



UA CENTER TO ADDRESS SUBSTANCE USE DISORDERS AND IMPROVE HEALTH EQUITY CCN WELCOMES THE CENTER FOR SUBSTANCE USE RESEARCH AND RELATED CONDITIONS

The University of Alabama is home to a new research center focused on substance use disorders and related conditions such as integrated behavioral health, mental health, and the intersectionality of HIV/AIDS research across the lifespan.

In February of 2022, the Board of Trustees of The University of Alabama System approved the Center for Substance Use Research and Related Conditions (CSURRC) which will be dedicated to the prevention, treatment and management of substance use disorders.

“The substance use crisis is a public health concern that has been exacerbated by limited resources in the areas of prevention, treatment and recovery, especially in rural areas where access to healthcare is desperately needed,” said Dr. James Dalton, UA Executive Vice President and Provost. “This has created a need for a dedicated research center focused on prevention, treatment and management of substance use disorders.”

The mission of the CSURRC is to promote the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities affected by substance use disorders in Alabama and beyond through innovative, state-of-the-science, and culturally responsive research that reduces health disparities, improves health equity and addresses

social determinants of health. The center will be led by Dr. Mercy Mumba as Center Director.

“We are delighted that The University of Alabama Board of Trustees has approved the establishment of the Center for Substance Use Research and Related Conditions,” said Dr. Mumba.

“The purpose, vision, mission, and values of the center are congruent with Governor Ivey’s priority to combat the substance and opioid use pandemics in our state, as well as the federal government’s initiatives to help end addiction long-term.”

“The center will provide a unifying unit for faculty, students, and staff who are interested in substance use research and related conditions. Having a center will further strengthen existing interdisciplinary collaborations among these researchers, while at the same time fostering new collaborations.”

Dr. Mumba has 10 years of experience as a researcher and scientist, with extensive background and expertise in substance use disorders. Her funding portfolio of over \$15 million represents research and programs all focused on substance use disorders and related conditions. The CSURRC will be housed in the Capstone College of Nursing, where Dr. Mumba is an Associate Professor.

“We are very excited to host the Center for Substance Use Research and Related Conditions in the Capstone College of Nursing,” said Dr. Suzanne Prevost, Dean of the Capstone College of Nursing. “The focus of this Center fits perfectly with the College, particularly our graduate programs preparing nurse practitioners, nurse administrators, nurse educators, and nurse researchers to address the needs of rural communities in Alabama and throughout the U.S.”

Another major goal of the center is to support the training of the next generation of researchers, scientists, educators and clinical practitioners. The CSURRC will strive to inspire undergraduates to conduct research, as well as to train graduate and postdoctoral fellows across campus in substance use research and related conditions.

“Dr. Mercy Mumba is the ideal nurse researcher and leader to direct this work and mentor the many students and faculty who will collaborate through the CSURRC to develop and test solutions for the substance use crisis,” said Dean Prevost.

In 2020, almost two-thirds of drug overdose deaths were opioid overdoses. Alabama has the highest per capita opioid prescription rate in the nation at 120 prescriptions per 100 persons, which is double the national average.

OPPOSITE PAGE: CSURRC Staff: Jordan Hall, Blossom Rogers, Heidi Benstead, Dr. Mercy Mumba, Addy Loftin and Austin Butler.

BELOW: Dr. Mercy Mumba addresses the crowd at the CSURRC launch event.

