

Divisions: Department of Psychiatry

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Message from the Director

Welcome to the Division of Addiction Psychiatry. This is an exciting time to be working in the field of Addiction Psychiatry. Despite the enormous social and economic costs of substance use disorders, this is a time of opportunity. Many advances are being made in terms of understanding the neurobiology of addiction. These developments help to underscore that addiction is a medical disease that warrants recognition and evidence-based treatment in the healthcare spectrum. This message is essential if we are to reduce the stigma that unfortunately still surrounds mental and substance use disorders.

“I cannot remember any other time in my 25 year career as an Addiction Psychiatrist when there were so many open discussions of substance use and substance use disorders in public forums. Innovations in therapies including medication-assisted treatments for opioid use disorders are more available now than ever. The use of technology is increasing access to care and treatment paradigms are shifting to be more person-centered. New behavioral therapies are translational and exciting, based on targets developed in the human laboratory.”

Despite this progress, we know that more Americans will die this year of opioid overdoses than ever before. More efforts are needed to equip communities with resources and education for naloxone overdose reversal and more people need access to legitimate treatment. Despite some plateauing of opioid prescriptions, little is being done to address the misuse of many other prescribed medications including benzodiazepines. States and communities are struggling with how best to handle drug legalization and decriminalization, but taking much-needed steps toward criminal justice reform.

Tobacco still kills more individuals than any other substance and affects vulnerable populations including those with behavioral health comorbidity. Tobacco causes a staggering 50% of deaths in those with serious mental illness and kills more substance users than their primary substance. We now have considerable evidence that tobacco threatens recovery by negatively impacting finances, employability,



housing, mental health symptoms, and abstinence from the substances. Despite some progress in recognition of this Centers for Disease Control (CDC) report of 2016 state data indicates that US mental health programs still only ask about tobacco 50% of the time. This underscores the need to fully implement tobacco treatment into behavioral health settings.

The Division of Addiction Psychiatry has been working to help people with substance use disorders for more than 20 years. Our work covers a broad span of disorders and population subgroups but has addictions at its core. This includes conducting epidemiological studies to identify the scope of addiction problems and populations most affected, developing new programs and treatment models, rigorously testing these in controlled conditions, and translating effective interventions into real-world settings through implementation. We are also committed to teaching others and putting science into practice, through extensive efforts with trainees at every level as well as continuing education.

Thank you for your interest in our division. This website is full of information about our clinical research team, educational activities, current projects, and ongoing clinical trials. We hope you will explore this site and find the information helpful.

Jill M. Williams, MD

Division of Addiction Psychiatry
Robert Wood Johnson Medical School
Department of Psychiatry



News and Announcements

Adult Smokers With Mental Illness Consume the Most Caffeine in the U.S.

In a study published in the journal *Psychiatry Research*, Jill M. Williams, director of the division of addiction psychiatry at Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, found not only do adult smokers with bipolar disorder and schizophrenia drink the most caffeine, they are at the highest risk of negative health consequences.

[Read More\(/news/adult-smokers-mental-illness-consume-most-caffeine-us\)](/news/adult-smokers-mental-illness-consume-most-caffeine-us)

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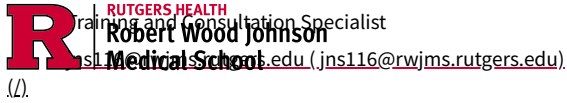
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Research Interests

Since its establishment, the Division of Addiction Psychiatry has grown rapidly and continues to lead the way in several specific areas of research. A list of our ongoing projects and studies can be found below.

Our research teams consist of Division faculty and staff working alongside Medical Students, Psychiatry Residents, Doctoral Psychology Interns, Ph.D. students in Clinical Psychology, Master of Public Health students, and outside collaborators. We take great pride in our research accomplishments in the following overlapping areas:

Behavior Therapy Development

Co-occurring Mental Illness and Addiction

Medication Clinical Trials

Opioid Use Disorders

Cannabis Use

Tobacco Use Disorder

Education and Implementation Studies

Mindfulness and Alternative Approaches

Motivational Interviewing

Current Projects and Studies

Division Faculty

Additional Projects

Opioid Overdose Prevention Network

In 2020, nearly 80,000 thousand people in the United States died from an opioid overdose. The Opioid Overdose Prevention Network (OOPN) was developed by the NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services in partnership with the Division of Addiction Psychiatry at Rutgers Robert Wood Johnson Medical School to combat this crisis. The program receives real-time, statewide information about drug overdoses from the state's police fusion center. This allows OOPN to deploy prevention interventions including training and distribution of naloxone to impacted areas.



