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Georgia’s DUI Court Programs Reduce Recidivism

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In 2002, the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety provided grant funding from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration to the Administrative Office of the Courts of Georgia to establish specialized court dockets to manage chronic DUI offenders (those with two or more convictions for driving under the influence). Three DUI Courts were implemented in the State Courts of Athens-Clarke County, Chatham County, and Hall County to provide intensive judicial oversight, substance abuse treatment, and offender accountability. An outcome evaluation, funded by the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety, was conducted by Applied Research Services (ARS) of the three pilot programs.

The following tables highlight the findings of a recidivism study of 645 offenders from the DUI court programs, including 364 DUI Court graduates and 281 offenders selected by the local courts as a control group. Members of the control group met all DUI program criteria prior to the existence of the program. They were subject to the Georgia multiple DUI offender administrative re-licensing requirements of assessment and substance abuse treatment.

DUI Court Study Participants

Table 1 describes the study intervention (DUI Court graduates) and control groups. Prior to the study, the offenders had accumulated 1,854 DUI arrests in Georgia - 1,057 arrests for the intervention offenders and 797 arrests for the control group offenders. The average number of prior DUI arrests is 2.9 for the intervention and 2.8 for the control group.

The average DUI Court participant is a 35 year old white male with at least three lifetime DUI convictions. The majority of participants are high school graduates; 95% are physically addicted to alcohol or other substances.

Prior to the study, the 645 offenders accumulated over 1,800 DUI arrests in Georgia.

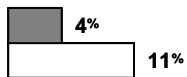
Table 1. Description of the Study Cohort

		Intervention		Control	
		#	%	#	%
Court	Chatham	152	42%	95	34%
	Clarke	86	24%	81	29%
	Hall	126	35%	105	37%
Gender	Male	302	83%	240	85%
	Female	62	17%	41	15%
Race	White	227	62%	198	71%
	Black	81	22%	68	24%
	Hispanic	46	13%	12	4%
	Asian	5	1%	3	1%
Total		364	100%	281	100%

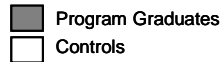
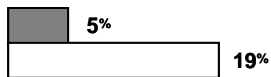
This study was funded by the Governor’s Office of Highway Safety. We wish to thank Jane Martin of the Administrative Office of the Courts of Georgia for providing the DUI Court data and GCIC for providing the re-arrest data.

Recidivism (Re-Arrest) Activity

New DUI Arrest In 12 Months



New DUI Arrest In 24 Months



To qualify for inclusion in the recidivism analysis, the offender must have a minimum of 12 months since program graduation (intervention) or identification for program eligibility (control). New arrest activity is measured as an official arrest recorded in the Georgia Crime Information Center (GCIC) automated criminal history repository as of January 15, 2007.

Of the 364 intervention group offenders, 297 have a minimum of 12 months since their graduation and are included in the 12-month follow up analysis; 91 have a minimum of 24 months since their graduation and are included in the 24-month follow up analysis. All 281 control group offenders are included in both the 12 and 24-month follow up

analysis since it has been more than 24 months since they were identified as eligible for the program. Table 2 compares the arrest activity of all intervention group offenders before, during, and after the program to control group offenders before and after eligibility identification. DUI Court graduates have significantly fewer felony, misdemeanor, and DUI arrests in the 24-month follow up period.

Program Results in Fewer DUI Arrests

After 12 months, program graduates are almost 3 times less likely than controls to have a new DUI arrest (4% vs. 11%). At 24 months post graduation, DUI Court participants are 4 times less likely to have a new DUI arrest (5% vs. 19%).

Table 2. Arrest Activity for 3 Pilot DUI Court Programs (N=Number of Offenders)

Type of Arrest	Intervention	N	Control	N	Sig. Diff.
% of Offenders with Arrests Prior to the Program					
Felony	51%	187	57%	160	
Misdemeanor	95%	347	99%	280	*
Drug	17%	62	25%	71	*
DUI	98%	356	98%	276	
% of Offenders with Arrests During the Program					
Felony	17%	60			
Misdemeanor	6%	23			
Drug	1%	2			
DUI	2%	8			
% of Offenders with Arrests within 12-Month Follow Up					
Felony	9%	24	21%	59	*
Misdemeanor	8%	21	18%	51	*
Drug	0%	0	2%	5	*
DUI	4%	11	11%	31	*
% of Offenders with Arrests within 24-Month Follow Up					
Felony	14%	8	33%	93	*
Misdemeanor	17%	10	30%	84	*
Drug	0%	0	5%	13	
DUI	5%	3	19%	54	*

* Statistically significant difference (Pearson Chi-Square, $p < .05$)

DUI Court graduates have significantly fewer felony, misdemeanor, and DUI arrests in the 24-month follow up.