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May 4th, 12:00 AM

### Challenges to Implementing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for Substance Use in Primary Care Settings at Rowan-Virtua


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Hochman, Alissa; Straub, Kristy; Chase, Nancy; Damiri, Samuel; DeStefano, Jenna; Distel, Allyson; and Farhat, Sana, "Challenges to Implementing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for Substance Use in Primary Care Settings at Rowan-Virtua" (2023). *Stratford Campus Research Day*. 132.

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# Challenges to Implementing Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) for Substance Use in Primary Care Settings at Rowan-Virtua

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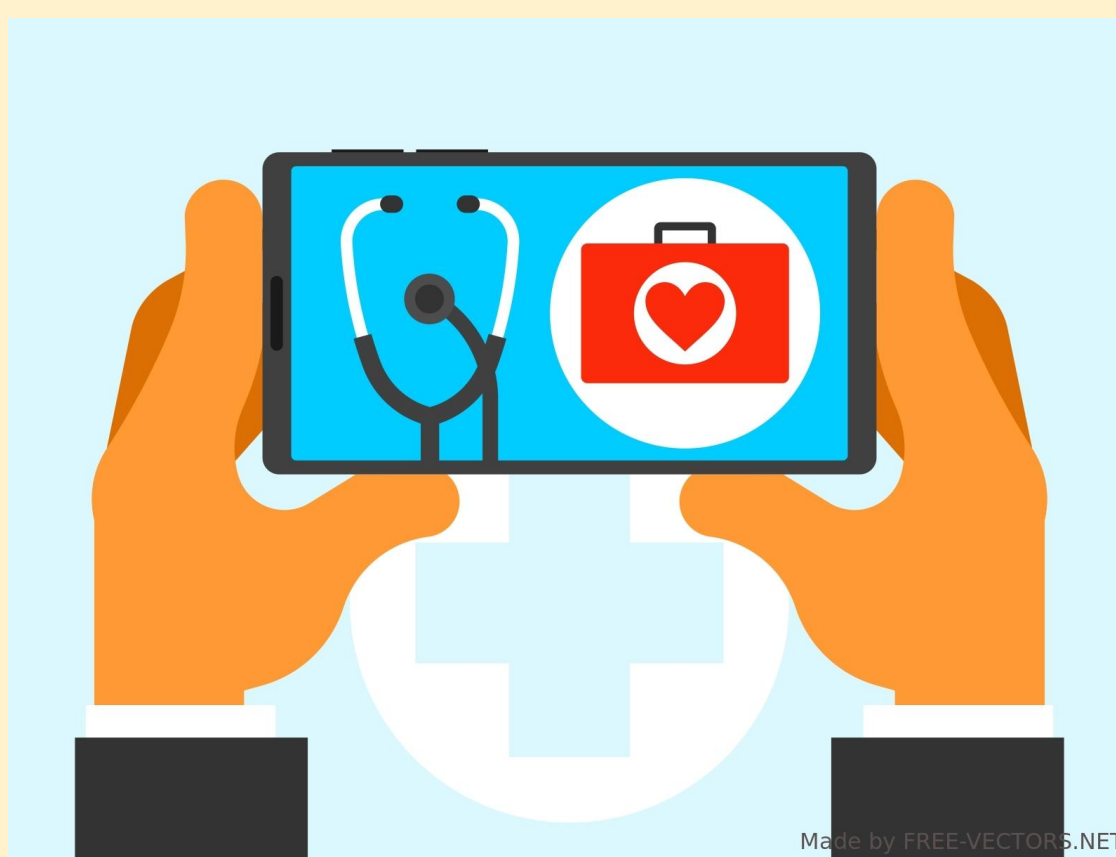
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## Program Purpose

