



# Unhealthy Alcohol Use NOW

- 3rd leading cause of preventable death in the U.S.
- A key contributor, along with opioids and suicide, to a recent decline in U.S. life expectancy, especially among those living in rural areas
- The main driver behind a rise since 2009 in mortality due to cirrhosis, with the greatest relative increase in people aged 25-34
- Associated with use of other harmful substances, with harms reflecting joint effects
- Often involved in overdoses and poisoning deaths when combined with other drugs—particularly depressants such as opioids or benzodiazepines

## Screening & Management of Unhealthy Alcohol Use in Primary Care

### What's in it for your practice?

1. Help from practice facilitators to develop a process
2. The chance to develop or improve a systematic approach to screening for unhealthy alcohol use and helping patients who engage in risky drinking or have alcohol use disorder (AUD)
3. Help developing an organized summary of available services for helping people who drink too much, by county
4. Learning how and when to prescribe medications for AUD (mainly naltrexone)
5. These are billable services, with approved billing codes allowing practices to be reimbursed for providing screening and counseling
6. Money—for completing surveys and collecting data, we will provide stipends
7. Lunch and learn sessions that will cover the latest evidence on unhealthy alcohol use
8. As long as you continue to work on office systems for risky drinking, the facilitators can help you optimize your practice with other systems improvements

### What are we asking of the practices?

1. Work with practice facilitators to implement a process to screen for unhealthy alcohol use
2. Work with practice facilitators to implement a process for counseling patients who engage in risky drinking or who have alcohol use disorder (AUD)
3. Learn how and when to prescribe medications for AUD
4. Respond to surveys about the process
5. Collect data describing the implementation, e.g., number of patients in target population, and number & percent of:
  - patients screened
  - patients who screened positive
  - patients who received brief counseling intervention
  - patients who received medications for AUD
  - patients referred to specialty clinics