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PLANNING AND EVALUATION STUDY OF THE SUFFOLK COUNTY
DWI JAIL ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM:
TWENTY-FOUR MONTH REPORT

Executive Summary

April 1988

Submitted to:

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Division of Probation and
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ACQUISITIONS

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I. INTRODUCTION

New York State and Suffolk County have jointly funded the operation of the Suffolk County DWI Jail Alternatives Program since 1985. Partial funding is allocated from 'alternative-to-incarceration' funding, administered by the New York State Division of Probation and Correctional Alternatives (DPCA). In addition, this program receives funding as part of the Suffolk County DWI Plan which supports programs out of fines collected from convicted drunk drivers. Suffolk County also provides supplemental direct funding for program operations out of the County budget.

The Suffolk County DWI Jail Alternatives Program is a correctional/treatment project aimed at reducing jail overcrowding and the recidivist role of chronic DWI offenders.¹ There are two major components of this program: the DWI Jail Alternatives Facility (under the jurisdiction of the Sheriff); and the intensive PAT probation supervision component (operated by the Probation Department). Alcohol treatment services are essential elements of each component.

Both the 24-hour DWI Jail Alternatives Facility and the intensive PAT community supervision component have been designed for the most serious drunk driver population; that is those offenders who, because of the recidivist behavior, have been sentenced to a term of jail and probation. The overall program design is a cooperative, interdisciplinary correctional/treatment approach between the Sheriff's Office, the Probation Department and the Department of Health Services. This integrated alternative model is a variation of the highly effective Probation Alcohol Treatment (PAT) approach which has been operated and evaluated continuously since 1979.^{2,3,4}

One of the essential elements of this program's operational design is an ongoing program evaluation component. In August, 1987 a comprehensive research and evaluation process was initiated. All administrative, supervisory, line and clerical program personnel are involved in this continuous evaluation process.

Those involved with this project invested a considerable amount of effort in the program evaluation process. Twenty-two planning meetings, and numerous structured interviews were conducted during the evaluation period between August 1987 and January 1988. In addition, confidential questionnaires assessing the effectiveness of program operations were completed by project staff. A statistical analysis of program impact was also conducted.

The purpose of this report is to present the results of this in-depth evaluation of current operations and procedures. All

aspects of the program, as compared to the original program design⁵ have been reviewed. Recommended modifications are also included for analysis. In addition, a profile of the first 120 clients who were sentenced to the DWI Jail Alternatives Program between December 1985 and September 1987 is included. Recidivism, traffic violation and accident results are also presented in this report.⁶

The current report has been organized in the following manner: I. Introduction; II. Major Findings; III. Program Description & Current Operations; IV. Characteristics of Project Population; V. Planning & Research Methods, Procedures & Designs; VI. Results; VII. Impact on Jail Overcrowding; VIII. Future Directions; IX. Analysis & Conclusion; References; and Appendices.

II. MAJOR FINDINGS

1. The objective of developing and implementing an alternative correctional/treatment program for the jail bound recidivist drunk driver population has been achieved. The Suffolk County Jail Alternatives program began with a day treatment component in December 1985 and expanded to a 24 hour correctional/treatment facility in February 1987.

2. As of January 1988, 165 of Suffolk County's most serious drunk driving population were sentenced to the appropriate split sentence which consists of 1) an initial period at the DWI Jail Alternatives Facility; and 2) the remainder of the sentence receiving Intensive PAT probation services.

3. As of September 1987, 120 individuals were sentenced to this program. This subgroup of offenders represents the first two research cohorts and are the subject of the current research and evaluation effort.

4. The project population consists of Suffolk County's most serious drunk driving population. Two subgroups of the target population have been identified: the 'DWI Dominant' and the 'Criminal Dominant'. (Refer to Section VI, g, pp. 42-43.)

5. The 120 project participants analyzed in this study were responsible for 628 prior criminal arrests of which 402 arrests were for DWI offenses. Each offender had an average of 5.3 prior arrests, not including the current offense or recidivism arrests. This population was responsible for over 765 total criminal arrests.

