RE: Support of HB916

Good morning Chairman and members of the Committee. My name is Mindy Huddleston and I work for Alcohol Monitoring Systems, the company that manufactures the SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring device.

I am pleased to testify in support HB916, which would replicate supervised bail programs for repeat DUI offenders like those in York and Lancaster Counties.

Repeat DUI offenders are a serious concern.

The National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) estimates there are roughly 1.5 million alcohol-impaired driving arrests each year, one-third of which involve repeat offenders. The risk of being involved in an alcohol-related traffic crash increases by approximately 20% with each additional prior DUI. In 2010, the most precise study in this regard analyzed more than 100 million driver records from 1973 to 2004 in Maryland, and found:

- The odds of a 1st time DUI offender repeating to a second offense (crash or arrest) is 24%.
- The odds of a 2nd time DUI offender repeating to a third offense (crash or arrest) is 36% (12 percentage-points or 50% greater than a 1st time offender).
- The odds of a 3rd time DUI offender repeating to a fourth offense (crash or arrest) is 51% (27 percentage-points or 110% greater than a 1st time offender, and 15 percentage-points or 40% greater than a 2nd time offender).  

As you may know, in 2012 York County started a supervised bail program to reduce repeat DUI offenses after it determined that 25% of its docket was DUIs and 25% of those were repeat offenders. Furthermore, about 25% of those repeat offenders were accumulating additional DUI arrests between the time they were first stopped for DUI and the time they appeared in court to enter a plea for the original DUI arrest.

Since then in York County all repeat DUI offenders are required to abstain from drinking alcohol while out on bail, and they are continuously monitored to hold them accountable for that condition of release. As a result, the county has experienced a 90% reduction in the number of

DUI offenders who are arrested for a subsequent DUI offense within the same year. Also, about 6% of all victims of crime in the county are DUI victims, which is down from 18% in 2011. Additionally, according to PennDOT York County had a 17% decrease in impaired driving crashes between 2012 and 2014, the largest decrease in South Central Pennsylvania.

Because of its success, other counties—like Lancaster—have started similar programs using continuous alcohol monitoring bracelets to deter drinking and reduce the likelihood of recidivism.

For those not familiar, the SCRAM bracelet transdermally monitors for ingested alcohol every 30 minutes, 48 times each day. It distinguishes from ingested and environmental alcohol. People cannot drink around testing schedules or intentionally miss tests, as they can with any other alcohol testing technology.

Research demonstrates that the use of transdermal continuous alcohol monitoring for a minimum of 90 days significantly reduces the probability of recidivism among high-risk DUI offenders. In a study conducted by the National Center for State Courts, recidivism rates for repeat DUI offenders who wore a continuous alcohol monitoring bracelet for at least 90 days were 50% less than those who were alternatively sentenced. Remarkably, 98% of the offenders did not commit a new offense while wearing a SCRAM bracelet. A NHTSA study replicated these powerful effects; showing that 90 days on continuous alcohol monitoring significantly decreased the risk of recidivism up to 43%.

These studies demonstrate the deterrent power of continuous alcohol monitoring and its strong influence on the extrinsic motivation that is critical to keep DUI offenders from drinking. Since most repeat DUI offenders do not have the internal motivation to stay sober, continuous alcohol monitoring aids individuals by reinforcing sobriety every 30 minutes, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. They know, without a doubt, if they drink they will be caught. That certainty of detection is a powerful deterrent and motivator to stay sober when individuals don’t yet have the internal motivation or tools to stay sober on their own. As a direct result, public safety can be improved, the orders of the court can be effectively enforced, and the individual’s likelihood of long-term recovery is increased.

Although the continuous alcohol monitoring device does not stop the car from driving, it does deter the behavior of drinking. Nationally, 99.2% of SCRAM days are Sober Days, meaning there are no confirmed drinking or circumvention events. Thus, when people are sober, they are not committing the crime of DUI.

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To date, the SCRAM Continuous Alcohol Monitoring bracelet has been worn by more than 700,000 alcohol-involved offenders for a total of 72.2 million monitored days.

As a former resident of Dauphin County with family still residing in the county and throughout the state, I encourage you to support HB916. As already proven in York County, this legislation will enhance public safety and save lives.

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