To help our communities cope with the opioid epidemic including a spike in opioid-related overdoses, MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center has applied the Screening, Brief Intervention, Referral to Treatment (SBIRT) approach to all emergency department patients since 2016.

If the SBIRT screening tool identifies a moderate or high-risk patient for substance abuse behaviors, a peer recovery coach uses motivational interviewing techniques in an attempt to promote the patient’s own desire to change. The peer recovery coach then offers additional evaluation and referral services to help encourage behavioral change.

Through this nationally recognized, evidence-based program, more than 600 patients struggling with substance abuse have been referred to treatment. These successes led to the use of SBIRT program in the Department of Medicine’s Primary Care Center this year and plans are to implement it in the Women’s Pavilion next year.

"We meet patients where they’re at... we have been in their shoes... it’s just about giving them a shot of hope.”
James Wentworth, Peer Recovery Coach
In response to the FY15 Community Health Needs Assessment, ConnectFest!, a fun block party, with food and entertainment, offered a variety of basic mainstream resources to help improve community health. Many social determinants of health—services like transportation, housing, education, workforce development and financial education—require documentation such as photo IDs and birth certificates. ConnectFest! provided direct services, application assistance and referrals for many of these basic needs.

ConnectFest! was a success by all measures. Our plan was to serve approximately 200 people with mainstream resources to meet basic needs for health management. Fifty volunteers and 48 vendors provided mainstream resources to over 110 households, most of whom reside in and around our Community Benefit Service Area (CBISA) 21221. Services included: birth certificates, library cards, haircuts, health insurance enrollment, health screenings (blood pressure, body fat, diabetes, depression), pediatric dental appointments and pet spay/neuter appointments.

Resource information was shared for food stamps, education, transportation, housing, job opportunities, State identification and Social Security.

ConnectFest! was an excellent example of collaboration between MedStar Franklin Square Medical Center, Baltimore County Departments of Health, Planning, Social Services, Baltimore County Public Schools and Southeast Network service providers. We anticipate continuing to build on the success of ConnectFest into the future.