

April 2, 2010

Alcohol and/or Substance Abuse Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)

Perhaps you know that in all age categories, Alaska has one of the highest alcohol consumption AND illicit drug use rates in the nation.

What if you could help your patients stop drinking and using harmful substances before these problems become serious enough to destroy their lives? Alaskans need your help and the State of Alaska's Department of Health & Social Services is sending this information to remind you that the Medicaid program is supportive of your efforts to provide such help to affected Medicaid recipients.

Did you know that the Alaska Medicaid program (including Denali KidCare) pays for the services for Alcohol and/or Substance Abuse Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT)? These services have been covered by the Alaska Medicaid and Denali KidCare since November 1, 2008 when performed by enrolled primary health care providers.

Through the provision of SBIRT services, patients undergo a quick screening to assess their alcohol and drug use. Patients who are at risk of developing a serious problem receive a brief intervention that focuses on raising their awareness of substance abuse and motivating them to change their behaviors. Patients who need more extensive treatment receive a referral to specialty care for assessment, diagnosis, and appropriate treatment.

A number of screening instruments have been developed for use in various primary health care settings. You may investigate which instrument is the right fit for your practice by visiting the SBIRT Website provided through the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Association (SAMHSA) at www.samhsa.gov and selecting "SBIRT" under the heading "Programs & Campaigns" on the homepage. Complete information about SBIRT is available at this location, including training manuals, on-line resources, publications and other tools.

To bill the SBIRT services provided to Alaska Medicaid recipients, use one of the following procedure codes (complete information is published in the American Medical Association's Current Procedural Terminology (CPT) book):

- | | |
|--------------|---|
| 99408 | Alcohol and/or substance (other than tobacco) abuse structured screening (eg, AUDIT, DAST), and brief intervention (SBI) services; 15 to 30 minutes |
| 99409 | greater than 30 minutes |

In addition to SBIRT information that can be obtained from the SAMHSA website, please feel free to contact the Division of Health Care Services (907-334-2400) or the Division of Behavioral Health (907-269-3600) about SBIRT or the Alaska Medicaid fiscal agent, Affiliated Computer Services, Inc (907-644-6800 or 800-770-5650) about claims billing and payment for SBIRT services.

With your help, we can all make a difference in reducing the rates of alcohol and drug use in Alaska.