



The Human Service Center of Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties
705 E. Timber Dr.
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MEDIA ADVISORY

October 15, 2016

The Human Service Center Announces Benefits of Biomarker Program: Improves Recovery and Reduces Recidivism in Repeat Intoxicated Drivers

This Initiative Prevents Drunk Drivers from Getting Back on the Road Before they're Fully Engaged in Recovery- Showing less recidivism, safer roads and taxpayer savings--

Clinical assessors and treatment providers at The Human Service Center (HSC) are now using direct biomarkers – obtained from fingernails and blood spots – to monitor repeat offenders in Forest, Oneida and Vilas Counties for the heavy use of alcohol and drugs. Direct biomarkers are tools that help clinicians decide the best treatment options for these offenders and conduct timely brief interventions (BI) during relapses with the intention of making them more accountable of their drinking and drug use habits. ***'This program has allowed us to improve the allocation of our limited treatment dollars'*** says Chris Hartlep, Clinical Substance Abuse Counselor at HSC.

Since the program debuted in 2012, close to 600 repeat offenders have been tested to gauge how well they are really doing in recovery prior to re-earning the right to drive. ***'Fingernail testing assists assessors and treatment professionals with objective and accurate information needed to give better recommendations for treatment and more individualized plans to match the needs of each driver,'*** says Donna Shimeck, HSC's Behavioral Health Administrator.

Offenders are tested three times in a one year period and when tests results are positive they indicate a relapse to heavy drinking. ***'When relapses are detected, we use this information to conduct brief interventions and contact their treatment providers to work together in assisting the offender during challenging times,'*** says Jodi Baker, the OWI Assessor at HSC.

Recent data analysis shows that almost 80% of the repeat offenders enrolled completed biomarker testing successfully and two thirds of the completers abstained from heavy drinking during the full 12 months of monitoring. The remaining one third suffered a relapse and of these 77% responded well to the brief interventions. ***'This type of program is a good example of what rural communities like ours can do while using evidence based practices to help repeat intoxicated drivers in their recovery'*** says Tamara Feest, the Executive Director at HSC.

'Ninety two percent of those who complete the biomarker program are not rearrested for the same offense for up to 4 years after enrolling in the program' says Dr. Pamela Bean, a

national expert on biomarker testing and Principal at BioMark Global in Madison, WI, who assists counties to implement these monitoring programs. An average overnight stay in jail for one inmate in the state of Wisconsin costs \$120; for an annual tab of \$40,000 of taxpayer dollars. Biomarker testing for one offender costs \$400 annually and is paid by the offenders. '**Accountability is the key word for me in being a responsible citizen moving forward**', says John Paul an offender with seven prior OWI convictions who is currently enrolled in the biomarker program.

Interviews To learn more about this program, how it works, and the effort to improve lives while making our roads safer, media interviews are available on October 20, 2016 at 10am at The Human Service Center:

- Subject experts include:
 - Donna Shimeck, Behavioral Health Administrator;
 - Chris Hartlep, Clinical Substance Abuse Counselor;
 - Jodi Baker, OWI Assessor;
 - Dr. Pamela Bean, BioMark Global LLC; and
 - John Paul, participant in the program.

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