- During 2021 in NJ alone, there were 87,745 treatment admissions and 86,626 discharges reported to the New Jersey Department of Human Services, Division of Mental Health and Addiction Services by substance use treatment providers<sup>2</sup>
- The goals of SBIRT include the following:
  - Normalize conversation about alcohol & other substance use into patient visits
  - Reduce harm & consumption
  - Reduce costly healthcare utilization among patients seeking care at NJ SBIRT project sites
  - Promote policy & system change to overcome barriers to treatment access
  - Reduce stigma of seeking help
  - Build trust between patients & primary care physicians
  - Providing helpful referrals for patients<sup>1</sup>

## Post-COVID Barriers

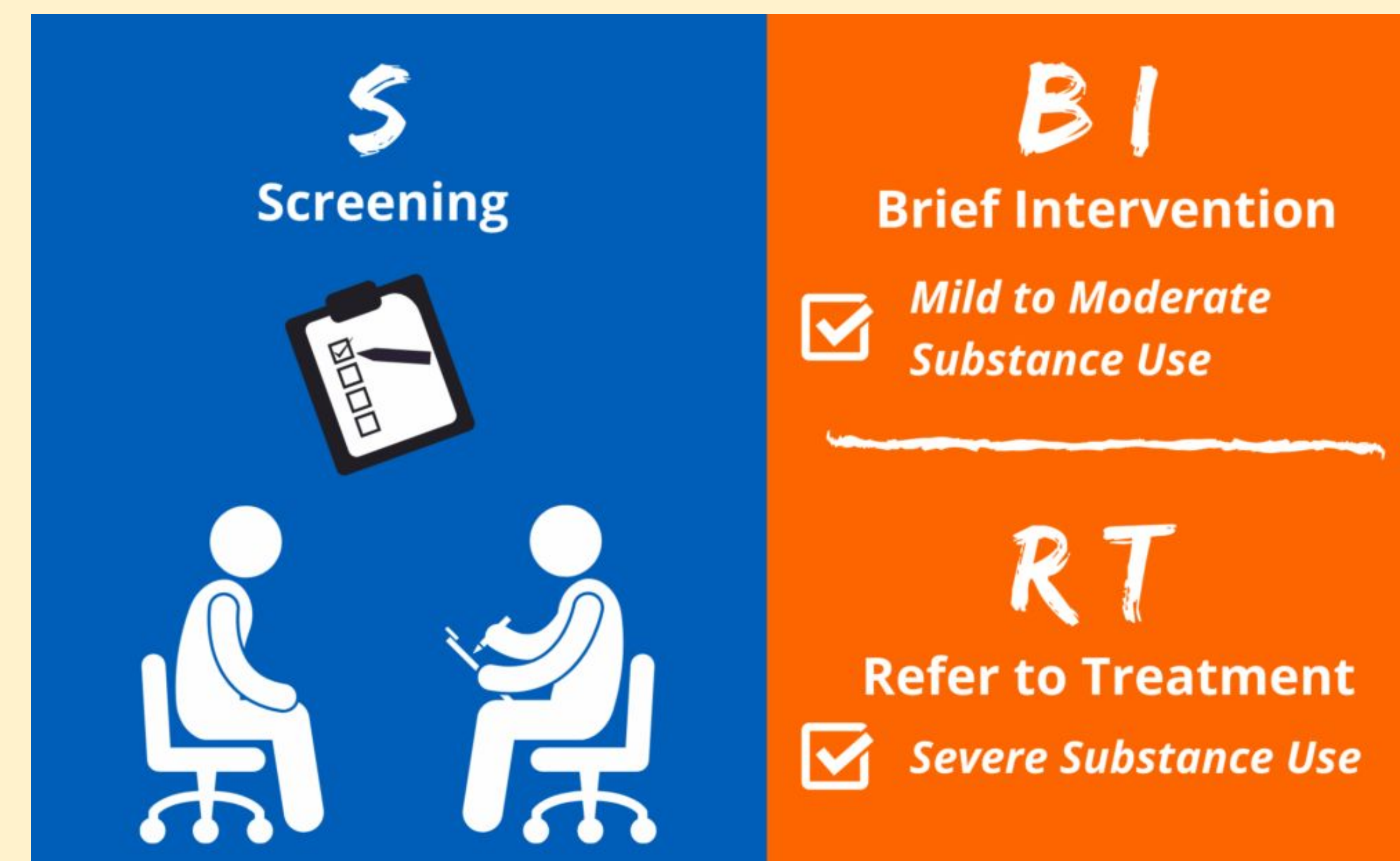
- The COVID-19 pandemic has significantly disrupted the healthcare system which has lead to:



- Decreased healthcare utilization
- Delays or avoidance in healthcare-seeking behaviors<sup>3</sup>
- A decrease of in-person visits in primary care settings
- Increase in telehealth visits has become a challenge due to lack of volume of patients in the office
- Lack of protocol in place to capture patients seen via telehealth
- Lower volume in-person patients = less time to incorporate health education & B.I. within visit

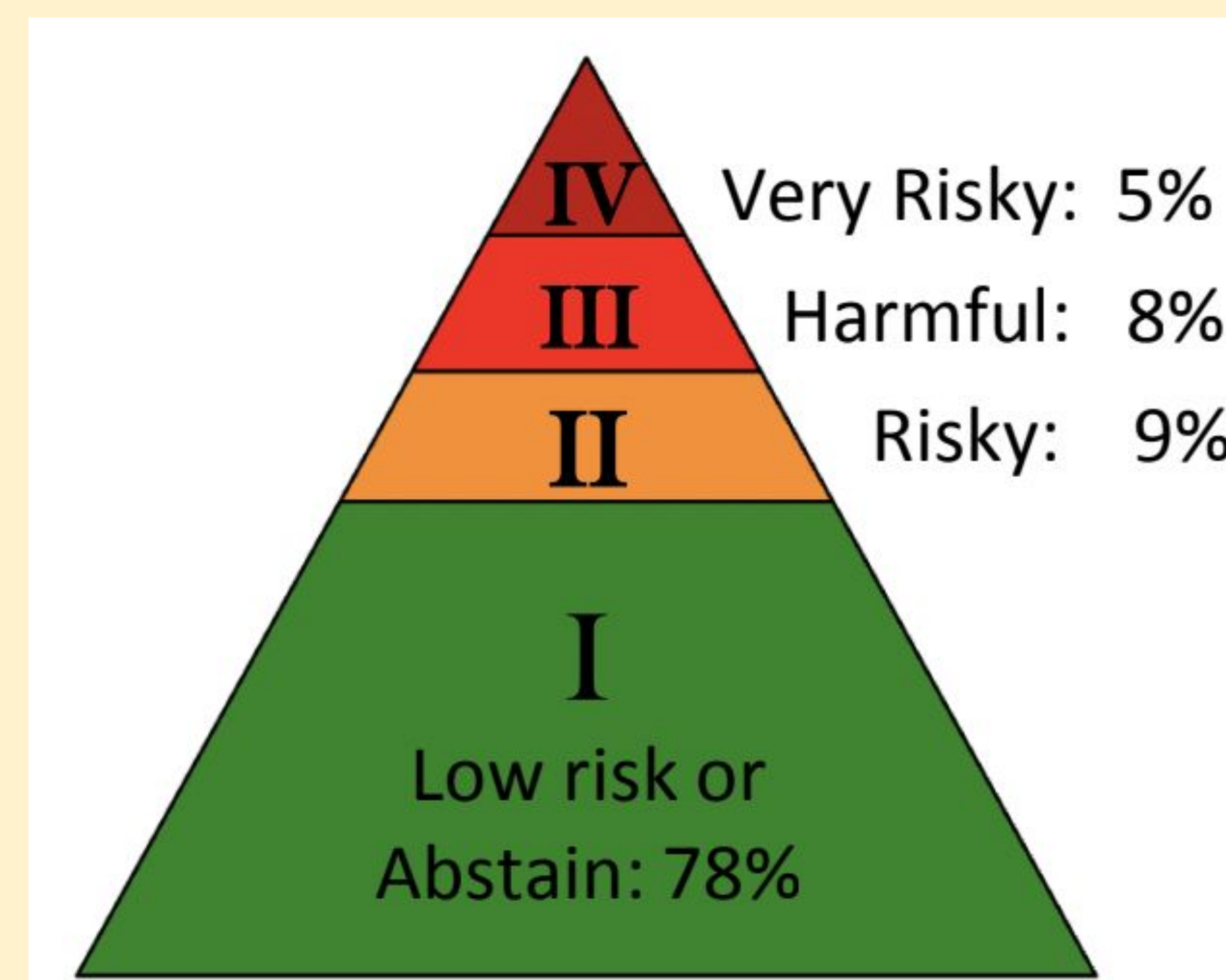
## SBIRT Project Implementation Goals

- Program involves the recruitment, hiring, and training of health educators (HE) and collaboration with project supervisor
- Implementation in 9 primary care sites throughout South Jersey



### Implementation Process:

1. Certified Medical Assistant (CMA) conducts pre-screen with patient to determine alcohol-use, cannabis use, or non-prescribed substances risks during rooming process
2. Screenings used include **AUDIT-C, DAST-10 & CUDIT**



3. Health Educator delivers a full screening and motivational interview-driven feedback within 8-15 minutes for patients who screen positive
  - a. Positive screening includes:
    - i. A score of a 4 or more on AUDIT-C
    - ii. Responds “yes” to cannabis-use or non-prescribed substances
4. Patients who respond “yes” to follow-up will be contacted in 90 days, at which point a secondary Qualtrics survey will be completed regarding patient progress

## Early Challenges Encountered

- **Work-flow/Integration-of-care challenges**
  - Ideal placement of intervention is after CMAs have ‘roomed’ patient, but before physician conducts exam
- **Site variations in administrative processes**
  - Some sites pre-rooming and pre-screening patients via phone making it easier for the HE to identify patients requiring intervention.
