

# Referral to Treatment: Overcoming Common Barriers

**Richard L. Brown, MD, MPH**



# Richard L. Brown, MD, MPH




- ✧ Practiced family medicine for 25 years with emphasis on substance use disorders and behavioral health
- ✧ Retired full professor with tenure, University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health
- ✧ Published dozens of articles on substance use disorders in peer-reviewed research journals
- ✧ Gave hundreds of talks and workshops on SBIRT and motivational interviewing
- ✧ Directed a \$12.6 million, five-year, SAMHSA-funded project to help 33 diverse primary care clinics deliver SBIRT with newly hired and trained health coaches
  - >100,000 patients screened
  - > 20,000 brief interventions delivered
  - High patient satisfaction
  - Reductions in substance use
  - Substantial healthcare cost savings
- ✧ Past president and Harris Award winner for excellence in medical education, Association for Medical Education Research in Substance Abuse (AMERSA)
- ✧ Retired Senior Director of Population Health Management, Concerto Health
- ✧ Current trainer and consultant


# Working with Communities.

## Contact the Opioid Response Network

- ✦ The SAMHSA-funded *Opioid Response Network (ORN)* assists states, organizations and individuals by providing the resources and technical assistance they need locally to address the opioid crisis and stimulant use.
  - ✦ Technical assistance is available to support the evidence-based prevention, treatment and recovery of opioid use disorders and stimulant use disorders.
  - ✦ To ask questions or submit a request for technical assistance:
- ✦ The *ORN* provides local, experienced consultants in prevention, treatment and recovery to communities and organizations to help address this opioid crisis and stimulant use.
  - ✦ *ORN* accepts requests for education and training.
  - ✦ Each state/territory has a designated team, led by a regional Technology Transfer Specialist (TTS), who is an expert in implementing evidence-based practices.

 Visit [www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org](http://www.OpioidResponseNetwork.org)

 Email [orn@aaap.org](mailto:orn@aaap.org)

 Call 401-270-5900



Funding for this initiative was made possible (in part) by grant no. 1H79TI083343 from SAMHSA. The views expressed in written conference materials or publications and by speakers and moderators do not necessarily reflect the official policies of the Department of Health and Human Services; nor does mention of trade names, commercial practices, or organizations imply endorsement by the U.S. Government.

# Thanks to ...

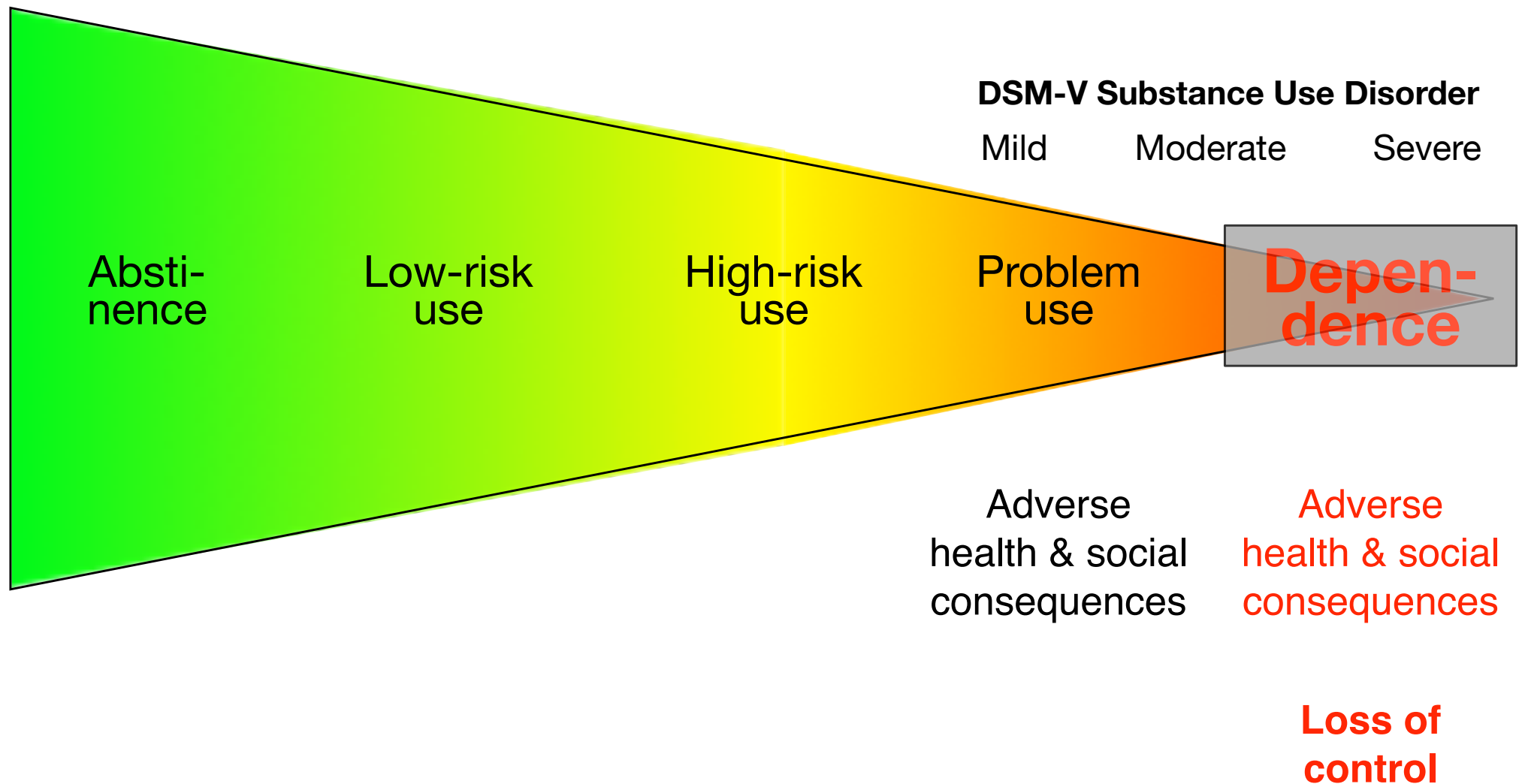


# Outline

- ✦ Continuum of substance use
- ✦ The challenge of Referral to Treatment (RT)
- ✦ Common barriers to effective RT
- ✦ Overcoming those barriers