6. After an average follow-up period of 348 days for the 120 individuals accepted into the program between December 1985 and September 1987, 3 individuals or 2.5% had been arrested for a felony crime; and an additional 11 individuals or 9.2% were rearrested for misdemeanor crimes. Thus 14 individuals out of 120 or 11.7% had been subsequently rearrested for felony or misdemeanor offenses.

7. Out of the recidivism total, two individuals or 1.7% were rearrested for felony DWI crimes; while an additional 5 individuals or 4.2% were rearrested for DWI misdemeanor offenses. Therefore, 7 out of 120 offenders or 5.8% were rearrested for DWI offenses after an average follow-up period of one year.

8. During the intensive PAT component of this project 24 violations of probation (VOP) were filed with the criminal courts. Twelve (12) were filed due to rearrest, while 12 additional VOP's were filed for technical violations.

9. Regarding the DWI Alternatives Program's impact on jail overcrowding, and after computing time off for good behavior, the actual reduction in sentenced jail days with this program equals 8,402 days care saved during the first nineteen months of program operation. (Refer to Section VII, 1.)
10. There is an additional savings of 8,656 days care for Cohort II that were housed at the alternative residential facility instead of at the Riverhead or Yaphank Correctional Facilities. (Refer to Table 35.)
11. While the per diem cost of placement at the DWI Jail Alternatives Facility is roughly comparable to the cost of incarceration, there is an estimated 26% reduction in the overall cost of the alternatives sentence as compared to a straight jail sentence. (Refer to Table 36.)
12. If the preliminary results hold up over a longer follow-up period, then there will be solid empirical evidence that the DWI Jail Alternatives Program is an effective, less costly, alternative to incarceration.

III. PROGRAM DESCRIPTION & CURRENT OPERATIONS

I. Program Overview

The Suffolk County DWI Jail Alternatives program is an interagency, correctional/treatment model for split sentence drunk drivers. As illustrated in Figure 1, there are two distinct components of this project; a 24 hour alternative treatment facility, and an intensive special (PAT) supervision component.

A. DWI Jail Alternatives Facility:

The 24 hour facility has been designed into three distinct phases.

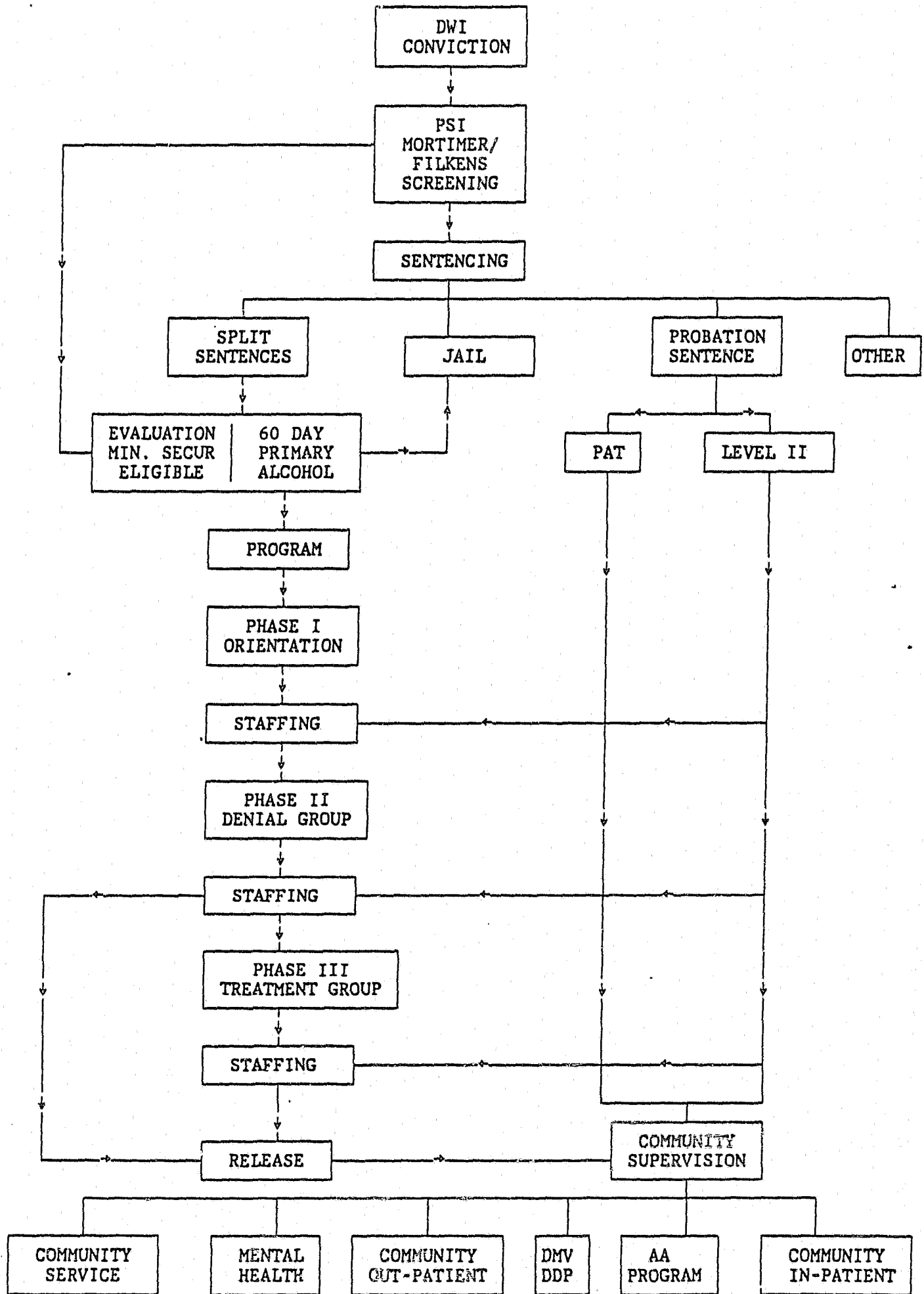
a. Orientation Phase - of the program occurs subsequent to a determination of eligibility while in the jail and immediately upon entering the facility. Before the offender enters into the first treatment group the orientation phase must be completed.

