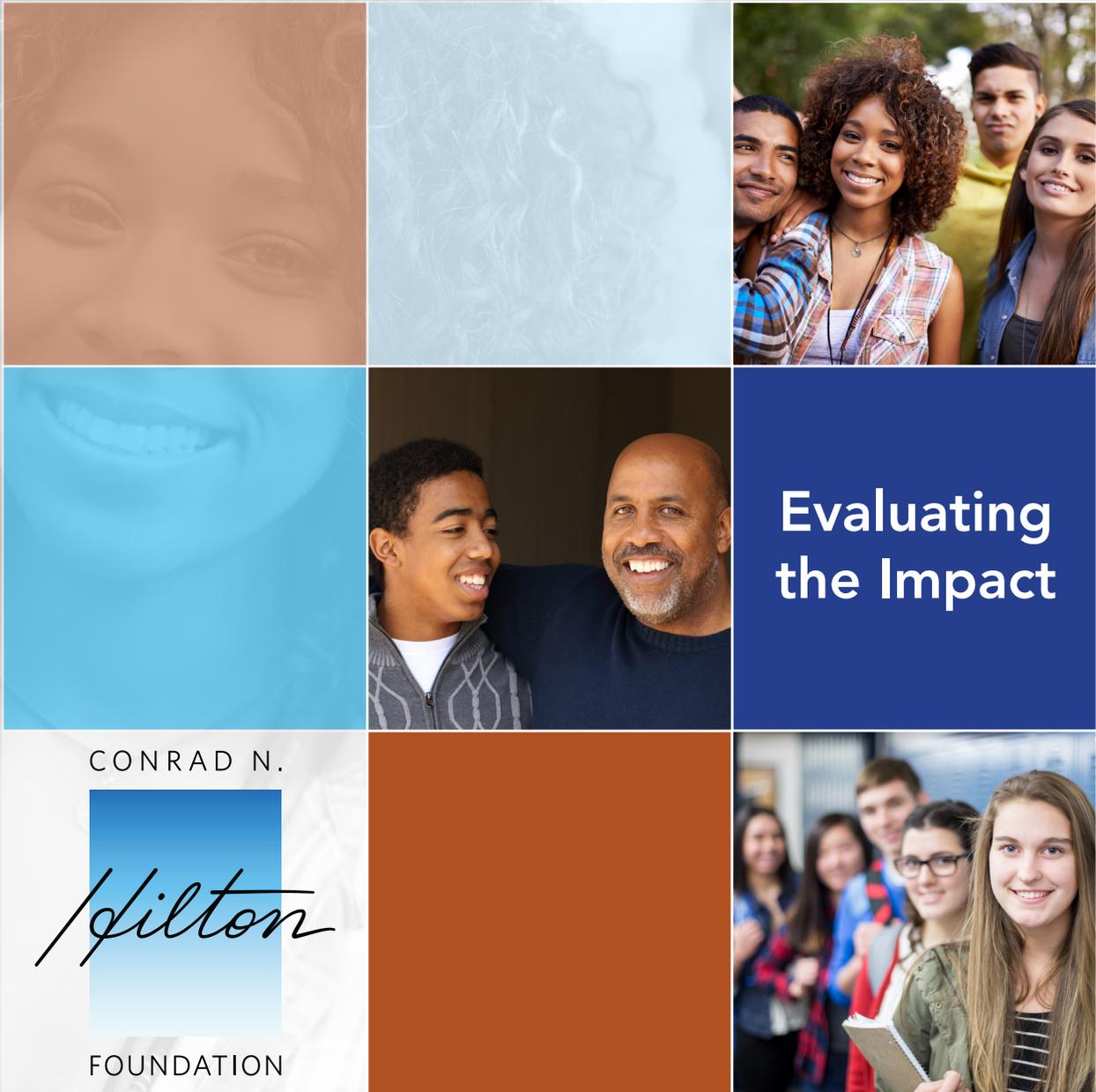


The Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's Youth Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention Strategic Initiative



CONRAD N.



