



VASAM 2026 Annual Conference

October 23-24, 2026
Hilton Norfolk – The Main
Norfolk, Virginia

FRIDAY, OCTOBER 23, 2026

8:30am-12:15pm: Pre-Conference Symposiums (Learner Chooses One)

Addiction 101

Hannah Kissel-Smith, MD

Assistant Professor in Addiction Medicine, Emergency Medicine and Internal Medicine, Virginia Commonwealth University Health System, Richmond, VA

Educational Goals

1. Definition of the disease of addiction
2. Neurology of addiction
3. Behavioral and medical consequences of addiction
4. Treatment options in addiction

Abstract: What really is addiction? How should we approach it? Can we treat it? Addiction Medicine 101 is a sweeping introduction to addiction basics—from definitions and language to pathophysiology, diagnosis, and treatment. This pre-conference session is great for any professional interested in gaining a foundational understanding of addiction and how you can help care for people with substance use disorder and addiction in your community. In this course we will explore the biopsychosocial impact of substance use, how this translates to behavioral and medical consequences, and an approach to triage and treatment of substance use disorders.

8:30am-12:15pm: Agents of Change: Building Harm Reduction Where You Practice

Lauren ‘LB’ Canary, MD, MPH

PGY-2, Family Medicine, Carilion Clinic- Virginia Tech Carilion SOM

Danny Clawson, MPH

Executive Director, Virginia Harm Reduction Coalition

Educational Goals

1. Describe the current state of practice of comprehensive harm reduction programming in Virginia.
2. Demonstrate competence in incorporating harm reduction principles in eliciting a drug use history and advising on safer use practices
3. Identify opportunities to partner with comprehensive harm reduction programs to inform clinical practice and community-based initiatives.

Abstract: This three-part interactive session provides attendees with an overview of harm reduction practice in Virginia and provides a framework for its integration into clinical addiction medicine practice. The session will include a review of the history of harm reduction and its current status in Virginia, including an overview of relevant legal implications for patients participating in comprehensive harm reduction programs. Attendees will learn techniques from those with lived and living experience for eliciting relevant drug use practices and for discussing real-world safer use practices. The presenters will review real-time trends in adulterants present in the drug supply in Virginia, and the potential for drug-checking partnerships in informing clinical management. Attendees will be supported in identifying opportunities to build ethical partnerships with their local harm reduction programs to advance clinical management and advocacy.

12:15pm-1:15pm: Networking Luncheon

1:15pm-5:00pm: Pre-Conference Symposia: When the Brain Won't Log Off: In
Maha Alattar, MD
Associate Professor of Neurologysomnia in Addiction, Division
Chief, Interim. VCU Health Center for Sleep Medicine Virginia
Commonwealth University
Shannon Jenkins, MD
Sleep Medicine, Neurology
VCU Health

Educational Goals

1. Discuss basic physiology and pathophysiology of Sleep including an overall view of classification of sleep disorders.
2. Provide a basic framework for the diagnosis of common sleep disorders such as insomnia, restless legs syndrome, and sleep apnea for providers working in addiction medicine setting.
3. Provide basic tenants of treatment to this specific patient population that is efficacious and safe and in accordance with current American Academy of Sleep Medicine's practice guidelines.
4. Describe the basic physiology and pathophysiology of sleep including classification of sleep disorders.
5. Provide a basic framework for diagnosing common sleep disorders including insomnia, restless legs syndrome, and sleep apnea for providers in Addiction Medicine.
6. Identify the principals of treatment tailored to patients in Addiction Medicine.

Abstract: Sleep health is at the core of health. In the context of managing patients and their symptoms or disorders, learning about the importance of sleep health, its physiology and sleep

disorders open the doors for improved outcomes in their overall wellbeing and mitigation of their illnesses and suffering. Sleep disorders such as insomnia, hypersomnia, sleep apnea, restless legs syndrome to name a few are common in the general population but more specifically in patients with substance use disorder. Sleep Medicine has advanced in recent years in terms of offering treatments and management of such sleep disorders. Clinic-based diagnosis and treatment by non-sleep medicine providers can be effective with learning about the right questions to ask, understanding the relationship between symptoms and sleep disorders, and providing pharmacological versus non-pharmacological treatments that is safe and effective or appropriate referral to the sleep medicine clinic.

Sleep disorders and substance use disorders share a complex, bidirectional relationship that significantly impacts treatment outcomes and quality of life. Recent evidence demonstrates that specifically addressing sleep disorders in patients with substance use disorders produces meaningful clinical benefits. The evidence supporting sleep-focused interventions in Addiction Medicine is particularly compelling for insomnia treatment with CBT-I. Approximately 60-75% of individuals in treatment for substance use disorders experience clinically significant insomnia, which persists even after achieving abstinence and substantially increases the risk of relapse and treatment dropout. Treating insomnia during addiction treatment has been shown to reduce alcohol-related problems by 68% and improve overall quality of life, with patients reporting that improved sleep directly supports their recovery efforts. The integration of Sleep Medicine into addiction treatment represents an evidence-based approach to address modifiable risk factors that undermine recovery and present new opportunities to enhance treatment adherence, reduce relapse risk, and improve patient well-being.

