



TRUE TALK: POWER OF PREVENTION

# Prevent Youth Addiction

## A Solution for Georgia

Every kid and teenager in Georgia deserves a shot at a great future. Too often, that future is put in jeopardy when we miss opportunities to identify and treat early alcohol and drug misuse. Georgia can address this problem with a preventive public health solution—SBIRT.

### What's the problem?

Georgia high school students are using alcohol, tobacco and other drugs; however, many of them are not getting the information and support they need to make healthy decisions.

Alcohol	Tobacco	Other drugs
18.1% of GA high schoolers drank alcohol for the first time before age 13. <sup>1</sup>	12.8% of GA high school students surveyed stated they smoked cigarettes on a least one day during the 30 days prior to the survey. <sup>1</sup>	17.7% of Georgia high school students have taken prescription drugs without a doctor's prescription. <sup>1</sup>

Research supports that early access to screening and counseling can help young people avoid the destructive consequences of drug and alcohol misuse and addiction. Too often, adults who interact with teens and young adults don't know how to begin conversations about alcohol and drug use. This means that young people who are just starting to experiment with drugs and alcohol are frequently not asked about their experiences until they're addicted.

### SBIRT can be part of the solution

SBIRT, which stands for Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment, is an evidence-based approach that gets young people talking about their use. SBIRT is a question and answer tool that helps adults have honest, simple conversations with teens and young adults to identify alcohol or drug problems and help them get help, if it's needed. It empowers trusted adults to ask young people questions such as, "Do you ever use alcohol or drugs to relax, feel better about yourself, or fit in?"

Screening tools like blood pressure checks and mammograms save countless lives each year. SBIRT is no different. By checking for small problems before they become big ones, we can save the lives of teens and young adults across Georgia.

<sup>1</sup> Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, High School Youth Risk Behavioral Survey, 2013. Data available at <http://nccd.cdc.gov/youthonline/App/Results.aspx?LID=GA>

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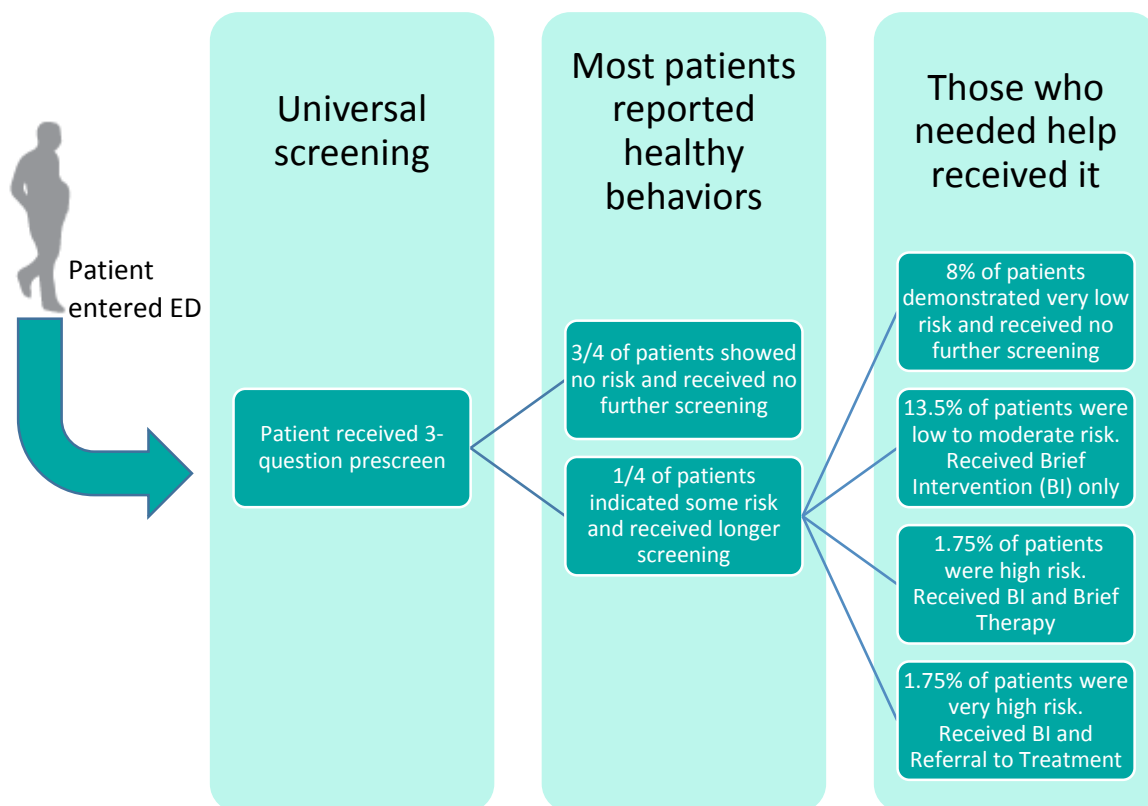
## SBIRT in Georgia

SBIRT has been successfully implemented in Georgia with adults. In the future, it could be part of the solution for Georgia's teens and young adults.

## Georgia BASICS program

In 2008, Georgia received a grant from the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) for a five-year SBIRT implementation project. SBIRT was used to screen all patients for risky drinking and substance use in two emergency departments (ED)—Grady Health System and Medical Center of Central Georgia. Seventeen percent of patients who received SBIRT screening were provided with brief interventions or therapy, or referred to addiction treatment services.

## How it worked



## SBIRT produced positive results

After 6 months, substance use among patients showed improvement.

- The number of days in the past month that patients drank alcohol was reduced from 11 days to 6 days.
  - Marijuana use went down from almost 6 days in the past month to about 3 days.
  - Patients' use of "any drug" was cut in half—from 7 days in the past month to about 3 days.
  - Even the patients who only received the 3-question pre-screen showed positive results (reduced alcohol use).
  - Strong improvements were shown in the mental health of patients who received SBIRT.
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