Evaluating New Mexico’s Mandatory Ignition Interlock Law

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New Mexico has very strong interlock laws compared to other states. This evaluation of the New Mexico Ignition Interlock Program summarizes the development of alcohol ignition interlock devices, laws, and programs during the past 22 years. It reviews the laws that were written in New Mexico from 1999 to 2005. It goes on to characterize current penetration of interlocks relative to alcohol-related risk indicators, followed by detailed methodological reports on eight studies undertaken to understand the effects of several aspects of the New Mexico laws. The eight studies included are (1) an evaluation of recidivism among court-mandated offenders who were required to install interlocks but were not allowed to drive those cars; (2) an evaluation of recidivism differences of first-time offenders who installed interlocks relative to matched offenders who did not; (3) an evaluation of the effect of an interlock licensing law that allows revoked DWI offenders to install an interlock on an insured vehicle and drive that way during the remainder of their revocation period; (4) an evaluation of a strong mandate in Santa Fe County during a 2-year period in which electronically monitored house arrest was required for offenders who did not want to have an interlock or claimed no plan to drive; (5) an evaluation of the patterns of elevated BAC tests by hour of the day and day of the week from among the more than 10 million New Mexico breath tests collected by interlock devices; (6) a comparative evaluation of predictors of recidivism including prior DWI, measures of drinking from the interlock event record, age, and other predictors; (7) a report on an interview process that included key informants, such as judges, prosecutors, defense attorneys, and probation officers, who manage or administer the interlock program; and (8) a report on focus group findings with interlock-using DWI offenders.

Start Date: August 10, 2004
End Date: September 30, 2009
Contractor: Pacific Institute for Research and Evaluation, 11720 Beltsville Drive, Ste. 900, Calverton, MD 20705
Contract Number: DTNH22-D-02-95121 Task #9
Total Contract Cost: $446,994.

Date Last Updated: March 10, 2009