



**A New Tool to Determine if a Patient May Have a Problem with Alcohol or Drugs**  
*SBIRT Maryland website provides resources about  
Assessing alcohol and drug use to improve patients' health*

**BALTIMORE, MD** – Consumers and healthcare providers have a new online resource with a rich array of information about an alcohol and drug use screening and intervention service being implemented at primary care centers in Maryland. This new site provides resources for consumers and health practitioners on how to discuss the impact of alcohol and drug use on overall health and well-being. The new website, [marylandsbirt.org](http://marylandsbirt.org) provides information about the Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) tools that providers and consumers can use to screen for problematic alcohol and drug use and learn ways to “Change the Conversation” between patients and health care practitioners.

SBIRT is a nationally recognized evidence-based practice that has been implemented at six primary health care organizations with 22 locations across seven Maryland jurisdictions. Electronic Health Record systems in all participating organizations were modified to integrate SBIRT screening tools, service delivery documentation, and reports. This early intervention practice facilitates open and nonjudgmental discussions between patients and primary care provider regarding the effect of alcohol and or drug use on health conditions. The project will continue to expand throughout the State in the next three years with additional health clinics and several hospital emergency departments participating in the project.

By asking five simple questions, health care providers are able to assess patients' risk for misuse of alcohol or drugs and offer education and motivational discussions that can help patients reduce use or seek treatment if needed. While some providers do typically ask patients about their use of alcohol and drugs, others are hesitant to have the conversation. In the SBIRT model health care provides are given tools and resources to assist in having this conversation.

Dr. Gayle Jordon-Randolph, the Deputy Secretary for Behavioral Health at the Maryland Department of Health and Mental Hygiene said, “We are excited about the SBIRT project and the [marylandsbirt.org](http://marylandsbirt.org) website. Both support a public health approach to comprehensive health services that reduce risk through early intervention, inform patients and refer to specialty care when needed. For many an open discussion with a health care provider who is prepared to assist with resources to educate and motivate change is a major step to reducing the risk of substance use related consequences.”

The Maryland SBIRT project is led by the DHMH Behavioral Health Administration's, Office of Prevention and Wellness Services and managed by Behavioral Health System Baltimore, with funding from the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The Mosaic Group, a Baltimore-based health care consulting firm, is leading the implementation and technical assistance for SBIRT in all sites statewide.

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# Maryland SBIRT

Change the Conversation for Better Health