

May 23, 2025

Re: HB 96 Operating Budget - Replacement Funding for Existing Interlock and Alcohol Monitoring / Promotion of Recovery and Road Safety

Chair Cirino, Vice-Chair Chavez, Ranking Member Hicks-Hudson, and Members of the Ohio Senate Finance Committee:

Thank you for the opportunity to submit written testimony. My name is Brent Leonard, President of Ohio Alcohol Monitoring Systems (Ohio AMS). Our company is located in Independence, Ohio, and for the past 20 years, we have worked to help those with alcohol dependency issues achieve a sober life here in Ohio through the use of technology.

I am writing as historically, Ohio has supported the monitoring of indigent OVI offenders by allocating a portion of driver's license reinstatement fees, and a portion of OVI fines, to the Indigent Driver Interlock and Alcohol Monitoring (IDIAM) fund. These funds, either collected by the court, or collected by the BMV and distributed through the Department of Public Safety to Ohio's courts, have not kept pace with increasing demand.

Last year, new legislation was passed that certainly improved public safety through a pragmatic approach to earlier and more frequent interlock application. The legislation also made some changes to the source of the IDIAM funds, removing the license reinstatement fees as a source while increasing OVI fines. All of these changes were a big step forward in public safety and funding realignment, and additional updates are necessary to statutory language to ensure continued, equitable distribution of indigent funding in a manner consistent with historical practices.

This amendment request proposes to preserve funding levels historically provided through the IDIAM fund. The need is particularly urgent due to the increased demand for alcohol monitoring equipment under the new law and the discontinuation of a traditional funding source. Without this amendment, the IDIAM fund risks accelerated depletion.

The proposed appropriation would continue support through Line Item 5FF0 762621 (Indigent Interlock and Alcohol Monitoring) within the Department of Public Safety. This line item provides funding to counties and municipalities to cover the costs of alcohol monitoring and ignition interlock devices for indigent adult and juvenile offenders. Funding would increase access to effective monitoring technologies and supportive programs.

These programs help individuals maintain employment, stay connected with their families, and reduce the risk of recidivism—ultimately contributing to safer roads across Ohio. The IDIAM fund also grants judges discretion in determining the most appropriate treatment and monitoring methods for offenders. Its flexible use ensures effective interventions that meet both public safety and individual rehabilitation goals by allowing funds to be transferred back to the Indigent Driver Treatment Fund.

Request: An allocation of \$2.0 million over the biennium or \$1.0 million annually is proposed to maintain traditional IDIAM funding levels. This includes:

* Coverage for the cost of immobilizing or disabling devices, including certified ignition interlock devices or alcohol monitoring devices.

* Funding support for offenders (adult or juvenile) deemed indigent and ordered by a municipal, county, or juvenile court judge to use immobilizing or disabling devices, including certified ignition interlock devices or alcohol monitoring devices.

The enhanced funding would allow more people to use ALL TYPES of monitoring (interlock device, or an alcohol monitoring devices) to help people end dependency, help people stay in jobs, help people stay with their families, and keep Ohio roads safer.

To give you some background, Ohio AMS has been able to positively change lives through the use of technology called Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (CAM). The SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring (SCRAM CAM) bracelet provides 24/7 transdermal alcohol testing for high-risk alcohol caseloads. When someone consumes alcohol, a small percentage will be excreted back out through the skin in a very predictable manner in what is called “insensible perspiration.” By automatically sampling the wearer’s insensible perspiration every 30 minutes, we can definitively determine if an individual has consumed alcohol. This uninterrupted level of monitoring by the SCRAM CAM bracelet eliminates testing gaps and encourages accountability. SCRAM CAM not only supports sobriety but also results in higher compliance rates with court orders and **increases community safety.**

Key technology highlights:

- Has been employed in courts throughout the US for 20 years.
- Has been worn by over 1,097,266 individuals for over 105 million days and has taken over 5 billion alcohol tests.
- Is extremely effective - as 99.1% of all those days monitored by SCRAM CAM are verifiably sober.
- Has been subjected to abundant peer review and has been upheld in over 130 evidentiary hearings throughout the US.
- NHTSA conducted a study in 2015 that determined the following – Assignment to CAM for at least 90 days was associated with a 113% decreased risk of recidivism.
- Is widely accepted in both the scientific and legal communities.

This Legislature has continued to take a firm stance on behalf of constituents to establish the safest roads possible. This stance builds on what previous General Assemblies enacted as the initial continuous alcohol monitoring legislation passed in the 127th GA (2007-2008). Ohio AMS respectfully feels it makes sense to now modernize these provisions and continue to make our roads safer.

Courts rely on CAM to provide the critical motivation to keep DUI offenders from drinking, in turn allowing those with alcohol issues to have another tool in the path to recovery. From our years of work in the field, we feel these provisions will greatly help Ohio citizens.

The proposal significantly improves the lives of individuals in need of accountability monitoring while alleviating the strain on courts statewide, which often grapple with difficult decisions regarding resources and the supervision and support of high-risk OVI offenders.

The data shows why SCRAM / Continuous Alcohol Monitoring is important:

- A study published by the National Center for State Courts in 2009 and the National Drug Court Institute in 2010 showed that the longer on CAM, the lower the rate of recidivism. (Flango and Cheesman)

- Historically, our targeted demographic, the hardcore drunk driver, is someone who has multiple offenses, drives drunk multiple times per month and is responsible for 2 out of every 3 alcohol-related fatal car accidents. (Fell, 1995; Sloan, Platt, & Chepke, 2011).
- DWI Recidivism in the United States: An Examination of State-Level Driver Data and the Effect of Look-Back Periods on Recidivism Prevalence - 34% of Ohio's DUI offenders are repeat offenders.
- In 2023, the marginal cost for the Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction (ODRC) to house an offender was \$11.98 per day. (Ohio Department of Rehabilitation and Correction's 2023 Annual Report)
- The cost for a SCRAM CAM device is between \$10 - \$11 a day.

The SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring device has a profound impact on individuals' lives. Recently, we removed an OVI client from the bracelet who remained sober throughout his entire time on continuous alcohol monitoring. Upon completing his program, he emphasized that this device and program not only changed his life but also saved it. However, his experience is not unique. Exit surveys from thousands of clients nationwide provide valuable insights into their journey. **Remarkably, 82% of bracelet wearers would recommend it to others struggling with alcohol problems, and 77% reported benefiting from the program.** Many past clients express a desire to continue wearing the device because they have witnessed firsthand the benefits of leading a sober life. They are adamant about not wanting the assistance to end. This underscores the critical importance of integrating accountability monitoring with alcohol and substance use treatment. Leveraging this window of sobriety to its fullest potential requires proper coordination and sequencing of efforts.

We understand that intervention and breaking the cycle of dependency have transformative effects on individuals' lives. **Ultimately, it is these profound changes that will enhance safety for Ohioans by addressing the root causes of recidivism rather than merely treating the symptoms.**

Funding will ease the burden on judges and probation officers, who often face difficult compromises between adhering to best practices and managing various resources. These provisions will further solidify Ohio's leadership in promoting public safety and providing addiction services.

Thank you for your time and review of this important matter.

Sincerely,

Brent Leonard

President

Ohio Alcohol Monitoring Systems (Ohio AMS)