

T R A F F I C   I N J U R Y   R E S E A R C H   F O U N D A T I O N



## Screening, Assessment and Treatment in the Justice System

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National Partnership on Alcohol Misuse and Crime  
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## Goals

- > Overview of the Traffic Injury Research Foundation (TIRF).
- > About the Working Group on DWI System Improvements.
- > Barriers to screening, assessment and treatment.
- > Recommendations to improve implementation and delivery.



## About TIRF

- > To prevent the health and social consequences of traffic crashes by designing, promoting, and implementing effective programs, policies and legislation based on sound research.
  
- > Core activities:
  - » Research on road user behavior and crashes;
  - » Program and policy development;
  - » Evaluation plans, program and policy evaluation;
  - » Knowledge transfer and exchange.



## Background

- > The Working Group on DWI System Improvements was formed in 2003 under funding from Anheuser-Busch.
- > Members represent a coalition of 14 criminal justice organizations that are concerned about drunk driving and its impact on the justice system.
- > Their purpose is to promote the implementation of findings from a national research project involving more than 5,000 criminal justice practitioners.
- > Goal is to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of the justice system for dealing with hard core drunk drivers.



## Working Group Members

- > Alabama State Police (Major Charles Andrews)
- > American Judges Association (Judge Mike McAdam)
- > American Probation and Parole Association (Carl Wicklund)
- > Bureau of Justice Assistance (Drew Molloy)
- > California District Attorneys Association (Creg Datig)
- > Highway Safety Committee, International Association of Chiefs of Police (Dick Ashton)
- > Institute of Police Technology and Management ( Bob Jacob)
- > National Association of Prosecutor Coordinators (Tom Kimball)
- > National Association of State Alcohol and Drug Abuse Directors (Lewis Gallant)
- > National Association of State Judicial Educators (Paul Biderman)
- > National Center for DWI Courts (Dave Wallace)
- > National Criminal Justice Association (Kay Chopard Cohen)
- > National Center for State Courts (Gene Flango)
- > National Judicial College (Judge Harvey Hoffman)
- > National Traffic Law Center, APRI (Joanne Michaels)
- > New York State Police (Major Dave Salmon)



# Background

enforcement

prosecution

sanctioning

monitoring

**Working Group**

on DWI System Improvements:

Proceedings of the Inaugural Meeting

TRAFFIC INJURY RESEARCH FOUNDATION  
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A Criminal Justice Perspective on Ignition Interlocks

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10 Steps to a Strategic Review of the DWI System: A Guidebook for Policymakers

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**Working Group**

Improving Cooperation and Communication:  
A Report from the Working Group on DWI System Improvements

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## Background

- > In 2007 emphasis was given to training and education.
- > Screening, assessment and treatment served as an exemplar.
- > These interventions are an important part of the solution to impaired driving.
- > Practitioners do not know about “what works”.
- > Lots of research on this issue.
- > However it is fragmented and practitioners lack time to access it or interpret it.



## Background

- > The goals of this document are threefold:
  - » Provide comprehensive information to practitioners about the basics of screening, assessment and treatment;
  - » To share the challenges that practitioners face in using these interventions; and,
  - » Identify ways to improve implementation and delivery of these tools.





## Barriers in the Justice System

- > Practitioners identified different types of barriers that need to be addressed to facilitate screening, assessment and treatment in the justice system.
  - » Resources
  - » Research
  - » Myths and misconceptions
  - » Concerns
  - » Legislation
  - » Implementation



## Barriers in the Justice System

### > Resources:

- » Cost of screening – staffing, instruments and volume of offenders.
- » Quality of screening – only 25-50% of offenders are screened using standardized instruments.
- » Staffing – sufficient numbers, qualifications.
- » Availability of treatment – less than 10% of DWI offenders who need programs have access to them; long waiting times; one-size in rural areas.
- » Lack of aftercare for treatment – few interventions have aftercare opportunities to prevent relapse.



## Barriers in the Justice System

- > Research:
  - » Methodological weaknesses – poor research designs, unclear or varying definitions, inconsistent measures, small sample sizes, few longitudinal or cohort studies, impact on other life areas;
  - » Validation of instruments – few normed on DWI offenders or in natural settings;
  - » Treatment matching – not specific to DWI populations.



## Barriers in the Justice System

- > Myths and misconceptions:
  - » Screening is a time-consuming and resource-heavy process – screening can be inexpensive and streamlined with minimal training and self-administered instruments.
  - » Screening and/or treatment is expensive – outpatient services, insurance, government grants and ROI.
  - » Coercive treatment is ineffective.
  - » Self-help programs qualify as treatment – success depends on attributes of individual, treatment and AA group.



## Barriers in the Justice System

- > Concerns:
  - » Treatment is “soft on crime” – not according to offenders.
  - » Offenders participate in treatment to avoid tougher sanctions – these offenders may not benefit from intervention.
  - » The use of medications to treat substance abuse – frequency, side effects, use of licensed professionals and cost. Informed consent is critical.
  - » The “one-size fits all” approach to treatment – particularly in rural areas. Promoting benefits is needed.
  - » Support for treatment in rural communities.



## Barriers in the Justice System

- > Legislation:
  - » Screening and/or treatment is not a sentencing priority – secondary to surveillance and control. Benefits should be emphasized among legislators and policy makers.
  - » Information-sharing is a challenge – HIPAA, confidentiality, and liability. Consider privacy releases, consent forms, protocols.



## Barriers in the Justice System

### > Implementation:

- » Inconsistent implementation – duration, frequency, program fidelity. Need for education, guidance.
- » Lack of accountability – of offenders for participation, under-reporting, also among service providers who deliver a low quality of care. Need for performance measures for service providers.
- » Institutional approaches – need for more community-based approaches and wrap around services.
- » Obstacles to early identification - refusal.



## Recommendations

- > Good research to guide decision-making – more rigorous evaluation, engagement of practitioners, knowledge translation.
- > Education and cross-professional training – knowledge to promote informed decision-making and use of evidence-based practices.
- > Resource allocation – greater emphasis on these interventions and flexibility to incorporate interventions according to local decision-making.
- > Comprehensive services – combining strategies can increase effectiveness, use of wrap around services.



## Recommendations

- > Consistent identification of appropriate offenders – combination of informal and formal methods at all phases of the system, prioritize high-BAC offenders and refusers early in the process.
- > Streamlined policies and practices – information easily gathered at multiple points to inform decision-making.
- > Information-sharing protocols – with offenders and across agencies.
- > Accountability and aftercare – relapse should be expected. Positive responses to events that create accountability and reinforce successes are important elements.



## Conclusions

- > Screening, assessment and treatment are important interventions that can prevent drunk driving and crime in general.
- > Knowledge translation efforts involving researchers and practitioners are needed to ensure the development of evidence-based principles and practices that are applicable in real world settings (i.e., the justice system).
- > More research is needed to answer critical questions.
- > Interventions must be flexible to accommodate differences in resources, needs, staffing, support and availability of services.



## Staying informed

[www.tirf.ca](http://www.tirf.ca)