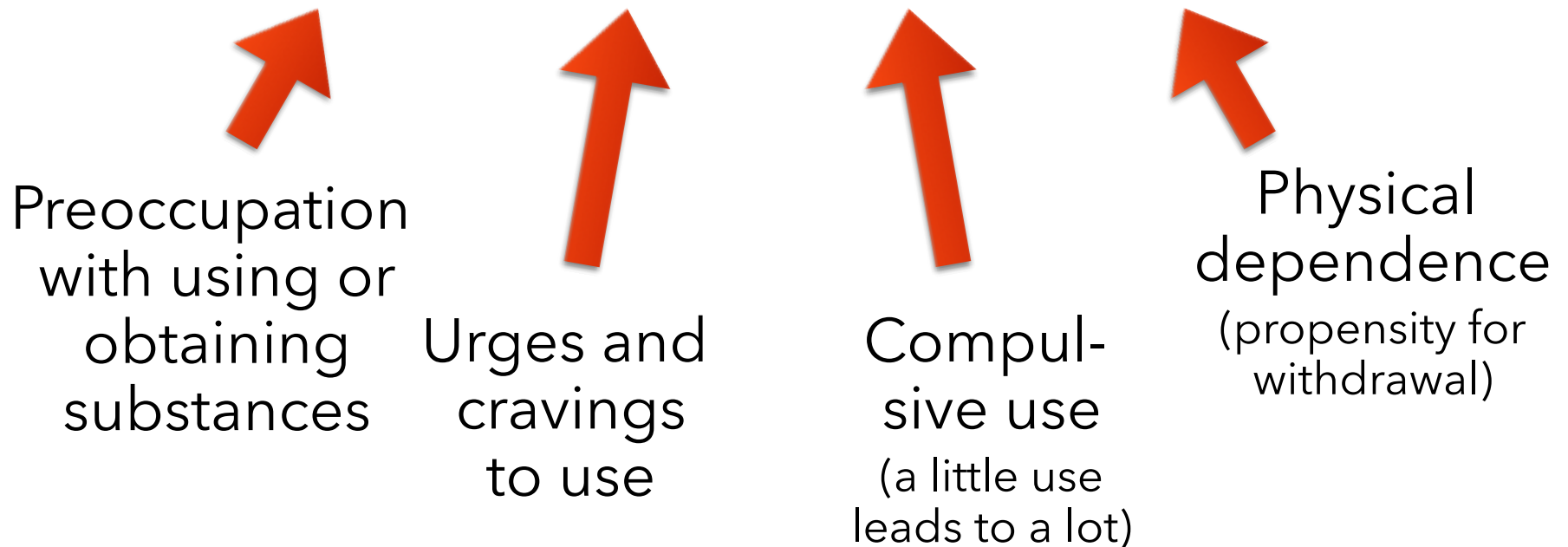


# SBIRT and the Substance Use Continuum

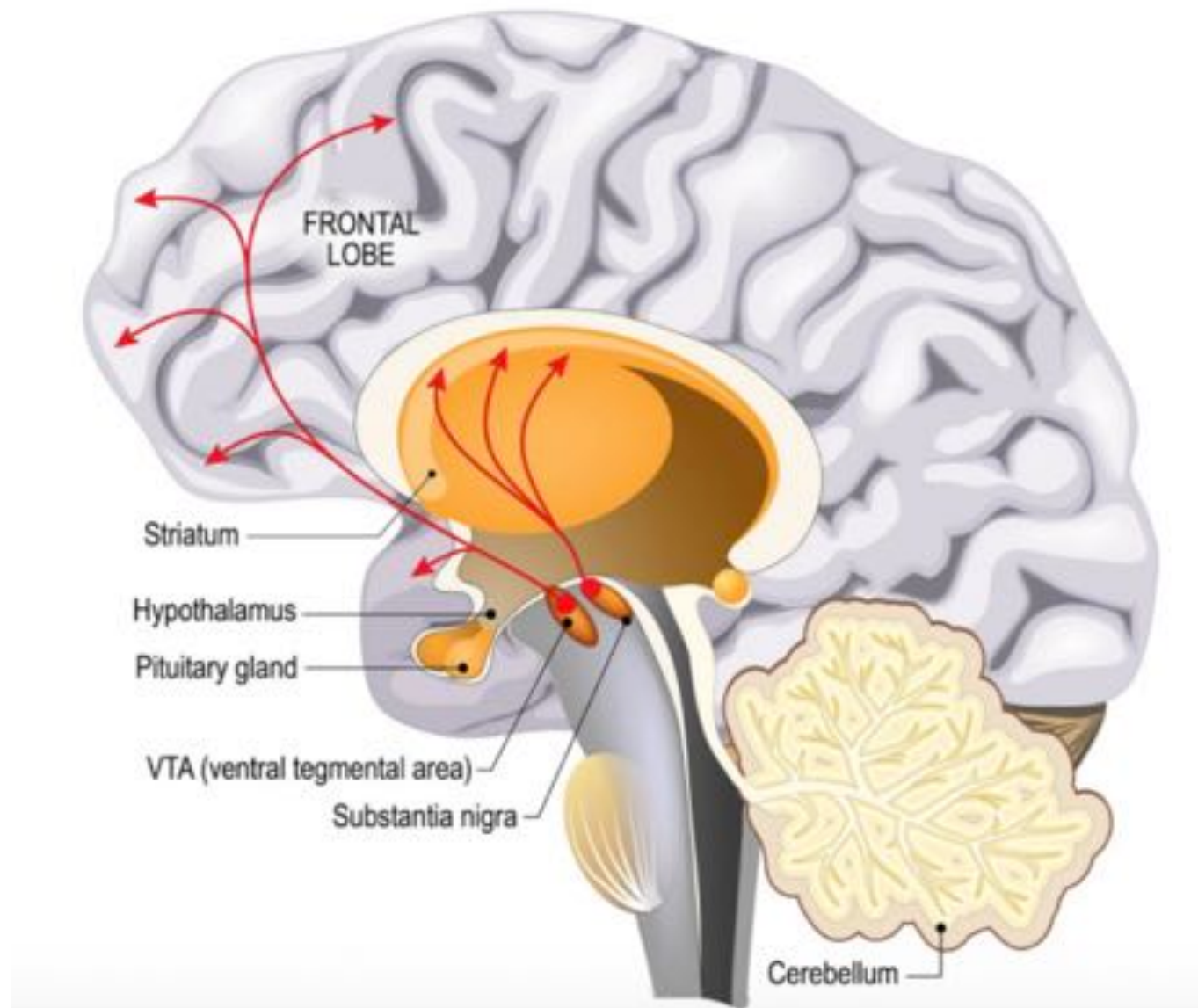


# Dependence Symptoms

## Loss of Control over Substance Use



# Loss of Control

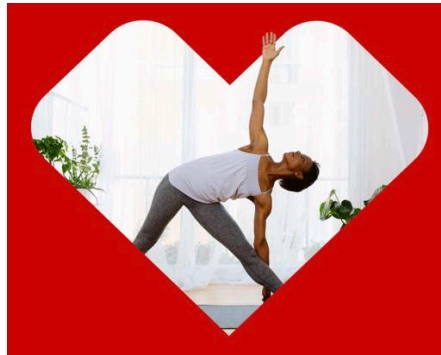




# Treatment is Effective!



**Less substance use**



**Better physical health**



**Better mental health**



**Healthier relationships**



**Better work function**

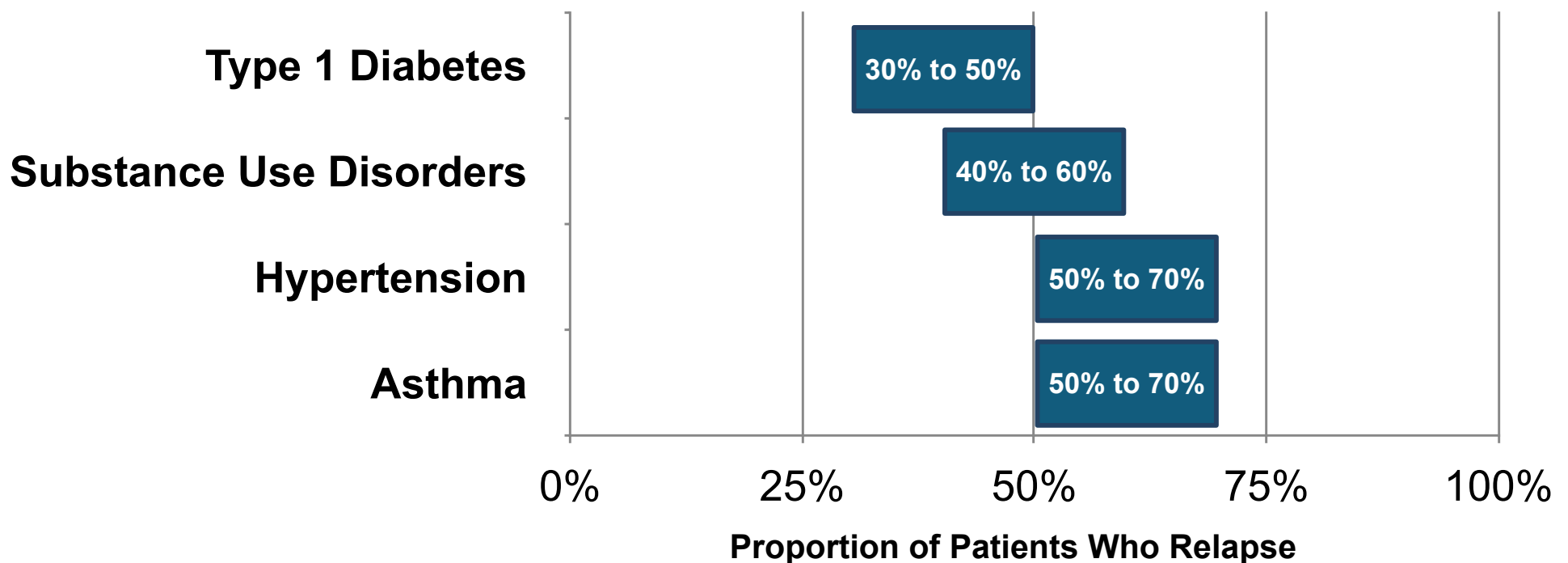


**Lower criminal recidivism**



# Treatment is Effective!

With treatment, relapse rates for substance use disorders are similar to relapse rates for other common chronic illnesses.



