



At Howard Dental Center, we are dedicated to doing our part in the prevention of substance abuse for our new patients who currently are *non-dependent* substance users and will be instituting SBIRT Colorado with the help of our new Medical Case Manager, **Hazel Harris**.

**SBIRT Colorado**---Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment---is a comprehensive, integrated, public health approach based on universal screenings (includes every patient) to create awareness about America's number one preventable health issue---substance abuse.

**SBIRT Colorado** is based on the following:

- Alcohol and other drug use—at any level—affects a person's health and general well-being.
- Prevention screenings serve as a powerful education tool for those who use alcohol and drugs.
- Research proves that screening within a healthcare setting can motivate people to change their habits.
- Early intervention can reduce risky alcohol and other drug use before it leads to addiction.
- The benefits of this program extend well beyond the user—to the person's family and employer, to law enforcement and to the healthcare industry.

#### **What is the SBIRT Colorado process?**

**Screening:** Health educators or healthcare providers conduct universal screening of patients for alcohol and other drug use.

**Brief Intervention:** If a patient screens positive, a brief intervention, is conducted using interviewing techniques to establish an open and trusted dialogue that encourages change.

**Referral to Treatment:** A patient may be referred to a more intensive or specialized treatment program during the initial screening, after the brief intervention, or at the completion of the brief treatment. A referral coordinator facilitates placing the patient in the right level and type of treatment option.

#### **What is SBIRT Colorado's approach to substance abuse?**

SBIRT Colorado treats alcohol and drug use like the preventable healthcare issue it is.

- Screening, brief interventions and brief therapy informs people about health consequences related to substance use and reinforces responsible health behaviors.
- This approach has proven to be successful changing behavior to improve health and quality of life.

#### **Why is SBIRT important?**

SBIRT Colorado considers the health consequences people experience due to substance abuse use and offers people the opportunity to improve their overall health.

- Currently, treatment resources address only dependent users, for whom treatment is more expensive.
- For every \$100 spent on substance abuse problems in Colorado, only \$0.06 is spent on treatment or prevention. That is less than two percent of the average amount spent on abuse problems in other states.
- Screenings and brief interventions lead to changed behaviors that reduce overall healthcare costs, criminal behavior, disability and even death.

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