



Ohio has embarked on what promised to be the nation's most influential research into the predictors of suicide and drug addiction — and one outcome is already clear: **This research will save lives.**

“It’s hard to fight a battle when we simply don’t have the knowledge or information we need to effectively combat it. Seeing this investment in mental health has brought me to tears. All I can say is that it’s about time and thank you.”

— SOAR study participant

ABOUT THE SOAR STUDY

The **State of Ohio Adversity and Resilience (SOAR)** study is one of the most comprehensive efforts ever undertaken to understand mental health, resilience and adversity across generations in Ohio. It includes two key components:

- **Wellness Discovery Survey:** A broad health and lifestyle survey of over 15,000 Ohio residents.
- **Brain Health Study:** A deeper look into how the brain, body, the people around us and environment interact to affect mental health, involving over 1,200 families (approximately 3,600 individuals).

Together, these studies aim to discover what helps people thrive and what puts them at risk, with a special focus on how experiences shape mental health over time.

The early days of this study are revealing that suicide and drug overdose risks are distinct and predictable and that resilience is not random.

What sets the SOAR study apart is that it examines underlying biological, psychological, environmental and social patterns over time, going broader and deeper than any other mental health research to date.



PRELIMINARY FINDINGS FROM THE SOAR STUDY

Wellness Discovery Survey

- Resilience is strongly shaped by positive childhood experiences. Learning and using the right skills at the right time can help resilience emerge.
- Changeable factors can be targeted to reduce suicides and overdoses in Ohio.
- Substance use may be driven by environmental predictors such as socioeconomic instability, family structure and community opportunity.
- A psychological variable that was protective was hope.

Brain Health Study

- The brain health study is beginning to show compelling evidence that cognitive and neurological markers can help identify individuals at risk.
- Electroencephalogram (EEG) technology showed reduced brain activity for people who had attempted suicide or experienced childhood trauma, which may one day be identified even before symptoms appear.
- Prevention strategies could benefit early identification of risk “before” problem drinking and related risky behaviors develop.
- Poor impulse control may be a reliable indicator of suicide risk, making it a potential screening or intervention tool.

Why It Matters

Mental health challenges — including addiction, trauma and suicide — affect thousands of Ohio families each year. By collecting in-depth information across generations and over time, the SOAR brain health study aims to:

- Identify what helps people bounce back from hardship.
- Develop better prevention and treatment approaches.
- Inform policies that support healthier communities.

SOAR is giving the road map to invest wisely in communities, families and futures to stop preventable suffering before it starts.



THANK YOU TO OUR GROWING LIST OF PARTNERS



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