



WISCONSIN LEGISLATURE

P. O. Box 7882 Madison, WI 53707-7882

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
July 8, 2016

CONTACT: Sen. Van Wanggaard
608-266-1832
Speaker Robin Vos
608-266-3387
Rep. Thomas Weatherston
608-266-0731

RACINE SELECTED TO PILOT DRUNK DRIVING REDUCTION PROJECT

Five Counties Chosen for 24/7 Sobriety Program

MADISON - The Department of Justice has selected Racine County as one of five Wisconsin counties to pilot a new program designed to reduce repeat drunk driving. The new program, dubbed “24/7 Sobriety” requires participants to be under near-constant monitoring for drug and alcohol use and has shown success in other states.

“We know that for some drunk drivers the usual preventative measures are ineffective,” said Van Wanggaard (R-Racine), a co-author of the pilot program. “This is a promising tool which should reduce drunk driving and potentially other crimes.”

Under the 24/7 Sobriety Program, repeat drunk drivers are given a high-level of monitoring to ensure no consumption of alcohol or drugs. This monitoring may include twice-daily alcohol tests, routine, scheduled drug testing, or another means of continuous testing for alcohol. A positive or missed test results in immediate consequences for the individual. The program is designed to be cost-neutral to taxpayers, as program costs are paid by participants.

“Every year alcohol-related crashes injure thousands of people and takes too many lives,” said Speaker Robin Vos. “It’s essential that we employ new strategies to address drunk driving to save lives and make our roads safer.”

In other states, drunk driving recidivism rates for participants in 24/7 Sobriety are up to half that of non-participants. In South Dakota, overall drunk driving rates decreased by 12%, and there was also evidence that the 24/7 program reduced domestic violence by 9%. The decreased alcohol and drug use by program participants may also have additional public health benefits.

“Not only is the public better off when fewer people are on the roads while drunk, but so are the individuals who are kept sober by the program,” said Rep. Thomas Weatherston (R-Caledonia). “24/7 Sobriety has lowered the re-arrest rates of drunk drivers elsewhere and I look forward to seeing this program succeed in Racine County too.”

The 24/7 Sobriety pilot runs through the year 2020. The Wisconsin Department of Justice will work with the selected counties to ensure continuity in the program, along with compliance in the law. The costs for program participants are expected to be around \$50 for enrollment and \$2 per on-site breath testing. In addition to Racine County, Green Lake, Washburn, Manitowoc, and Oneida Counties will also participate in the pilot program.

###