# The Challenge

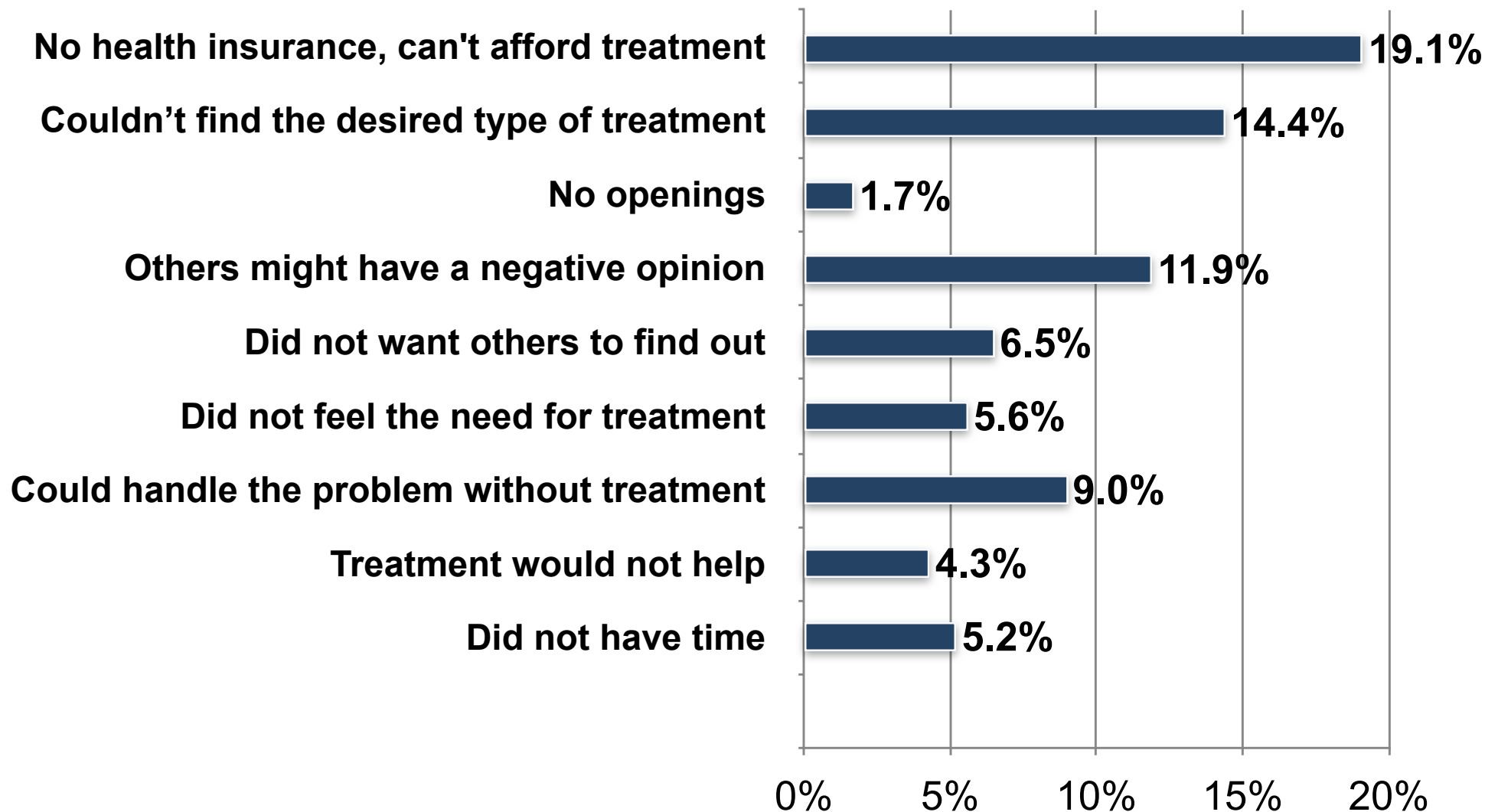


# National Survey on Drug Use and Health – 2020

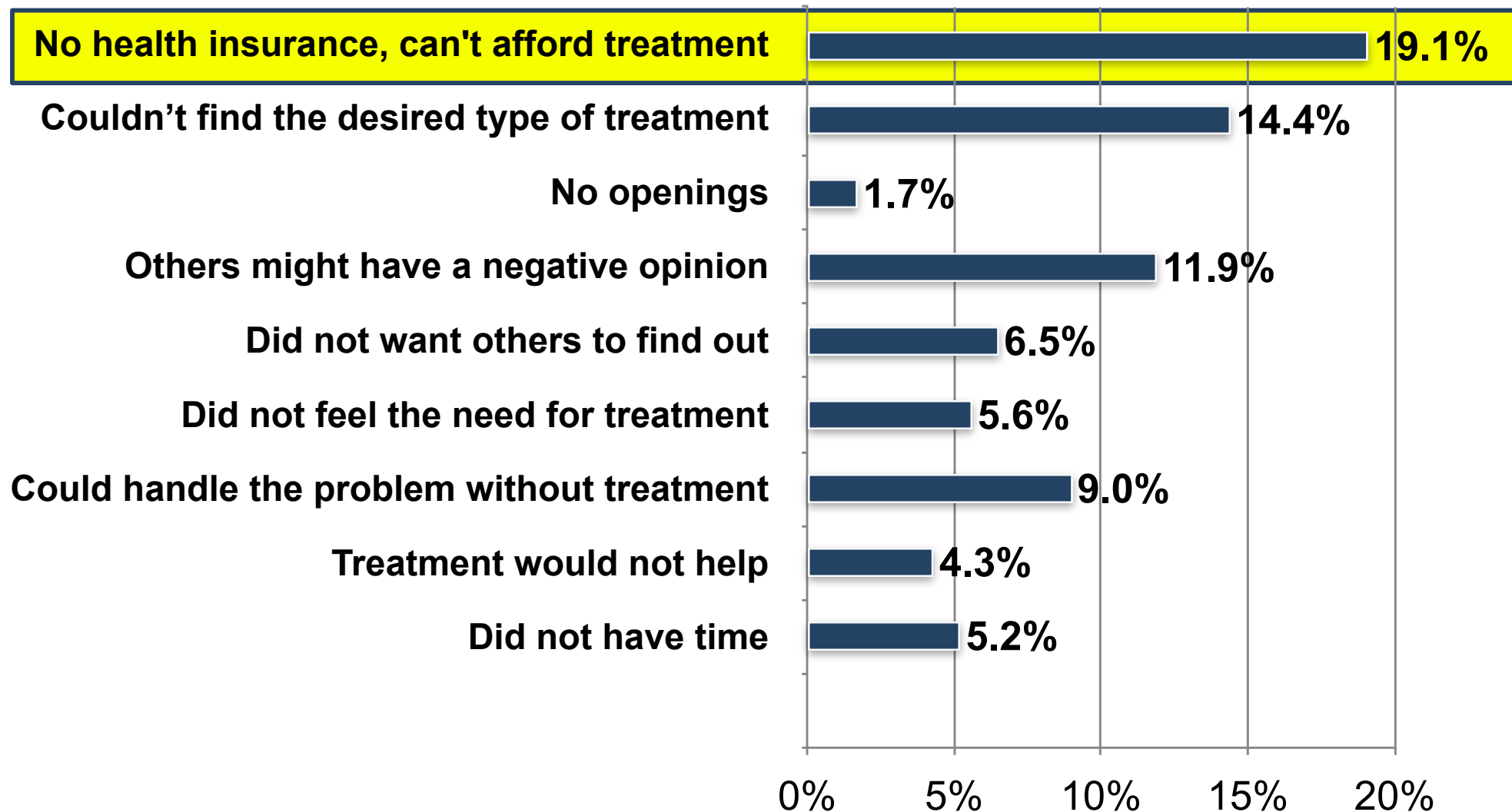
- ✧ Surveyed 352 to 2,152 people in every state
- ✧ Ages 12 and up
- ✧ To maximize participation and accuracy:
  - Confidential, names not collected
  - Computer-administered
  - English and Spanish
  - Private setting in people's homes
  - \$30 cash incentive
- ✧ Questions
  - Substance use, consequences, and dependence symptoms
  - Receipt of treatment
  - Reasons for not obtaining treatment



# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

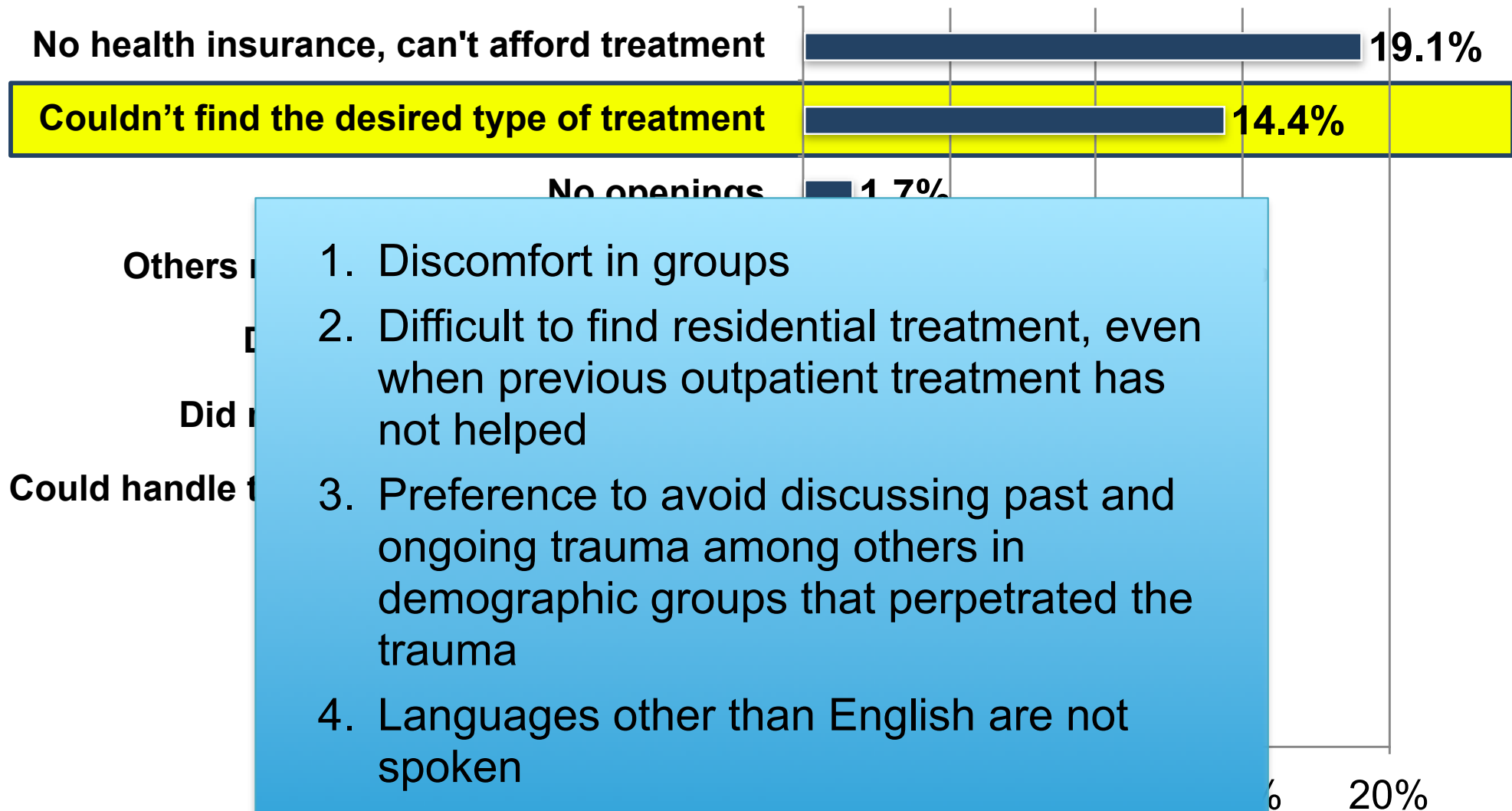


# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

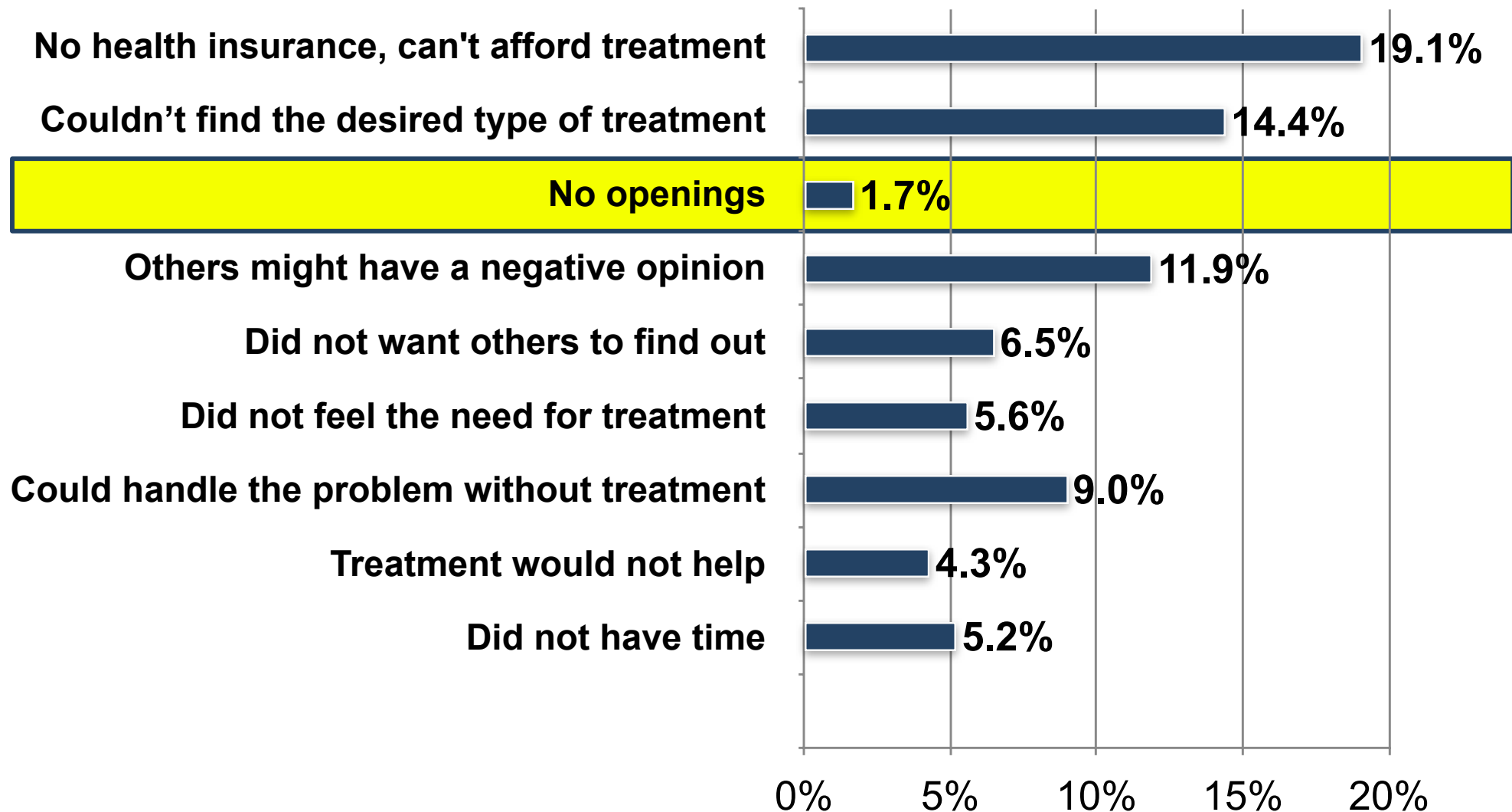




# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

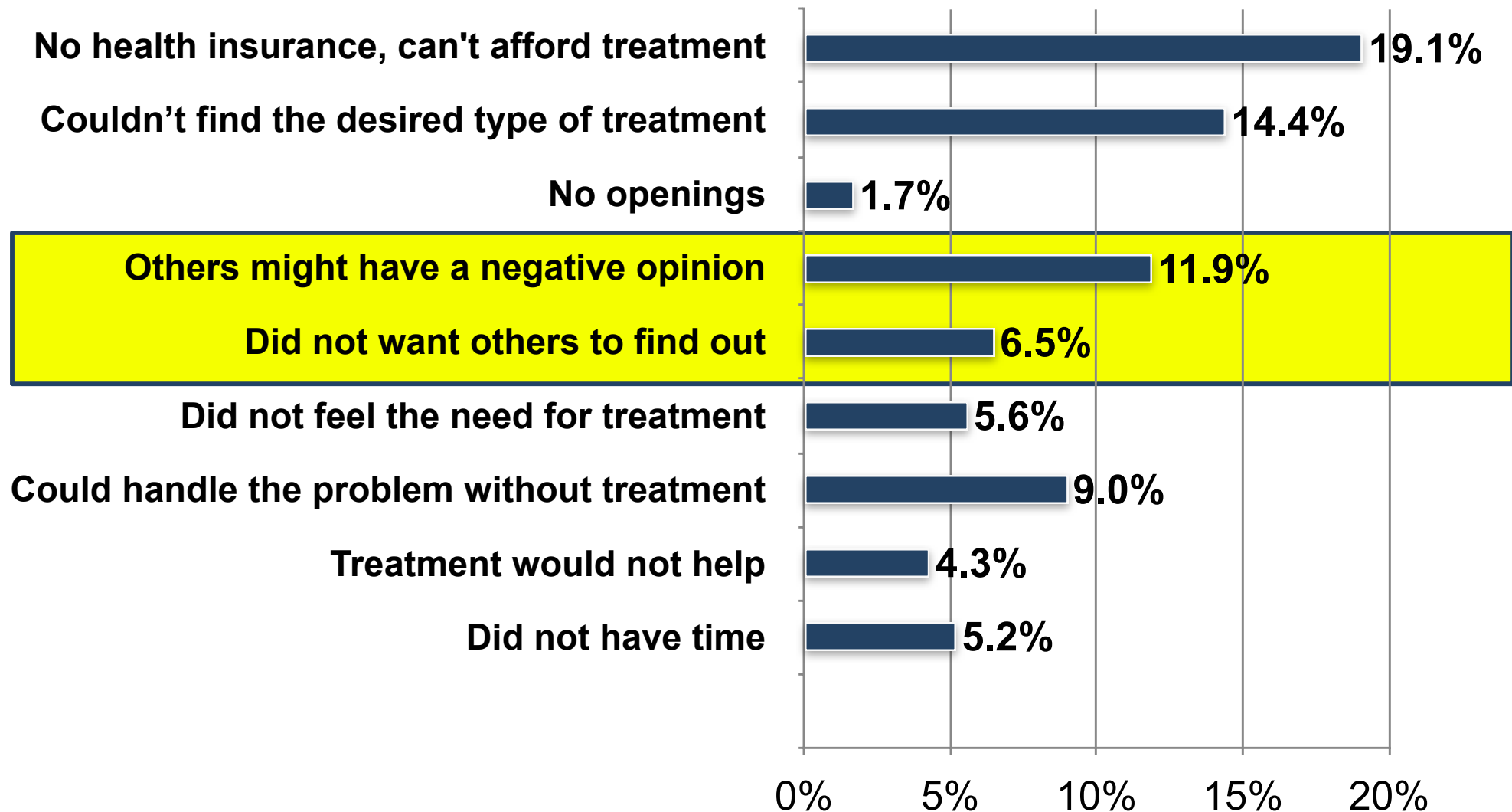


# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders

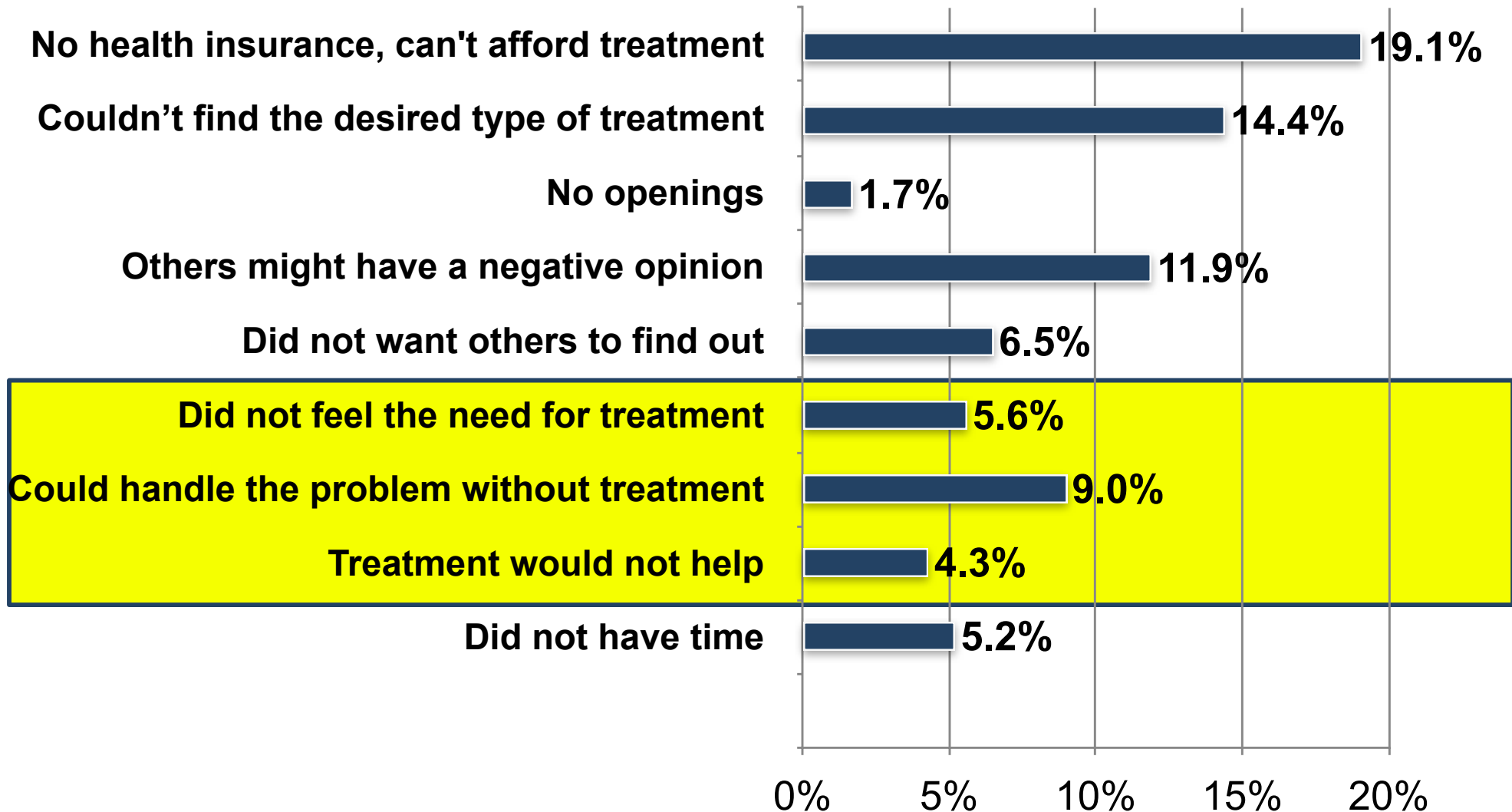




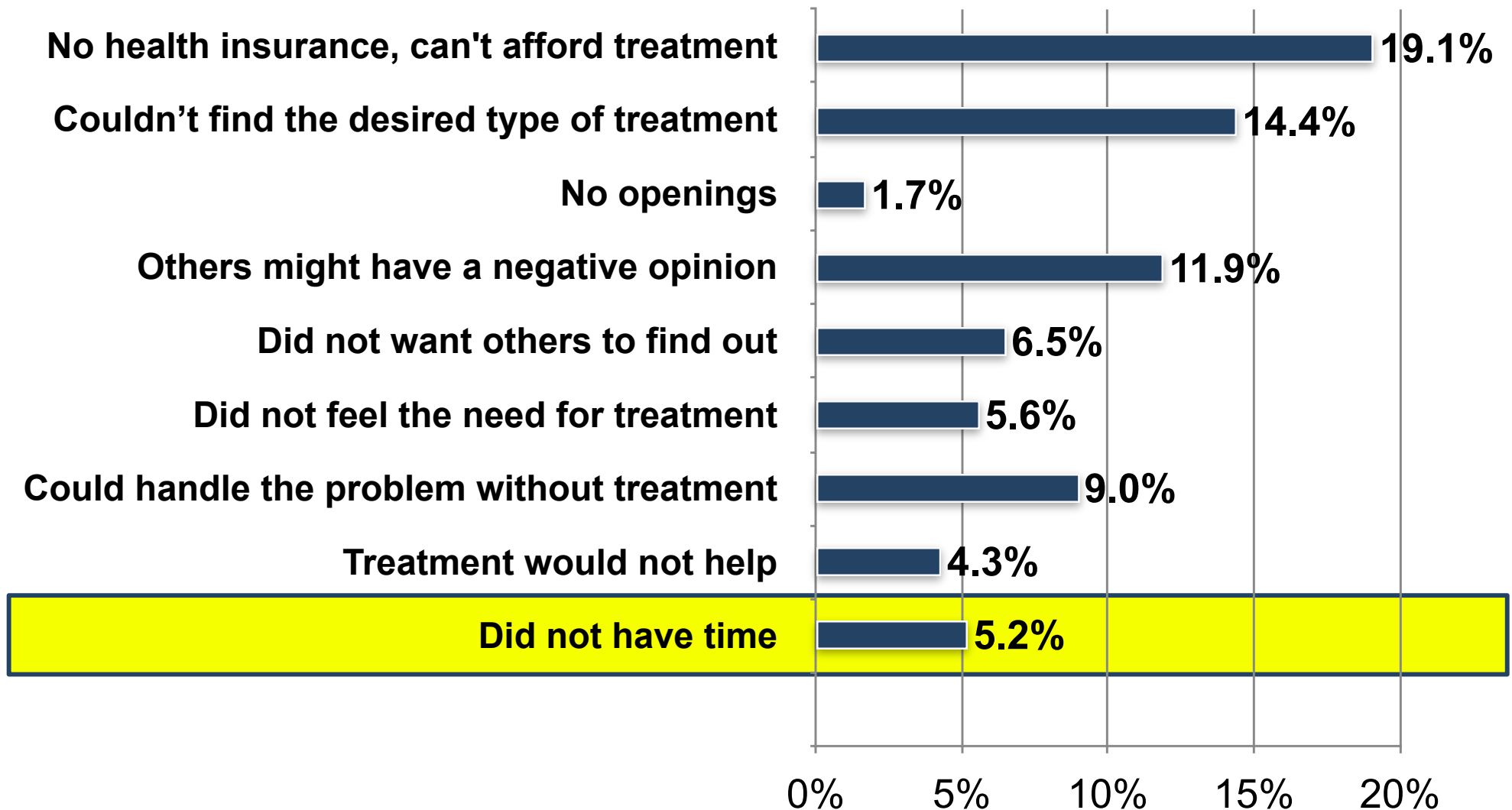
# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders



# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders



# Reasons for Not Receiving Treatment for Substance Use Disorders



# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## Subjects:

102 teens with drug use disorders

35 “key informant” professionals

## Locations:

11 rural communities in Northern Ontario

## Methods:

Questionnaires, interviews, and focus groups



Russel et al, PLOS One, Assessing service and treatment needs and barriers of youth who use illicit and non-medical prescription drugs in Northern Ontario, Canada; 2019.  
<https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0225548>

# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## Results:

4 categories of barriers:

- Personal
- Social
- Physical
- Structural



# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## ✧ Personal Barriers

- Unaware of treatment resources and how to access them
- Not interested in getting help or quitting drug use
- Difficulty in admitting need for help



# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## ✧ Social Barriers

