured presentations from researchers and leaders working across the addiction field, along with opportunities to hear directly from people helping bridge research and real-world impact.

RARC Director Danielle Dick, PhD, shared the Center's strategic vision for its next chapter, while leaders and community partners highlighted the importance of translating research into information and services that people can use.

The symposium also showcased the next generation of addiction scientists through trainee presentations and a research poster session. Outstanding trainee work was recognized across clinical, neuroscience, and undergraduate research categories.

FIVE YEARS — AND LOOKING AHEAD

Since its launch, RARC has grown into a multidisciplinary research community spanning Rutgers schools, campuses, and areas of expertise. As the Center enters its next five years, the focus remains clear: advancing cutting-edge addiction science while strengthening the pathways that move research from discovery to impact.

MAKING ADDICTION SCIENCE EASIER TO UNDERSTAND

RESEARCH INSIGHTS, IN PLAIN LANGUAGE

Scientific papers can provide important new insights into addiction, but their findings are not always easy for people outside of research to access or interpret. Through the RARC Research Blog, we translate emerging findings from Rutgers researchers into brief, accessible stories that explain what the research found, why it matters, and what questions still remain.



What Can the Gut Tell Us About Cocaine Addiction?

Researchers are examining how cocaine use may alter the gut microbiome and whether changes in gut bacteria could be linked with addiction-related behaviors. The work reflects growing interest in the connection between the gut and brain — and how that relationship might help researchers better understand substance use disorders.

Coaches May Be an Overlooked Group in Gambling Prevention

Sports coaches may encounter gambling in ways that differ from athletes and the broader public. New research is helping identify gambling behaviors and risks among coaches, pointing to a group that may benefit from greater attention in prevention efforts.





When Alcohol Cues Feel More Relevant, Drinking Risk May Rise the Same Day

Rutgers researchers are studying how attention to alcohol-related cues can shift from day to day — and how those changes may relate to drinking behavior in real time.

Love, Empathy, and Recovery

Social connection can play an important role in recovery. New research is examining how empathy, close relationships, and social experiences may interact with opioid use disorder and recovery, helping scientists better understand the interpersonal side of addiction.





Why Young Adults Use Alcohol and Cannabis May Change From Day to Day

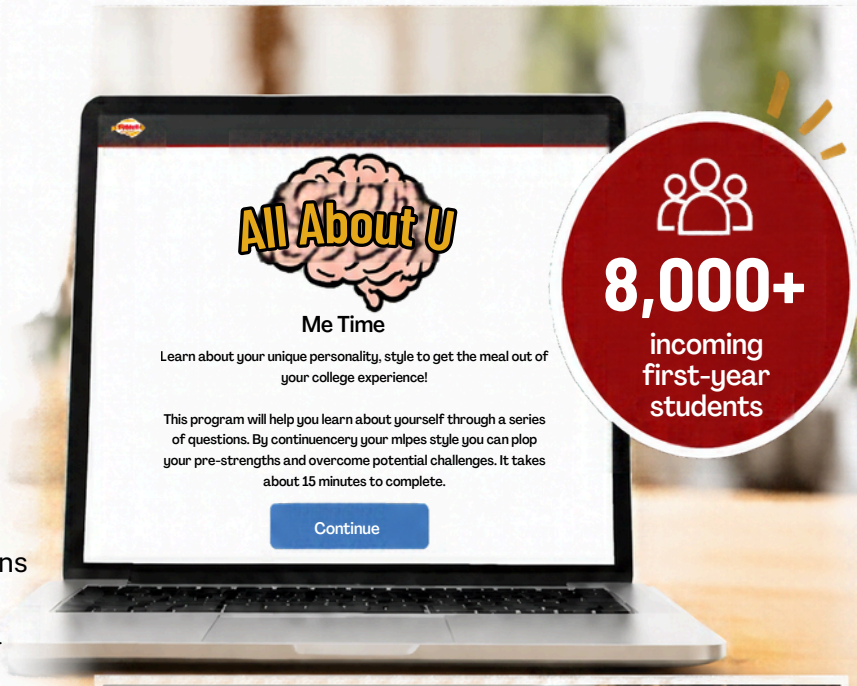
Research with young adults suggests that motivations for substance use can change from one day to the next, highlighting why understanding the circumstances surrounding use may be important for prevention and intervention.

Scan the QR codes to explore stories from the RARC Research Blog.

MOVING RESEARCH FORWARD, TOGETHER

FROM RESEARCH STUDY TO CAMPUS-WIDE PREVENTION

Earlier this year, we introduced ***All About U***, a personalized, science-based substance use prevention program developed by the Rutgers Addiction Research Center and Rutgers-New Brunswick Office of Student Affairs. This fall, more than 8,000 incoming first-year students completed the program as part of Rutgers' required prevention education.



A DIFFERENT APPROACH, BACKED BY SCIENCE

Unlike traditional prevention programs, *All About U* begins with a brief personality assessment, providing students with personalized insights into their strengths, potential risks, and strategies for navigating college life. The 20-minute program addresses substance use, mental health, gambling, and relationships, and provides linkage to campus resources.

Developed from NIH-funded research led by RARC Director Danielle Dick, the program builds on findings showing reductions in alcohol and cannabis use among young adults who received personalized prevention compared with traditional approaches.



KEY TAKEAWAY

All About U moves beyond traditional drug education, using science to help students better understand themselves, make informed decisions, and access resources that support their well-being.

HELIX NJ: A NEW HOME FOR INNOVATION

RARC leadership are relocating this fall to the Health & Life Science Exchange (HELIX NJ), a hub connecting academia, industry, and entrepreneurship to accelerate discovery and implementation.



EXPLORE MORE RESEARCH

Visit the RARC website and follow us on social media for new stories translating addiction science into information for the public.

addiction.rutgers.edu