



FNA gets \$3.9 million for mental health early intervention screening

Contact: Perry Ahsogeak, FNA Behavioral Health Services Director, 907-452-1648, ext. 6411

Sept. 23, 2021

Fairbanks, Alaska—Fairbanks Native Association has received a \$3.9 million grant to provide early screening and intervention for anyone within the Fairbanks area accessing FNA's Behavioral Health Services.

The new tool is called Screening, Brief Intervention and Referral to Treatment, or SBIRT. It is used to quickly assess the severity of substance use and identifies appropriate levels of treatment, according to grantor Substance Abuse and Mental Health Administration. SAMHSA recently awarded \$123 million in grants to combat the national overdose epidemic, including SBIRT funding, and FNA is one of eleven SBIRT grantees nationwide.

“FNA has been offering substance use disorders treatment in the Fairbanks North Star Borough for 50 years, and during two of those decades was the only SUD treatment provider in the borough,” said Perry Ahsogeak, Director of FNA Behavioral Health Services.

“The SBIRT award will grow and boost our care for all those who are struggling with mental health issues and substance use.”

Trained staff will give the SBIRT assessment to those first seeking services at FNA Behavioral Health, and should take about 5-10 minutes. The screening is standard across primary care, hospitals, trauma centers and other behavioral health agencies, according to SAMHSA.

FNA will partner with the Interior Aids Association, ThrivAlaska and Effie Kokrine Charter School over the life of the five-year grant. The goal of the partnership is to enhance prevention efforts with early screening, and to provide the necessary resources within the Fairbanks community. An end-of-grant outcome is that staff positions will be sustained: 100% with FNA, and 50% at the partner sites.

FNA will work closely with the Interagency Transition Council, an 18-member group with people from substance abuse, mental health, juvenile and criminal justice, child welfare, Head Start, education, employment, spiritual/religious, housing, and social services fields, that will provide leadership in meeting the goals of the project.

“We are happy to add another tool to help people with substance abuse and mental health concerns in the Fairbanks area,” said Steve Ginnis, FNA executive director.

XXX