- Lack of confidentiality and privacy
- Potential consequences from parents and legal authorities
- Pressure from peers to decline treatment and continue using
- Stigma, judgment, discrimination, racism



# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## ✧ Structural Barriers

- Waiting lists and evanescent desire for help
- Time limitations of services and lack of linkage to additional services
- Limited hours of operations to address needs that arise during nights and weekends
- Bureaucratic requirements





# Study of Barriers to Treatment for Teens

## ✦ Physical Barriers

- Geographic isolation
- Limited transportation options traveling to treatment and back home
- Lack of warm clothing for allowing travel in cold weather



# Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to Treatment



# Strategies for Overcoming Barriers to Treatment

- ✦ Education and advocacy regarding health insurance coverage
- ✦ Treatment program search
- ✦ Deliver treatment in primary care settings
- ✦ Motivational interviewing
- ✦ Engage parents



# Health Plan Education & Advocacy

## Commercial insurance

- ✧ If plans cover MH/SUDs, benefits must be equivalent to benefits for other medical disorders
- ✧ Plans are required to have “network adequacy”
- ✧ Deductibles, co-insurance, and co-pays may be prohibitive

## Public insurance - Medicare, MaineCare (Medicaid)

- ✧ Not subject to the same requirements
- ✧ Medicaid coverage varies by state



# Treatment Program Search

Online treatment search resources:

- ✧ [211.maine.org](http://211.maine.org)