- **Site variations in patient demographics**
  - Patients of advanced age at lower risk in higher % at newer practices & during daytime appointment hours
- **Unexpected loss of key project director at State level**
- **Legalization of medical and recreational cannabis**
  - implementation grant as-written complicated by cannabis remaining Schedule 1 substance at federal level (considered an illicit substance - federally funded grant.)

## Conclusion and Future Direction

- Continued efforts are being made to address the challenges
- Progress has been made in terms of hiring more HE’s to cover sites and collaborating with CMAs to integrate SBIRT into existing workflow

### Future Direction includes:

- Provide opportunity for patient education, early intervention, and help reduce high-risk behaviors in all visits
- Connect people to resources, services, and support
- Reduce costly healthcare utilization through prevention
- Increase training for clinical personnel on integrating substance use conversation
- Sustain/expand SBIRT intervention in medical settings

## References

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2. Substance Abuse Overview 2021 Statewide - NJ.GOV. (n.d.). Retrieved April 18, 2023, from <https://nj.gov/humanservices/dmhas/publications/statistical/Substance%20Abuse%20Overview/2021/statewide.pdf>
3. Moore, Ramey PhDa; Purvis, Rachel S. PhDa; Hallgren, Emily PhDa; Reece, Sharon MD, CCFPa; Padilla-Ramos, Alan MDa; Gurel-Headley, Morgan BSb,c; Hall, Spencer MAa; McElfish, Pearl A. PhD, MBAA,\*; “I am hesitant to visit the doctor unless absolutely necessary”: A qualitative study of delayed care, avoidance of care, and telehealth experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic. Medicine 101(32):p e29439, August 12, 2022. | DOI: 10.1097/MD.00000000000029439