FOUNDATION

Evaluating
the Impact

2016 Executive Summary





Executive Summary

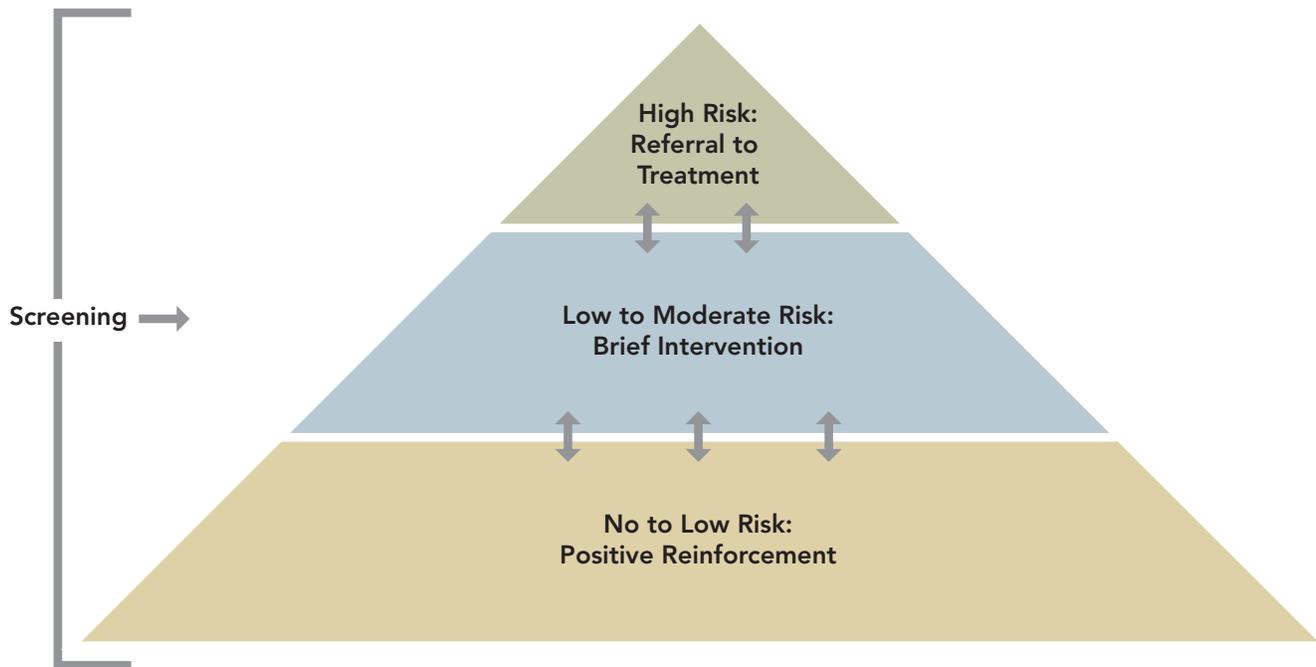
Youth substance use is a leading public health concern in the United States. The U.S. spends over \$700 billion a year in alcohol, tobacco, and drug-related problems associated with health, crime, and lost productivity in the workplace.¹ Because most substance use concerns manifest in adolescence and the young adult years, evidence-based prevention and early intervention strategies for youth are particularly vital to reducing the burden of substance use on individuals, families, and communities. In recent years, policies and services implemented as a result of the Affordable Care Act have significantly impacted primary care and behavioral health delivery systems by emphasizing the value of preventive services, promoting models for primary care and behavioral health integration, engaging communities in population health strategies, and increasing access to substance use and mental health services. Capitalizing on this momentum, the Conrad N. Hilton Foundation's (the Foundation's) Youth Substance Use Prevention and Early Intervention Strategic Initiative (Strategic Initiative) is leading a movement in how people think about, talk about, and address youth substance use. This initiative is laying the groundwork for long-term change through communications and advocacy, preparing the workforce, promoting evidence-based practices, and aligning services across physical health care, behavioral health systems, and community supports nationwide.