Goal

Impact

Free Public Training - For Individuals

Free Private Training - For Groups

Testimonials

Resource Links

Our Partners

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CHOICES and Learning About Healthy Living

Consumers Helping Others Improve Their Condition by Ending Smoking

CHOICES was founded in 2005 by Dr. Williams and Marie Verna through a partnership with the Mental Health Association of NJ and the Legacy Foundation, along with ongoing support from the NJ Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services. CHOICES is a consumer-driven initiative to reach smokers with mental illness in the community.

[Learn More About CHOICES\(http://www.njchoices.org\)](http://www.njchoices.org)

Learning About Healthy Living (LAHL)



We developed Learning about Healthy Living (LAHL) as a tool to work with clients with behavioral health conditions who use tobacco. Despite a historic low of cigarette smoking rates in the US, disparities persist, with rates that are 2-3 times higher in individuals with elevated morbidity. LAHL is a 20-session group treatment approach. The goal of the intervention is to increase an individual's awareness about the risks of tobacco use, and treatment options, enhance motivation to address tobacco and begin by making other healthy life choices.

LAHL has been in use in mental health treatment programs in New Jersey since 2004. The LAHL treatment approach supports the current focus on wellness and recovery within the mental health field and is being used in treatment programs with great success.

A pilot implementation study of Learning about Healthy Living in New Jersey outpatient and partial hospital sites indicated good attendance, and high levels of interest and participation. Clinicians felt the program was easy to implement with limited training (Williams et al., 2009). LAHL was also implemented and evaluated in 9 psychosocial rehabilitation clubhouses in North Carolina, where it was felt to be feasible and well-received by members and staff. (Lee et al., 2011).

This 2024 update of LAHL reflects the changing landscape of new and emerging nicotine products as well as innovations in treatment. There are new sessions on topics of harm reduction, e-cigarettes and vaping, and changes to treatment including new approaches for reduce to quit and use of first line medication algorithms. Mindfulness meditation is added as a coping strategy, and we have revised guidelines for healthy eating and activity. Another change is a major design revision to make the materials more appealing.

This version of the LAHL manual is available as a free resource in the public domain. We hope you find this version helpful in your work. As always your feedback is welcomed (jill.williams@rutgers.edu) . If you plan to publish about this experience using the LAHL materials, we would ask that you cite the source and contributing authors.

[More Information on Learning About Healthy Living\(//sites/default/files/2024-04/2012_lahl.pdf\)](https://sites/default/files/2024-04/2012_lahl.pdf)

Addiction Psychiatry Contributes to CDC Meeting (<https://myemail.constantcontact.com/The-Dean-s-Weekly-View--Rutgers-Global-Surgery--New-Appointments--Honors-for-Staff-Member--Research-Grants-and-News--Presentatio.html?soid=1109962569672&aid=Cze9OqQVQhY>)

Faculty and staff from the Division of Addiction Psychiatry presented at the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention's meeting of the Interagency Committee on Smoking and Health, which comprises 21 members from eight federal agencies, including the United States Surgeon General, who chairs the committee, and five public members. **Jill M. Williams, MD**, professor and chief of addiction psychiatry, along with **Deidre Stenard**, a peer counselor with NJ CHOICES, a program of the division, presented during an afternoon session, "Notes From the Fields: Promising Practices." **Patricia Dooley Budsock, MA, LPC, CTTS**, mental health clinician, also was in attendance.

The meeting was focused on "Behavioral Health and Tobacco Control," to identify federal actions to address disparities in tobacco use among behavioral health populations.

RIOT

Rutgers Interdisciplinary Opioid Trainers

The Rutgers Interdisciplinary Opioid Trainers (RIOT) program provides a FREE 1-hour training to community members to educate them about the opioid epidemic in NJ, how to manage an overdose, and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder (MOUD).

Who We Are

We are Graduate Students at Rutgers University from these schools:

Robert Wood Johnson Medical School



School of Public Health

School of Pharmacy

School of Social Work

Graduate School of Applied and Professional Psychology

School of Health Professions

Graduate School in Biomedical Science

Our supervisor is Dr. Jill Williams from the Robert Wood Johnson Medical School, Division of Addiction Psychiatry.

We are committed to increasing education and reducing stigma about Opioid-Use Disorder and medication-assisted treatment.

RIOT is sponsored by a grant from the [NJ Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health & Addiction Services](https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/) (<https://www.state.nj.us/humanservices/dmhas/home/>).

What We Do

We provide a FREE 1-hour educational talk on the Opioid Crisis. Our target audience is community members in the state of New Jersey. This talk gives a broad overview of the current US Opioid Crisis and includes a discussion of Opioid Use Disorder, Overdose Management, and Medications for Opioid Use Disorder.

Our Resources

Presentations

Free Naloxone

SAFE Community Playbook

Additional Resources

Contact Us

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Patient Appointment Line: 732-235-7647



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