- Rules and regulations of the facility are explained and issued.
- One on one staff interviews with the offender are conducted in order to explain the program and exchange expectations.
- Conditions of Probation are read and explained.
- An interview to evaluate offender's level of dysfunction and denial, family, and social circumstances is conducted. Material from interview is compared to available reports and presentence investigation.
- Once the orientation interviews are completed, staff evaluate the offender and draw up a plan of treatment specific to the offender.

b. Denial Group Treatment Phase - The internal recognition of alcohol abuse is necessary for anyone to begin to accept the need for treatment. This phase has been designed so that clients can enter at any session and begin to use the group process to address their denial. This is an intense program, involving two distinctly different group activities, one structured, one oriented toward open discussion. In addition, an education series and attendance at in-house AA meetings are important components of the program.

c. Early Recovery Treatment Phase - When the offender has met the treatment goals previously

FIGURE 1: FLOW CHART OF THE DWI JAIL ALTERNATIVES PROGRAM



established and staff agrees that the offender has sufficiently worked through denial, he may enter the early recovery treatment phase of the program.

B. Intensive PAT Probation Supervision:

Once the individual completes the DWI Jail Alternative Facility portion of his sentence, he is required to participate fully in Suffolk Probation's Probation Alcohol Treatment Program (PAT) for the remainder of a three or five year split-sentence term.

2. Target Population

This program has been designed for high-risk DWI offenders who have been sentenced in Criminal Court to a split-sentence of jail and probation. The split-sentence term optimally should be for a minimum of 60 days. Basically, the target population is the most serious, alcohol abusing, jail bound, recidivist DWI offender.

Individuals with three or more prior DWI convictions, a high Mortimer-Filkins score, a high B.A.C. level, and a history of failure in other traditional DWI supervision and treatment programs make up the primary target population of this interagency program.

3. Admissions Criteria & Selection Procedures

After intensive review, the admissions criteria as defined in the program description and contract remains essentially intact. Basically, the target population remains the most serious, alcohol abusing, jail bound, recivist DWI offender. The major exclusions remain as follows: A) primary problem determined to be narcotics abuse; B) primary problem determined to be psychological; C) violent prone individuals; and D) individuals with serious medical problems that require daily monitoring and treatment. (Refer to Section VI, 2, A for a definition of each category.)