- ✧ [findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov)
- ✧ [maineaap.org/families/resources/substance-use](http://maineaap.org/families/resources/substance-use)



# 211maine.org



ENGLISH ▼

COVID-19 UPDATES ABOUT SERVICE CATEGORIES JOIN US NEWS CONTACT

SEARCH OUR DIRECTORY

## What do you need help with?

Find services in your area by selecting an area of need or by searching by keyword. You can also dial 211 or text your zip code to 898-211.

Select a need below:

Substance Use & Addiction ▼

✓ SELECT THE SITUATION

- I need help with opiate use.
- I need help to quit smoking.
- I need help with alcohol or drug use.
- I need substance use counseling.
- I need help with a gambling problem.
- I need pregnancy resources.
- I need prevention resources.
- I need treatment resources.
- I need information about support groups.
- Other

Search by keyword:

Select an option or type a keyword

OR  
Town or Zip Code

LOCATE SERVICES

You can also connect with Maine specialists by dialing 211 or texting your zip code to 898-211.









# findtreatment.gov

An official website of the United States government

FindTreatment.gov For help finding treatment 1-800-662-HELP (4357)

[Search for treatment](#) [Treatment options](#) [Paying for treatment](#) [Understanding addiction](#) [Understanding mental health](#)



**Millions of Americans have a substance use disorder. Help is available.**

The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA) collects information on thousands of state-licensed providers who specialize in treating substance use disorders, addiction, and mental illness.

