



TOPIC

24/7 Sobriety for Alcohol-Involved Crimes

PROBLEM

Alcohol-impaired driving kills over 10,000 Americans per year. Many efforts to deter repeat offenders (e.g., license removal, fines and incarceration) have only a limited effect.

Evidence from neuroscience, clinical psychology, and criminology suggests that behavior is more strongly shaped by immediate and consistent consequences than by the distant, probabilistic consequences the criminal justice system usually imposes.

SOLUTIONS



South Dakota Prosecutor Larry Long invented 24/7 Sobriety to supervise individuals repeatedly convicted of alcohol-impaired driving.



Individuals sentenced to 24/7 Sobriety are not allowed to drink alcohol. Their alcohol use is regularly monitored through in-person breath tests or through an alcohol-sensing bracelet.



Individuals testing positive for alcohol use receive a certain and swift consequences (e.g., one night in jail).



Individuals choose whether or not they wish to participate in alcohol treatment or Alcoholics Anonymous mutual help groups.

CONCLUSION

24/7 Sobriety has substantial evidence of reducing alcohol use and multiple criminal behaviors among alcohol-involved offenders. Because of alcohol's role in many crimes, expansion of the 24/7 Sobriety should benefit public health and public safety, and potentially reduce incarceration at the same time.



KEY POLICY EVIDENCE

Over 99% of people sentenced to 24/7 sobriety completed breath tests and recorded no drinking over millions of in-person breath tests. Continuous monitoring by alcohol-sensing bracelets also indicates extremely high program compliance.

Mortality due to all causes fell by 4.2% in South Dakota after 24/7 Sobriety was implemented.

24/7 Sobriety adaptations in other U.S. states (including Florida, Montana, North Dakota) as well as in the United Kingdom have produced positive results, according to studies using non-experimental designs.

Repeat DUI arrests dropped 12% in South Dakota counties that initiated 24/7 Sobriety. Domestic violence arrests also dropped by 9%, suggesting that removal of alcohol from the offenders' life had benefits that radiated beyond driving.

Rearrest or probation revocation rates decreased by 49% in the 12 months following participants' enrollment in 24/7 Sobriety.

Some other criminal justice supervision programs employing swift, certain, and modest consequences for use of drugs other than alcohol have also generated positive results.

LEARN MORE

Kilmer B, Nicosia N, Heaton P and Midgett G (2013). Efficacy of Frequent Monitoring with Swift, Certain, and Modest Sanctions for Violations: Insights from South Dakota 24/7 Sobriety Project. *American Journal of Public Health* 103(1): e37-e43.

Nicosia N, Kilmer B and Heaton P (2016). Can a Criminal Justice Alcohol Abstinence Programme with Swift, Certain, and Modest Sanctions (24/7 Sobriety) Reduce Population Mortality? A Retrospective Observational Study. *The Lancet Psychiatry* 3 (3): 226-232.

A compilation of Rand Corporation studies and associated articles can be found at <https://www.rand.org/search.html?query=24%2F7%20sobriety>



The 24/7 program works like an electric fence works. The punishment is swift, 100% certain, but not severe.

It's been gratifying to me to hear from family members of offenders who see a real difference in their son or daughter or spouse as they become sober again and are able to sustain it over time.

I believe that the 24/7 sobriety program... will help us make real strides in the future in balancing punitive and treatment options that can help end the cycle and move people to permanent sobriety."

*Judge Larry Long,
Founder, 24/7 Sobriety*

