

## Outreach Smartphone Monitoring for Alcohol Use

The Reno Municipal Court recently introduced a new, state-of-the-art process to detect the use of alcohol by offenders under court supervision. The cloud-based system, offered by Outreach Smartphone Monitoring (OSM), uses a smartphone, a proprietary app, and Bluetooth-enabled technology to check a person's blood alcohol concentration (BAC) level using a pocket-size breathalyzer. Random sobriety checks can be done up to 25 times a day. Each test uses biometric identification of the person being tested to prevent fraud. The OSM system can also be used as a GPS device to detect travel into restricted zones. It includes a communications tool by which supervising officers can send immediate messages to their participants or remind them of their court dates.

"We are proud of our Marshals Alternative Sentencing Unit (ASU) and its continuous effort to be innovative and efficient in supervising our Specialty Court clients," said Administrative Judge Dorothy Nash Holmes. "ASU officers are well-trained professionals, who closely monitor all activities of Specialty Court participants. As the name implies, ASU provides offenders with an alternative to jail, by utilizing intensive supervision for those addicted to drugs or alcohol and undergoing a year or more of court-ordered counseling." State and federal law requires random drug/alcohol testing of all persons in Specialty Courts. Best practices set the standard at a minimum of twice a week for drug testing, which Reno Municipal Court now performs in its on-site lab that opened last November. The lab tests for the use of both drugs and alcohol.

Nevada has a high incidence of DUIs involving alcohol and frequent BAC testing is necessary to hold such offenders accountable. According to Judge Nash Holmes, "almost everyone has a cell phone these days so the OSM system works great for those whose work or school schedule prevents them from frequent testing at the court. The OSM system enables participants to comply with their conditions of probation with minimal disruption to their daily lives and also have quicker contact with their supervising officer." It is less expensive than other electronic monitoring systems, and is less intrusive than an ankle bracelet.

Studies have shown that Specialty Court programs are the most successful criminal justice intervention in our nation's history. The National Drug Court Institute reports that for every \$1 spent on treatment courts, communities save an estimated \$27 in societal costs such as incarceration, social services and emergency hospitalization of addicts.