[Find treatment](#) [Learn more](#)

### Find a treatment facility near you



# Treatment Program Search

Online search resources:

✧ [211.maine.org](https://211.maine.org) ✧ [findtreatment.gov](https://findtreatment.gov)

Search for:

- ✧ Acceptance of various health plans and patients who cannot pay
- ✧ Detox, outpatient, residential, inpatient, transitional housing, telehealth
- ✧ Medications for alcohol and opioid use disorders
- ✧ Groups and other resources for teens, women, LGBTQ, veterans, and racial and ethnic minorities
- ✧ Spanish, American Sign Language, and other languages





[maineaap.org/families/resources/substance-use](http://maineaap.org/families/resources/substance-use)



[About Us](#) + [Advocacy](#) + [Education](#) + [Membership](#) + [For Families](#) + [For Providers](#) +

[FOR FAMILIES](#) | [RESOURCES](#) | [SUBSTANCE USE/OPIOD TREATMENT](#)

# Substance Use/Opioid Treatment

[Youth Peer Support Statewide Network](#)

**Youth Peer Support Statewide Network now accepting referrals for youth peer support!**

Maine Behavioral Healthcare was awarded a new contract with the State of Maine to develop a Youth Peer Support Statewide Network (YPSSN). This program offers anyone in the state of Maine who is between the ages of 14 and 26 access to a variety of peer support opportunities. The contract officially began in February of this year and we are already offering a number of activities for Maine's youth and young adults who are struggling or have struggled with their mental health, which may include substance use. There is no insurance needed, no diagnosis required, and no cost.

The YPSSN has youth peer support staff in Portland, Lewiston and Bangor primarily. We also will have staff in Piscataquis, Aroostook, and Penobscot Counties offering support to youth and young adults on waitlists for behavioral health services. Again, this is a statewide program, so youth and young adults from across Maine can access virtual and in-person activities.

**We are excited to announce that the YPSSN is now accepting referrals for 1-1 youth peer support statewide!** And there's more:

- **Providing virtual and in-person one-on-one youth peer support**

- o Electronic/online referral form located here: [YPSSN Referral Form](#)

# Youth Peer Support Statewide Network

Are you or someone you know between the ages of 14 and 26 living day to day with struggles of mental health and/or substance use challenges?



## YOUTH PEER SUPPORT STATEWIDE NETWORK

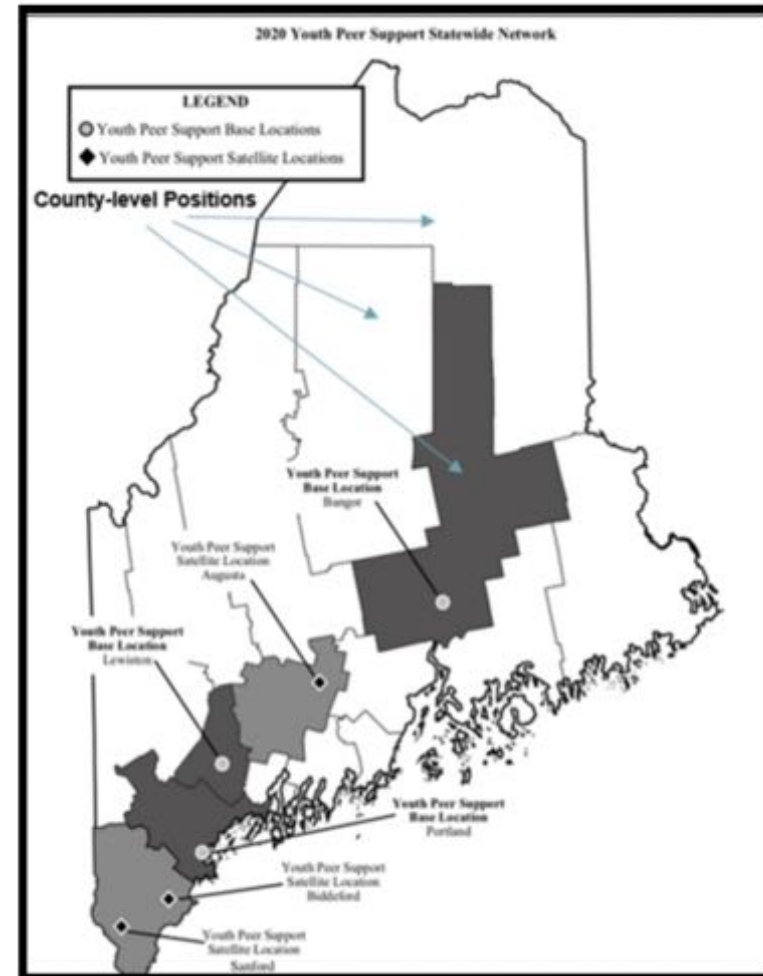
Visit our website:  
<https://bit.ly/youthpeer>

Email us at  
YPSSN@mainehealth.org  
or call us 207-396-7052

 YPSSNMaine

The youth peer support statewide network serves youth ages 14-26 who self-identify with history of mental health and/or substance use challenges.

Our services are free- we don't bill insurance or participants. We accept referrals from anyone, as long as the youth gives permission to have their information shared.



<https://bit.ly/youthpeer>

# Deliver Treatment in Primary Care

Collaborate with Treatment Program or Specialist

✧ Offer in-house counseling

PCPs or other staff

✧ Offer medications

✧ Encourage mutual support programs

Medication	Alcohol Use Disorder	Opioid Use Disorder	Legal to Prescribe in Primary Care
Disulfiram	✓		✓
Acamprosate	✓		✓
Naltrexone	✓	✓	✓
Methadone		✓	*
Buprenorphine		✓	✓

\* Methadone may be prescribed in general healthcare settings for pain, not for opioid use disorder



# Mutual Support Groups

<https://alcoholicsanonymous.com/aa-meetings/maine/>

Alcoholics Resource Center Find a Meeting Addictions Blog Get Help 800-839-1686

Home » AA Meetings » Maine

## Find AA Meetings in Maine

Welcome to AA Maine, a state-wide recovery resource devoted to supporting the men and women of Maine. AA Maine helps individuals struggling with alcoholism find the help they need on a local basis. Discover Maine Alcoholics Anonymous meetings per county or city, and take the next step to overcome alcohol addiction.

### Find Maine AA Meetings Serving These Cities

Abbot	Dedham	Machias	Sabattus
Acton	Deer Isle	Madison	Saco
Alfred	Denmark	Manchester	Sanford
Andover	Dexter	Mariaville	Sangerville
Auburn	Dover-Foxcroft	Mattawamkeag	Scarborough
Augusta	East Millinocket	Mechanic Falls	Searsport
Bangor	Eastport	Mexico	Sedgwick
Bar Harbor	Eddington	Milbridge	Skowhegan
Bath	Filsworth	Millinocket	Smith River

**Get Help With Alcohol Addiction**

**Talk To A Rehab Specialist Today**

Call now for:

- Find the best drug rehab centers
- Access **free** detox and rehab programs
- Get 24-hour guidance on starting your recovery

**800-839-1686**

All calls are 100% confidential

<https://namaine.org/in-person/>

## Narcotics Anonymous

Narcotics Anonymous in the State of Maine

Home Events Meetings Contact About Service Just For Today For Addicts For Professionals

## In Person Or Hybrid

Got a drug problem? Call our helpline and talk to a recovering addict.

The Narcotics Anonymous of Maine helpline offers information on NA in the state of Maine. For information on NA outside the state of Maine, please click here.

**1-833-436-6166**

There are currently **48 in-person or hybrid NA meetings in Maine.**

Weekday	Groups	Venue Types	Areas	Formats
Friday	12:00 pm - 1:00 pm	Mind Body and Spirit Together Place 2 Second Street, Bangor, ME, 04401		NAIP NAIP
Friday	12:00 am - 1:00	We Are All In This Together Portland Recovery Community Center		NAIP

<https://www.smartrecovery.org>

Do you know a SMART Recovery volunteer who has helped others create their Life Beyond Addiction? Take a moment to recognize them by filling out [this form](#).

SMART Recovery. Life beyond addiction.

About Us | Events | Bookshop | VolunteerHQ | Toolbox | Media | Videos | Español

What We Do | Who We Serve | Get Trained | Ways to Give | Resources | Contact Us **DONATE!**

Find a Meeting - | Online Community Search

## There's Life Beyond Addiction

SMART Recovery can help you get there.

Our mutual support meetings are free and open to anyone seeking science-based, self-empowered addiction recovery.

