

Behavioral Health

Constituency Section



November 21, 2007

Dear IHA Members:

I am writing to you about a valuable substance abuse screening and intervention program that is designed for medical patients in general hospitals called SBIRT, which stands for "Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral and Treatment." This successful program has been offered by a major Chicago hospital and its affiliates for the past three and one-half years. Through it, thousands of patients who otherwise may have slipped through the cracks have been directed to experts in substance abuse for intervention and possible referral for treatment. The SBIRT model can be available to other Illinois hospitals and patients.

Funded by the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, Center for Substance Abuse Treatment, an SBIRT grant was awarded to the State of Illinois for five-years, until September 2008, and is implemented by the Illinois Department of Human Services, Division of Alcoholism and Substance Abuse. The purpose of Illinois SBIRT has been to implement substance abuse screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment services in healthcare settings administered by the Cook County Bureau of Health Services. Since accepting patients in March of 2004, Illinois SBIRT has screened over 66,854 patients with alcohol and other substance use disorders, in either Stroger, Provident or Oak Forest hospitals, or in one of several Cook County Bureau of Health Services clinics. SBIRT patients are eligible for up to six fifteen-minute counseling sessions while they are hospitalized. Some of these patients may be referred for more extensive treatment following their hospitalization.

During the coming months, Illinois SBIRT and Great Lakes ATTC will co-sponsor at least two workshops for Illinois hospitals, explaining SBIRT and how your hospital might benefit from offering SBIRT services to your patients. Information about these programs will be available in January 2008.

In the interim, you will find attached a brochure entitled "About SBIRT," ([click here](#)) and English ([click here](#)) and Spanish ([click here](#)) brochures entitled "How Can I Help?" These brochures may be useful to your staff, patients or families who wish to know something about Illinois SBIRT and who need to cope with a loved one who drinks or uses drugs. You may make additional copies of these brochures, if you wish.

It is my hope that the information presented here may be of use to your staff, your patients and your community. If you want more information about Illinois SBIRT, or if you need further assistance, please do not hesitate to call Deborah Levi, Ph.D., Project Director, at (312) 814-6433 or Jennifer Smith, M.D., Medical Director, at (312) 864-4435.

Respectfully,

MaryLynn McGuire Clarke
Senior Director, Health Policy and Regulation
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