5:00pm-6:00pm: Welcome Reception

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 24, 2026

7:15am-8:00am: Continental Breakfast

8:00am-8:15am: Welcome & Opening Remarks
Masaru Nishiaoki, MD
President, Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine

8:15am-9:15am: Keynote Presentation: Long-Acting Buprenorphine: Innovations from General to Perinatal Care
Michelle Lofwall, MD, DFAPA, DFASAM
Professor of Behavioral Science and Psychiatry, Bell Endowed Chair of Alcohol and Addictions, Medical Director, First Bridge and Straus Clinics, University of Kentucky College of Medicine, Center on Drug and Alcohol Research

Educational Goals

1. Describe the patient sample who enrolled and how it is similar and different from the peripartum patients that you treat.
2. List two outcomes that showed a statistically significant difference between sublingual and weekly extended-release buprenorphine during treatment of OUD during pregnancy
3. List two key findings from the CTN 0080 MOMS trial after pregnancy through one year postpartum

Abstract: The opioid-use epidemic in the U.S. has been associated with a significant increase in the prevalence of pregnant persons with opioid use disorder and neonatal opioid withdrawal syndrome, which, particularly when left untreated, are associated with adverse health effects for the infant and with costly hospitalizations. In this presentation, the findings from the multisite outpatient Medication Treatment for Opioid-dependent Expecting Mothers (MOMs) trial (i.e., NIDA Clinical Trials Network Study 0080) will be presented demonstrating the results of extended-release buprenorphine compared to sublingual buprenorphine on opioid abstinence during pregnancy and post-partum phases and on neonatal outcomes and adverse events.

9:15am-10:00am: **Compulsion, Control, and the Brain: A Deep Dive into Behavioral Addictions**
Emily Brunner, MD, DFASAM
Physician, TTA Consultant, Professional Education and Continuum Solutions, Hazelden Betty Ford Foundation; Medical Director, Eosis Recovery

Educational Goals

1. Define and differentiate technology-associated behavioral addictions
2. Understand the neurobiological and psychological impact of these illnesses
3. Identify effective treatment approaches
4. Apply knowledge in a professional setting

Abstract: This session will address the current evidence base for the understanding and epidemiology of behavioral addictions, including gambling disorder, internet gaming disorder, binge eating disorder/food addiction and sexual addiction. The focus will be on helping clinicians identify and management a variety of behavioral addictions, including gambling disorder, internet gaming disorder, food addiction and sex addiction. We will focus on reviewing the current evidence for diagnosis and clinical management of these issues.

10:00am-10:20am: **Coffee Break**

10:20am-11:05am: **Treating PTSD in Addiction Settings: Practical Skills You Can Use Tomorrow**
Ajay Manhapra, MD
Section Chief, Pain Medicine, Department of Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Hampton VA, Medical Center, Hampton, VA

Educational Goals

1. Recognize the clinical presentation and diagnose PTSD.
2. Practice trauma informed care within the practice.
3. Provide minimum required treatment of PTSD without any other consultant service.

Abstract: The presenter will initially offer a detailed review of the complex clinical presentation of PTSD in addiction medicine settings. The participants will be provided a basic conceptualization of trauma and PTSD that they can use for daily practice. The diagnostic approach towards PTSD will then be described. This will be followed by detailed review of evidence based pharmacological and non-pharmacological treatments. The session will conclude

with practical plan for starting to care for managing PTSD in addiction clinics without specialized mental health providers.

11:05am-11:35pm: Fellow in Training Presentation I

11:35pm-12:05pm Fellow in Training Presentation II

12:05pm-1:00pm: Networking Luncheon

12:45pm-1:45pm: Student/Medical Trainee Poster Session

1:45pm-2:30pm: Neurobiology of Addiction Cues: Implications for Treatment and Relapse Prevention
Gil Schmidt MD JD FACEP FASAM
Medical Director, BrightView Health

Educational Goals

1. To review the basic science and neurobiological pathways of addiction and especially of relapse in addiction patients
2. To better understand those pathways and how they lead to and affect relapse in our patients lives
3. To provide real world tools and techniques founded in science in assisting patients in avoiding relapse

Abstract: While substances of misuse exert well-characterized pharmacologic effects, many patients describe a persistent pull toward the rituals, environments, and sensory cues associated with use—even in the absence of strong drug effects. This session reframes addiction through the lens of cue-driven neurobiology, highlighting how conditioned stimuli acquire incentive salience and drive compulsive behavior independent of the substance itself. We will examine key mechanisms including dopaminergic learning signals, cue reactivity, and the progressive shift from goal-directed to habitual behavior mediated by striatal circuitry. The integration of limbic memory systems and impaired prefrontal regulation will be discussed as core contributors to relapse vulnerability. By bridging neuroscience with frontline clinical observations, this presentation will provide clinicians with a more precise framework for understanding craving and will offer practical approaches to addressing cue-induced relapse across a range of substance use disorders.

2:30pm-3:15pm: Forever Young? Improving SUD Treatment Outcomes for Youth
Marc Fishman MD
Medical Director, Maryland Treatment Centers, Associate Professor, Psychiatry, Johns Hopkins University School of Medicine, Maryland Treatment Centers

Educational Goals

1. Participants will be able to identify barriers to youth substance use interventions.
2. Participants will name approaches to improving youth engagement in interventions for substance use disorders.

3. Participants will discuss approaches for improving family engagement in substance use interventions for youth.

Abstract: Substance use in adolescents and young adults is common but under-recognized and under-treated. This presentation will review approaches to addressing substance use and substance use disorder in youth. Topics will include developmental vulnerability, prevalence, cannabis, alcohol, opioids, treatment with an emphasis on motivational enhancement, and family involvement.

3:15pm-3:30pm:

Awards and Closing Remarks

Masaru Nishiaoki, MD

President, Virginia Society of Addiction Medicine

3:30pm:

Conference Concludes