HELP FOR MYSELF

HELP FOR FAMILY & FRIENDS

HELP FOR OTHERS



# Deliver Treatment in Primary Care

Collaborate with Treatment Program or Specialist

✧ Offer in-house counseling

PCPs or other staff

✧ Offer medications

✧ Encourage mutual support programs

✧ Work with behavior change plans

Medication	Alcohol Use Disorder	Opioid Use Disorder	Legal to Prescribe in Primary Care
Disulfiram	✓		✓
Acamprosate	✓		✓
Naltrexone	✓	✓	✓
Methadone		✓	*
Buprenorphine		✓	✓

\* Methadone may be prescribed in primary care settings for pain, not for opioid use disorder



# Behavior Change Plans

- ✦ Limits in substance use
- ✦ Triggers
- ✦ Ways to avoid or manage triggers
- ✦ Alternate behaviors
- ✦ Environmental change
- ✦ Social support
- ✦ Medications
- ✦ Rewards
- ✦ Contingency plans
- ✦ Follow-up

Initially: Guide patients in designing a behavior change plan

Subsequently: Guide patients in reviewing the plan's effectiveness and considering changes





# Deliver Treatment in Primary Care

Collaborate with Treatment Program or Specialist

✧ Offer in-house counseling

PCPs or other staff

✧ Offer medications

✧ Encourage mutual support programs

✧ Work with behavior change plans

✧ Assess for and treat mental health disorders

Medication	Alcohol Use Disorder	Opioid Use Disorder	Legal to Prescribe in Primary Care
Disulfiram	✓		✓
Acamprosate	✓		✓
Naltrexone	✓	✓	✓
Methadone		✓	*
Buprenorphine		✓	✓

\* Methadone may be prescribed in primary care settings for pain, not for opioid use disorder



# Employ Motivational Interviewing

- ✧ An empathic, respectful, patient-centered, strength-based, partnering approach to promote healthier behaviors
- ✧ Developed for addiction treatment and effective for a variety of health-related behaviors
- ✧ Effectiveness demonstrated in hundreds of RCTs
- ✧ Avoids unwanted advice & education → alienation & defensiveness
- ✧ Guides patients in considering behavior change in light of their goals, values, preferences, and constraints
- ✧ Requires several days of workshops, intensive practice, and feedback from experts
- ✧ Training resources:  
<https://attcnetwork.org/centers/new-england-attc/home>  
<https://motivationalinterviewing.org>



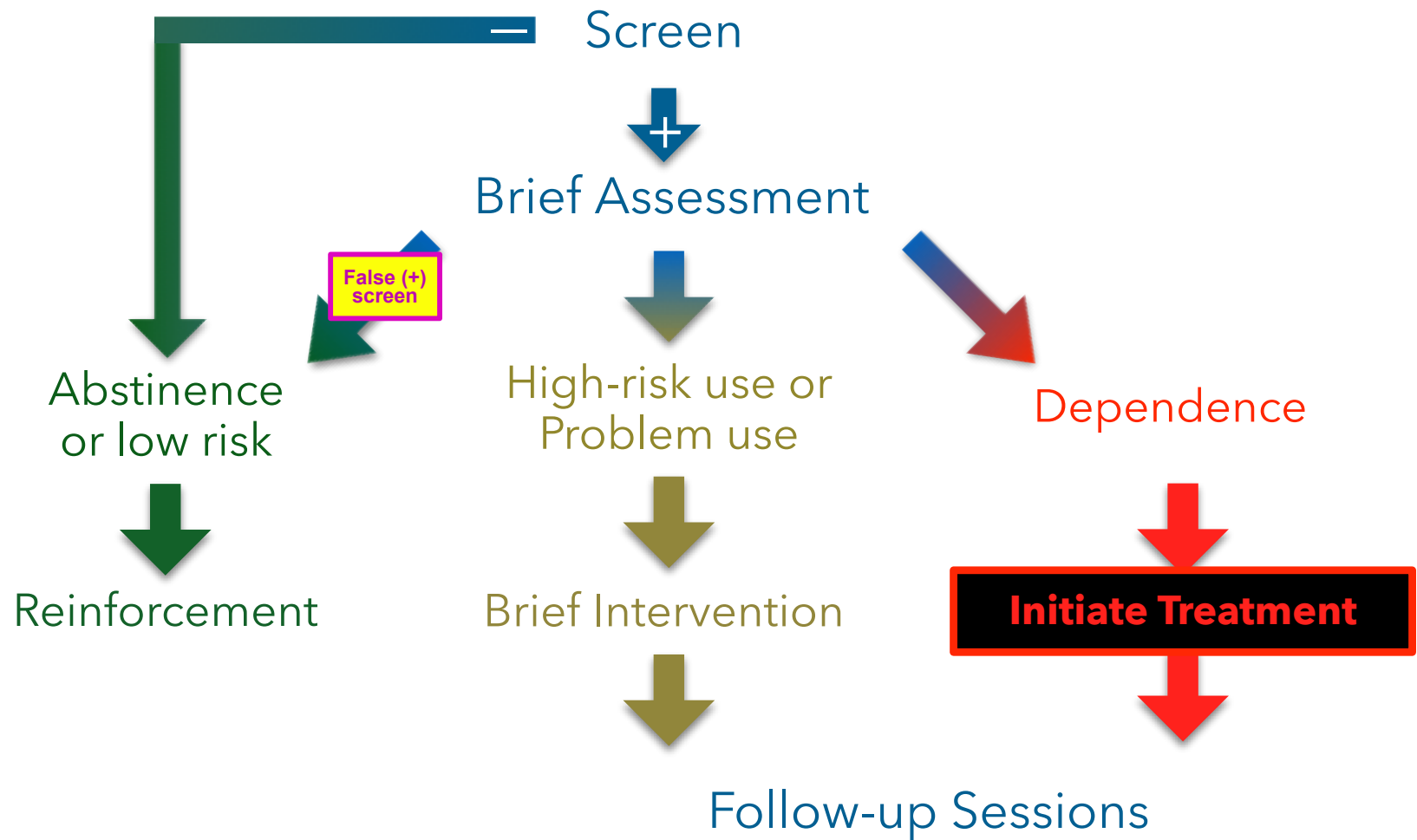


# Engage Family Members

- ✧ In light of the many barriers to obtaining treatment, staying in treatment, and recovering, patients need help from supportive family members
- ✧ PCPs can:
  - help family members set aside anger and blame and work together for the patient
  - help patients with SUDs overcome reluctance to involve family members
  - facilitate a meeting between parents and teen to
    - design a plan for seeking treatment
    - set interim ground rules that balance respect, autonomy, and safety



# SBIRT Patient Flow



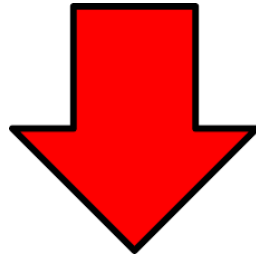
# Summary

- ✧ Screening and brief assessment sometimes reveal dependence
- ✧ Initial attempts to refer patients to treatment often fail
- ✧ Barriers to treatment include:
  - Finances
  - Waiting lists
  - Time constraints
  - Lack of availability of certain type of treatment
  - Stigma
  - Perceived lack of need
- ✧ Strategies for overcoming those barriers include:
  - Education and advocacy on insurance coverage requirements
  - Treatment program searches - [211maine.org](http://211maine.org), [findtreatment.gov](http://findtreatment.gov), [maineaap.org](http://maineaap.org)
  - Deliver treatment in primary care settings
    - Offer in-house counseling
    - Offer medications for alcohol and opioid use disorders
    - Guide patients in designing and refining behavior change plans
    - Assess for and begin treating MHDs
    - Engage family members
  - Employ motivational interviewing



# Summary

~~Referral to Treatment~~



**Initiate Treatment**



# Thank you!



# Referral to Treatment: Overcoming Common Barriers

**Richard L. Brown, MD, MPH**  
*[drrichbrown@gmail.com](mailto:drrichbrown@gmail.com)*



**Opioid  
Response  
Network**

# Would you please complete our brief evaluation survey?

<https://tinyurl.com/TREAT-ME>

