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### **State and Local Agencies Launch Pilot Dane County OWI Court** *Unique Partnership Targets Hardcore Drunk Drivers*

A unique state-local partnership announced Wednesday it is launching a new pilot OWI court in Dane County to reduce repeat drunk driving incidents and change behavior that puts the community in danger.

The Dane County OWI Treatment Court will target hardcore drunk drivers and provide accountability and intense supervision and treatment, a combination that has proven successful in other states.

Referrals to the Dane County OWI Treatment Court begin July 1st and will continue for at least one year. The pilot caseload is projected to be approximately 40 participants.

Those referred to the OWI Treatment Court will possess a significant criminal and substance abuse history. Mandatory conditions for referral to the Court include:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> OWI conviction
- BAC of .20 or higher or test refusal
- Placement on probation
- Age of 18 or older
- Resident of Dane County
- No past or current charge in conjunction with an OWI-related death or serious personal injury
- Assessed as alcohol-dependent or suspected dependency
- High case management needs

The OWI Treatment Court offenders must serve minimum jail sentences. After serving their incarceration time, offenders will be assessed and enter treatment. The Court will employ frequent judicial contact, incentives and sanctions and tight probation supervision and alcohol use monitoring to ensure an offender's treatment program is completed and successful.

Offenders also will be offered the free, voluntary option of receiving the injectable drug Naltrexone which reduces or stops the cravings for alcohol that can interfere with completion of an alcohol treatment program.

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Resources and staff for this pilot court program are a result of a partnership between the Wisconsin Department of Corrections (DOC), the Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS), Dane County judges, Dane County's District Attorney's Office, Sheriff's Department and Human Services, the Mental Health Center of Dane County and the State Public Defender's Office.

"Drunk driving with its devastating and costly consequences is not a partisan issue – it is a public safety one," said DOC Secretary Gary Hamblin. "The Department of Corrections is anxious to work cooperatively with DHS and our partners in Dane County to see if this wraparound solution can effectively reduce a crime that kills and seriously injures hundreds of people in Wisconsin each year."

The Dane County OWI Treatment Court partnership with DOC is possible due to the Governor's 2011-13 budget which funds 27.5 fulltime positions in the DOC Electronic Monitoring Center, and, bipartisan legislation toughening drunk driving penalties that took effect last year.

Part of that drunk driving legislation called Act 100 allows judges to place 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> OWI offenders on probation. DOC is currently supervising more than 500 of these offenders using a new Enhanced Supervision model that incorporates incentives and sanctions, close probation supervision and electronic monitoring for alcohol use violations to get offenders to complete treatment. This same supervision model will be used with offenders referred to the OWI Treatment Court in Dane County.

According to the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA), an estimated 10,839 people died in alcohol-impaired crashes in the U.S. in 2009.

70 percent of U.S. drunk driving crashes in 2009 involved hardcore drunk drivers. A hardcore drunk driver is defined as an individual who drives with a BAC of 0.15 percent or greater after a prior OWI conviction.

The WI Department of Transportation (WI DOT) reports 238 people in Wisconsin were killed in alcohol-related crashes and nearly 4,000 were injured in 2009.

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