

# Roseau County DWI Court, MN

## Result and Recommendation Brief

July 2014

### What are DWI courts?

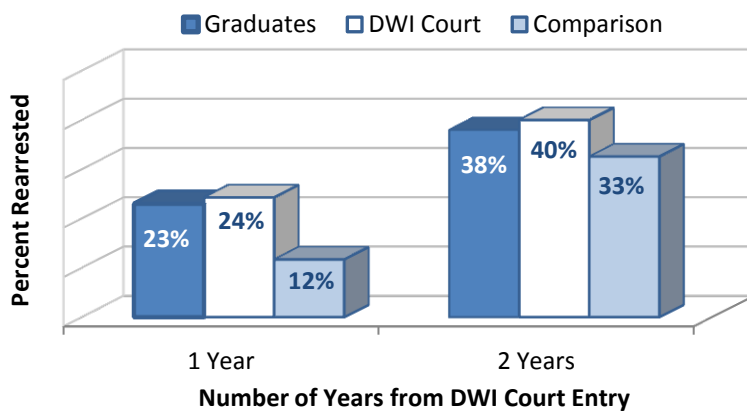
The purpose of DWI courts is to guide DWI offenders identified as alcohol-addicted into treatment under intensive judicial supervision that will reduce alcohol dependence, reduce recidivism, improve public safety and improve the quality of life for participants and their families.

There are two key policy questions of interest to policymakers about DWI courts. The evaluation of the Roseau County DWI Court (RCDWI) provided answers to these questions. This study included participants who entered the program between 2008 and 2012, and a matched comparison group of DWI offenders who were eligible but were not referred to the program. Most participants were assessed as high-need (92%) and fewer than one-third (31%) were assessed as high risk. Participants had an average of 2.8 DWI arrests in the ten years before DWI court entry.

### Does the DWI court reduce recidivism?

**NO.** RCDWI program participants were more likely to be re-arrested at 1 and 2 years after program entry compared to offenders who were eligible for the program but did not participate.

Percent of DWI Court Participants Rearrested at 1 and 2 Years



**DWI Recidivism.** Out of the 93 offenders in this study (DWI court and comparison), there was only *three new DWI arrest* in the two years after DWI court entry. This number was too small for statistical analysis. However, it is encouraging that DWI recidivism is quite low in this population.

*There is evidence that the DWI court programs are more effective with high risk participants. RCDWI outcomes may be improved by acting on assessment results and targeting higher risk offenders.*

### Recommendations

*Outcomes may be improved by following research based best practices. In particular it is recommended that the RCDWI:*

- **Continue efforts to have a county attorney and public defender at all staffing meetings.** It was noted that the county attorney was planning to train an assistant county attorney so a representative is always available for staffing. The presence of a participant advocate is an important piece of the staffing process, especially when jail sanctions are used.
- **Ensure all DWI court attorneys are trained in the drug/DWI court model, non-adversarial approach, and program eligibility criteria.** In order to fully develop a collaborative team environment, the county attorney and public defender are encouraged to attend drug/DWI court training and role-specific training since the roles of counsel on the drug/DWI court team differ from traditional attorney roles.
- **Expand evidence based treatment services.** Substance abuse clients present with a range of needs for various types of treatments and other services. A one size fits all approach does not work and is inconsistent with evidence-based practices and best practices. Having more “tools in the toolbox” allows the program to be more responsive to participants needs.
- **Review/reevaluate drug testing procedures to ensure reliability and effectiveness.** There are several testing locations and different protocols are used at each site. Due to the importance of maintaining integrity in drug testing, establishing a protocol (or MOU) with each location may help define roles and increase accountability.



This research was funded by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) and the MN Office of Traffic Safety. The study was performed by NPC Research, a nationally recognized firm in drug and DWI court research. [www.npcresearch.com](http://www.npcresearch.com)