BACKGROUND
- Alcohol use disorder (AUD) has widespread impact, with a prevalence rate of 13.9%.
- National prevalence rates are growing primarily due to a narrowing gender gap between males and females with AUD.
- AUD is associated with several physical and mental health issues:
  - Hypertension, asthma, hyperlipidemia, hepatitis, cardiomyopathy, various cancers
  - Major depression, bipolar personality disorder, anxiety disorders, antisocial personality disorders
- AUD is associated with increased risk of injury, through motor vehicle collisions, falls, and interpersonal violence.
- 88,000 deaths per year in the United States are attributed to AUD.
- In 2017, Connecticut had the highest national rate of alcohol-impaired driving fatalities compared to total driving fatalities (43%).
- Alcohol demonstrates adverse reactions with other substances. In 2019, alcohol was a contributing cause of death in 29% of all fatal overdoses in CT.
- There are numerous social, cultural, and epidemiological factors that influence the efficacy of interventions in populations with AUD.1

EVIDENCE BASED INTERVENTIONS
- Most effective interventions target factors at the individual, family, and community levels. Many interventions also target a younger population due to the evidence that substance use earlier in life is associated with higher rates of abuse and other negative health, social, and behavioral outcomes later in life.
- The Registry of Evidence-Based Programs and Practices (NREPP) has rated substance abuse prevention programs based on many criteria including training resources, quality assurance procedures, and readiness to disseminate.2
- School based intervention:
  - One school-based program that has been studied thoroughly to examine its effectiveness is Life Skills Training (LST), which received a perfect (4/4) readiness score by the NREPP.
  - LST has been found to be effective in the short and long term. A randomized controlled trial found that LST students had lower rates of tobacco, alcohol, and binge drinking one year after the program, while a separate cohort study found that students who received LST had a significant decrease in cigarette, alcohol, and marijuana use six years after the program compared to a control group.
- Family based intervention:
  - The Family Matters program educates parents and teaches skills to keep children away from drugs through
  - Instructional booklets provided to parents to implement at home with health educators.
  - Designed to set rules and strengthen communication within the family.
  - Reduced substance use at 3 and 12 months with strong NREPP score (3.3 out of 4).

RECOMMENDED ACTION
- Our team recommends the Life Skills Training program, a school-based intervention that trains teachers/counselors to teach substance use prevention.
- Easy to implement with flexible training (online or on-site).
- The benefits of Life Skills Training include:
  - Universal design benefits all students, not only high-risk groups.
  - Programs available for all levels (K-29).
  - Students learn from their own teachers who they already have relationships with. These teachers can lead the program year after year
  - The program is engaging, with facilitated discussion, structured small group activities, and role-playing scenarios.

IMPLEMENTATION
- The program can be implemented in schools through integration of psychosocial learning strategies (management, social, and resistance skills) into curricula.3
- Barriers:
  - There are many resources (personnel, funding, and time) required.
  - Solution: A program via mobile/online platforms can efficiently reach a large proportion of the targeted population at low cost.
  - Children in schools may not be willing to participate in this program.
  - Solution: An interactive user-friendly mobile/online platform and engaging small groups will achieve active participation.
- Opportunities:
  - Early coping strategies can target K-12 schoolchildren before peak incidence of AUD (age 20-29) in this population.
  - Mobile delivery combined with teacher facilitation can accommodate individual learning styles and hybrid schedules.

REFERENCES