Mandatory Alcohol Assessment/Treatment

Mandatory alcohol assessment and treatment refers to laws that mandate convicted DUI/DWI offenders undergo an assessment of alcohol abuse problems and participate in required treatment programs.

**Overview**
Over 70 percent of all DUI offenders have alcohol abuse problems and 10 to 50 percent are alcohol dependent. (Wieczorek, 1992) One-third of all DUI arrests are of drivers who have had previous DUls. (Fell, 1995) Even those who have had serious injuries from drunk driving are unlikely to change—over half of crash survivors who were drinking drivers said one year after their crash that they had driven impaired at least once. (Larkin, 1993) Clearly, part of the solution to drunk driving is to solve an underlying substance abuse problem.

Mandatory assessment and treatment of DUI offenders address substance abuse problems. A comprehensive educational program of education, treatment, and some form of follow-up monitoring (e.g., supervised probation or aftercare) has been shown to decrease repeat offenses by seven to nine percent. (Wells-Parker, 1995) Treatment has shown results across gender and racial lines. (Woodall et al, 2004)

Assessment and treatment are not a replacement for sanctions. Treatment works best when coupled with sanctions. (Wells-Parker, 1995) Additionally, sanctions deter people from ever committing DUls, whereas treatment prevents repeat offenses only by the individual receiving the treatment.

Assessment and treatment need to be mandatory components of all DUI sentences to make sure that offenders get treatment when necessary. If a DUI offender has a problem with alcohol, that person is less likely to endanger themselves and others again if the problem with alcohol is treated.

As part of a DUI sentence, MADD supports ignition interlocks for convicted drunk drivers. MADD recommends the following time on an ignition interlock:

- First conviction: one year
- Second conviction: two years
- Third conviction: five years
- Fourth conviction: ten years

For more information, please visit www.madd.org/interlock.

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