The Strategic Initiative is designed to advance the understanding of substance use as a health issue by implementing screening and early intervention approaches to prevent and reduce

substance use among youth as part of routine practice in health care and other settings where youth receive services. The Strategic Initiative's work is centered around a public health, population-based approach of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment (SBIRT). **Screening** refers to the routine, universal administration of validated questions to identify potential risk related to alcohol and drug use, followed by positive reinforcement for youth who screen as 'no' or 'low' risk. **Brief intervention** is one or more short, motivational conversations, typically incorporating feedback, advice, and goal setting around decreasing 'moderate' risk related to substance use. **Referral to treatment** describes the process of connecting individuals with problematic use ('high' risk) to appropriate assessment, treatment, and/or additional services based on their level of need. The intent of the SBIRT process is to identify and address substance use and related risks— including health, social, and legal consequences attributed to substance use— through developmentally appropriate interventions or referrals to other services when indicated. Historically, youth substance use has been solely addressed through prevention interventions focused on abstinence or substance use disorder services provided through traditional specialty treatment systems. The SBIRT framework addresses the gap between primary prevention and treatment for disorders by identifying use and potential risk early and intervening before the use of alcohol or drugs leads to more serious consequences.

Building on growing consensus among federal agencies (e.g. National Institute on Drug Abuse, National Institute on Alcohol Abuse and Alcoholism, Office of National Drug Control

¹Source: <https://www.drugabuse.gov/related-topics/trends-statistics>



Policy, and Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration) and professional groups (e.g. American Academy of Pediatrics, American College of Surgeons, International Nurses Society on Addictions, and Emergency Nurses Association) about the value of SBIRT services in preventing serious substance use-related consequences, the Foundation has utilized a comprehensive, structured approach to fund programs designed to move the needle in training, implementation, and evaluation of youth SBIRT services. Grantees are developing training and technical assistance (TA) curriculums and toolkits, implementing innovative screening and intervention approaches in a variety of settings, and conducting systems change activities designed to prevent and reduce youth substance use and promote health and wellbeing.

In 2014, Abt Associates was selected to serve as the Foundation's Monitoring, Evaluation, and Learning (MEL) partner for the Strategic Initiative. Abt Associates' three-year project is responsible for implementing an iterative and evolving evaluation and learning process to:

- Measure progress towards advancing the goals of the Strategic Initiative;
- Identify key areas of learning and develop recommendations for the Foundation, grantees, and broader stakeholder field;
- Collect data and advise on improvements needed to strengthen delivery systems and improve local evaluation capacity; and
- Identify aspects of systems change needed to sustain implementation and support scalability.

Guided by the Strategic Initiative's three overarching goals, the Foundation has awarded nearly \$42 million in funding to 44 projects implementing research, training, service-delivery, communications, and policy related programs and activities. The Foundation's investment and leadership in this arena has moved public agencies and other private foundations, including those not traditionally engaged in substance use related efforts, to prioritize adolescent alcohol and drug use in their project portfolios. This second annual evaluation report highlights the key learnings emerging from the Strategic Initiative and demonstrates the impact of this prevention and early intervention strategy. The progress towards reaching the Foundation's goals is summarized below and elaborated in the body of this report.

“Addiction is a pediatric disease.”

John Knight, MD, Associate Professor of Pediatrics, Harvard Medical School

Summary of Progress Made Towards Reaching the Strategic Initiative's Goals

GOAL 1: Ensure health providers have the knowledge and skills to provide screening and early intervention services.

- 118,767 individuals received information and resources about SBIRT implementation, including briefs, reports, and presentations.
- 11,119 individuals received SBIRT training through the Strategic Initiative, exceeding the Foundation's objective of training 5,000 providers.

GOAL 2: Improve funding for, access to, and implementation of screening and early intervention services.

- 17 grantees were implementing SBIRT services in 348 sites.
- Through these implementation sites, 29,607 youth have been screened for substance use. Of those screened, 4,036 received a brief intervention, and 758 received a referral to treatment. In other words, 86% of those screened did not receive any additional substance use intervention, while 12% received a brief intervention, and 2% received a referral for treatment or additional services.
- 17 grantees are engaging local, state, or national policy makers and external stakeholders.
- \$23.92 million in public and private funding has been raised by grantees.

GOAL 3: Conduct research and advance learning to improve screening and early intervention practices.

