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# Partner In Service



Multnomah County Department of County Human Services



## Driving Under the Influence of Intoxicants (DUI) Unit: Giving People An Opportunity to Change (continued from page 1)

made up of nine staff, is responsible for conducting assessments, providing referrals to a treatment providers and monitoring cases to report that treatment is successfully completed or the case is referred back to the court for further sanctions. At any given time, the DUI unit is monitoring more than 3,000 active cases.

The law, which led to the creation of the DUI system in Oregon, was adopted in 1980. At that time, the legislature enacted statutes to make driving while under the influence of intoxicates (DUI), a crime instead of a traffic infraction. First time DUI offenders have the option of diversion. "Diversion is an opportunity not to have the crime reported on their permanent record," explains Dr. Ryan. "But they do have to successfully complete a course of treatment by a state licensed provider."

"We are about 70% successful utilizing diversion," explains Dr. Ryan. "We encourage clients to complete the treatment program. The process is really an intervention, sometimes in the early stages of becoming dependent upon alcohol and other drugs. We have the advantage of being a county program as our primary job is to help people. We don't turn anyone away if they don't have the resources to pay the fee, which is ninety dollars. We attempt to instill a sense of accountability and responsibility for their actions and make sure they have access to treatment."

One feature of the DUI program is the Victims Impact Panel, where both victims and former DUI clients tell their stories to current DUI clients. After hearing the stories, here are some of the written reactions of clients. "Great sorrow, sadness and some anger mostly at myself." "Overwhelming feelings. The possibility that I could have caused someone great pain or hardship and all it took was making a decision to not drive that night." "Regret, remorse, sorrow." "I have a better understanding of my role to make a better choice for someone who can't make it for themselves; call them a cab, take their keys." "I realized I was given a second chance."

The DUI unit has computerized most of the process so that it is easier to share case information, monitor the progress of cases, and generate reports about client lapses. That allows the

DUII unit to contact the client and try to get them back onto a path of recovery. Case monitoring is more than just reviewing reports. Staff needs to know an extensive body of knowledge, and be able to work with representatives of the various systems - the courts, the treatment programs, the clients, the attorneys, etc.

Dr. Ryan sees the staff as one of the greatest assets of the program. "They have to want to do this, they are very committed to the process, and are highly skilled professionals." There are 4.4 FTE Alcohol and Drug Evaluation Specialists (ADES) - Ray Cantu, Lead ADES, Bernardino De La Torre, Michael Maginn, John McMurry, and Herman Goudy. Alex Watson and Brenda Sanchez-Huggett operate the busy front desk, manage appointments, data entry, manage fees, and monitoring failure to appear notices. Linda Bailey and Kathy Howe-Werner manage the computerized data system and status reports that are essential to the monitoring of cases.