The Heller School for Social Policy and Management

**Appendix 3**

**Understanding Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) Implementation in Vermont Medical Settings: A Mixed-Methods Study**

A Dissertation Proposal Presented to

the Faculty of the Heller School for Social Policy and Management Brandeis University, Waltham, Massachusetts

By

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Unhealthy alcohol consumption is a serious public health concern. Ranging from moderate or risky drinking to a clinically diagnosable alcohol use disorder, alcohol misuse takes a large toll on the health care system. Screening, Brief Intervention, and Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) is an evidence- based clinical process to identify and provide early intervention for patients engaged in unhealthy drinking and/or substance use. It is currently being adopted and implemented around the country, and in Vermont. While numerous studies substantiate the efficacy of SBIRT in outpatient and emergency medical settings, more research is needed regarding the process of implementing and sustaining it into routine clinical practice.

The proposed dissertation uses a mixed-methods research design to analyze the SBIRT implementation process in Vermont medical settings. Specifically, this study aims to first quantitatively determine the factors associated with screening, brief intervention, brief treatment, and referral to treatment after SBIRT implementation *(Aim 1*). The study will then qualitatively explore the implementation process through four case studies of successful implementation sites, and analyze how medical organizations in Vermont plan to sustain SBIRT (*Aim 2*). Finally, quantitative and qualitative findings will be integrated in order to evaluate specific implementation outcomes.

The overall goal of this project is to study implementation process, including how individuals and organizations integrate new clinical procedures into routine medical practice. To understand multi- level diffusion and implementation processes at play, this study will use the theory of diffusion of innovations to guide the research. The Greenhalgh and colleagues' *Conceptual Model for Considering the Determinants of Diffusion, Dissemination, and Implementation of Innovations in Health Service Delivery and Organization* and the *SBIRT Program Matrix* will be used to lead the research activities and evaluate implementation outcomes.

Understanding how SBIRT is implemented in Vermont may provide guidance for scaling up and expanding the clinical process in other states and locations. Additionally, findings may suggest how best to support and sustain SBIRT moving forward in the state. The proposed study presents a unique real-world implementation research opportunity, and findings are expected to support and expand the SBIRT knowledge base.

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Proposal Defense Hearing: Tuesday, May 16, 1:30 p.m. – 3:30 p.m.

Heller School, Room 147

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