- Eight grantees are funded to research or evaluate the feasibility and/or effectiveness of new models of SBIRT service delivery. Four grantees are projected to collect follow-up or outcome data at time points following the initial delivery of SBIRT, ranging from 3 to 12 months.
- 15 grantees plan to produce and disseminate findings from their projects and/or studies that will contribute to the larger SBIRT and youth substance use research and evidence base by the end of their grants.
- Cross-grantee learning and engagement occurs through the Hilton Community for Healthy Youth, an online collaborative community, webinars tailored for the Strategic Initiative, monthly web-conference meetings, and weekly email communications to all grantees.

As considerable progress continues to be made towards the goals, grantees and the broader field are addressing challenges related to the integration of routine, standardized screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment services within health care and other youth-serving organizations and systems. The MEL Project has identified several overarching recommendations as the Foundation and its grantees navigate the challenges and move into the second half of the five-year strategy. A summary of the recommendations and potential action items is below.

In the report that follows we describe the significant progress made towards reaching the Foundation's goals over the past year. The Foundation's process of developing and testing innovative strategies has brought challenges to light and led to creative approaches from grantees implementing SBIRT in new areas and with new youth serving providers. At the heart of the Strategic Initiative is the Foundation's monitoring, evaluation, and learning approach to program implementation where grantees learn from each other, cross-fertilize ideas and solutions, and use data to guide their decisions.

Summary of 2016 Recommendations

- **Assess SBIRT outcomes and level of impact on youth substance use.** Once the feasibility of SBIRT training and implementation is established, the Strategic Initiative can focus on the long-term question, considering how to support impact measurement to more effectively assess the level to which grantees are impacting youth substance use in the United States. For instance, the Foundation may:

 - Provide technical assistance around evidence-based practice in following-up with youth to measure outcomes.
 - Fund programs with an outcome evaluation expectation, i.e. measuring the longer term impact of training and implementation activities.
 - Develop objectives and indicators to account for differing training targets and topics.
- **Guide grantees to utilize existing evidence based practices and resources for SBIRT training and implementation to use research to improve practice.** There are several opportunities to unpack the individual components of screening, brief intervention, and referral to treatment to better align with the research base. For example:

 - Endorse a list of standardized, evidence-based training and implementation approaches during the initial funding stage.
 - Develop a brief report on the different screening tools utilized by the grantees in different settings and the properties of each, and make recommendations for which tool to use in which settings.
 - Create an organizational readiness assessment tool to assist organizations in tailoring training and technical assistance to align with organizations' knowledge, skills, and readiness.
 - Consolidate current lessons learned, resources, and products from the Strategic Initiative into guides for wider distribution to the field and utilization among future grantees.
 - Initiate a systematic study regarding referral to treatment and referral to services for youth and pilot new models.
 - Provide ongoing technical assistance to training providers and implementation sites.
- **Respond to emerging issues and gaps in current research and practice.** The Foundation may support future efforts to address these gaps, including:

 - Integrate SBIRT and substance use prevention into routine preventive health screenings and services to better connect substance use and general health and link health behaviors.
 - Support programs that are implementing evidence-based approaches for identifying and addressing the social determinants of health.
 - Support the development and testing of SBIRT approaches to reducing health disparities and inequities among marginalized youth.
 - Disseminate resources to assist states and providers in identifying and utilizing current and emerging financing mechanisms for screening and brief intervention.
- **Explore new, innovative approaches to resolve persistent, prevalent ambivalence and cultural norms around youth substance use.** Key learnings from the Strategic Initiative thus far could inform new approaches that capitalize on new technologies and components of successful social marketing and health communication strategies. Considerations include:

 - Utilize current projects to unpack the lessons learned thus far to further explore parental/caregiver ambivalence about youth substance use and develop strategies for effectively engaging parents in youth substance use prevention and intervention.
 - Fund projects to research and develop effective strategies for reaching health professionals and other youth serving providers with effective messaging and educational materials.
 - Direct grantees to involve youth in program planning and the development of effective messages, including youth and young adults in recovery from substance use disorders.

Abt Associates is a mission-driven, global leader in research and program implementation in the fields of health, social and environmental policy, and international development. Known for its rigorous approach to solving complex challenges, Abt Associates is regularly ranked as one of the top 20 global research firms and one of the top 40 international development innovators. The company has multiple offices in the U.S. and program offices in more than 40 countries.



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