

S298/A2504

SCREENING, BRIEF INTERVENTION AND REFERRAL TO TREATMENT (SBIRT)

New Jersey youth urgently need comprehensive mental health and substance use services, and schools are best positioned to reach those at risk. NJ youth were already struggling with mental illness and substance misuse prior to the pandemic, and according to the CDC, youth and young adults have experienced the highest increases in mental illness and substance misuse due to pandemic-related stress.

Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidenced-based, early intervention, cost-effective tool schools can use to give students the support they need and make sure no one is missed.

What will S298/A2504 Do:

- Establishes a universal screening program in all NJ high schools to identify students at risk for or experiencing substance misuse or mental health challenges.
- Students indicating a problem would receive brief follow up and referral to treatment if required.
- Screenings:
 - are confidential and only given with parental consent.
 - are administered by trained school-based personnel.
 - cannot result in any punitive action being taken against the student.
 - could be reimbursable under NJ Family Care.

197 Youth overdoses in NJ in 2018

36% NJ high school students report feeling sad or hopeless

15% NJ high school students seriously considered attempting suicide
(Nearly)

"SBIRT significantly decreases long-term substance [misuse] in students"

~ [Journal of Addictive Behavior and Therapy](#)

Youth who survive an overdose or suicide attempt often say, "if only someone had asked."



**IT'S TIME TO ADVANCE A COMPREHENSIVE MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAM IN NJ SCHOOLS
SUPPORT S298/A2504**