In addition the following two exclusions have always been in effect but never formally recorded; E) out of county residents (who cannot participate in Phase II - PAT Supervision); and F) individuals who have already been through the DWI Jail Alternatives Facility.

The initial program design established an interagency screening committee. The need for a correctional/treatment admissions screening process was reaffirmed during the evaluation process. Violent offenders and narcotic addicts must be screened properly, in order to insure the safety and security of the facility.

IX. ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSION

The Suffolk County DWI Jail Alternatives Program is a non-traditional, interdisciplinary, correctional/treatment program designed for the jail bound, multiple recidivist DWI offender. It is a model based on the concept of problem specific corrections; and the design has been modified from the original PAT project. Suffolk Probation's PAT program has been in operation and continuously evaluated since 1979. With this integrated design the interagency team of correctional treatment officers, probation officers and social workers are specially trained to address the primary dysfunction of alcohol abuse.

As indicated in Section II, Major Findings, the attempt to implement an alternative, correctional/treatment program has been achieved. The day program began in December 1985 and the 24 hour Alternative Jail Facility began in February 1987. In addition, analysis of the offender characteristics reveals that the project population is primarily comprised of the jail bound drunk drivers: the appropriate target population.

The initial results are positive. A 1.7% felony DWI recidivism rate; and a 5.8% total DWI recidivism rate after an average of approximately one year is promising. The 11.7% combined DWI and non-DWI rearrest rate is also positive. However, these results are only indicators and must only be interpreted as preliminary measures.

The analysis also offers evidence that there are two distinct subgroups within this population, those who are primarily DWI offenders and those who combine DWI offenses with other criminality. There appears to be a disparity between the type of recidivism and the recidivism rates for these two subgroups.

The observation that the 'DWI Dominant' subgroup is responsible for the DWI recidivism, and that the 'Criminal Dominant' subgroup is responsible for the majority of non-DWI recidivism is quite interesting. There is substantial evidence that all of these individuals have serious alcohol problems. In addition, all the recidivists have a history of prior DWI arrests. And yet, the type of recidivism appears to be correlated to the percentage of prior DWI involvement versus the percent of prior non-DWI involvement. The explanation might be found in a subcultural analysis of the two different groups of offenders. The meaning of the criminal act for each group may be different. For the pure DWI subgroup criminality may be primarily the result of their addiction to alcohol. Other values of this subgroup may be law abiding. However, for the 'Criminal Dominant' subgroup DWI offenses may simply be another area of their overall pattern of illegal behavior. A deviant identity may already be internalized for

many in this subgroup. Programmatic implications are numerous. However, we are still dealing with preliminary data and the relationship may not hold up over time.

One rather startling finding is that the DWI recidivism rate for the 'criminal dominant' subgroup is very, very low. (Refer to Table 18.) This means that the project's correctional treatment approach may be quite effective in reducing drunk driving with the average alcohol abusing criminal offender. Based on these results, the 'criminal dominant' subgroup should not be excluded from admission to the alternatives program. On the contrary, remarkable success in reducing drunk driving with this population has been demonstrated thusfar.

One indicator that is measurable at this early stage of evaluation is the close supervision afforded by the Probation PAT supervision component once the offender is released from the 24 hour facility. The use of intensive supervision combined with the periodic and unannounced Alco-sensor tests appear to result in a moderate number of violation actions. Although over half of the VOP's are the result of rearrests, twenty-four (24) violation of probation actions indicate a high degree of accountability introduced into the lives of the multiple recidivist drunk drivers. The preliminary results are consistent with those of Dr. Banks,¹⁶ as well as the evaluation of the PAT approach.¹⁷

In addition, the results of this study indicate that the DWI Jail Alternatives Program may be an effective alternative to incarceration. The target population appears to be true jail bound offenders and the reduced split/sentence dispositions seem to be legitimate. However, constant vigilance in this area is required to make sure that the net is not expanded to less severe cases. And finally, the average cost of an alternative sentence is potentially three quarters of a traditional jail sentence.

If the preliminary results hold up over a longer follow-up period, then there will be solid empirical evidence that the DWI Jail Alternatives Program is an effective, less costly, alternative to incarceration. Replication of this correctional/treatment approach should be considered.

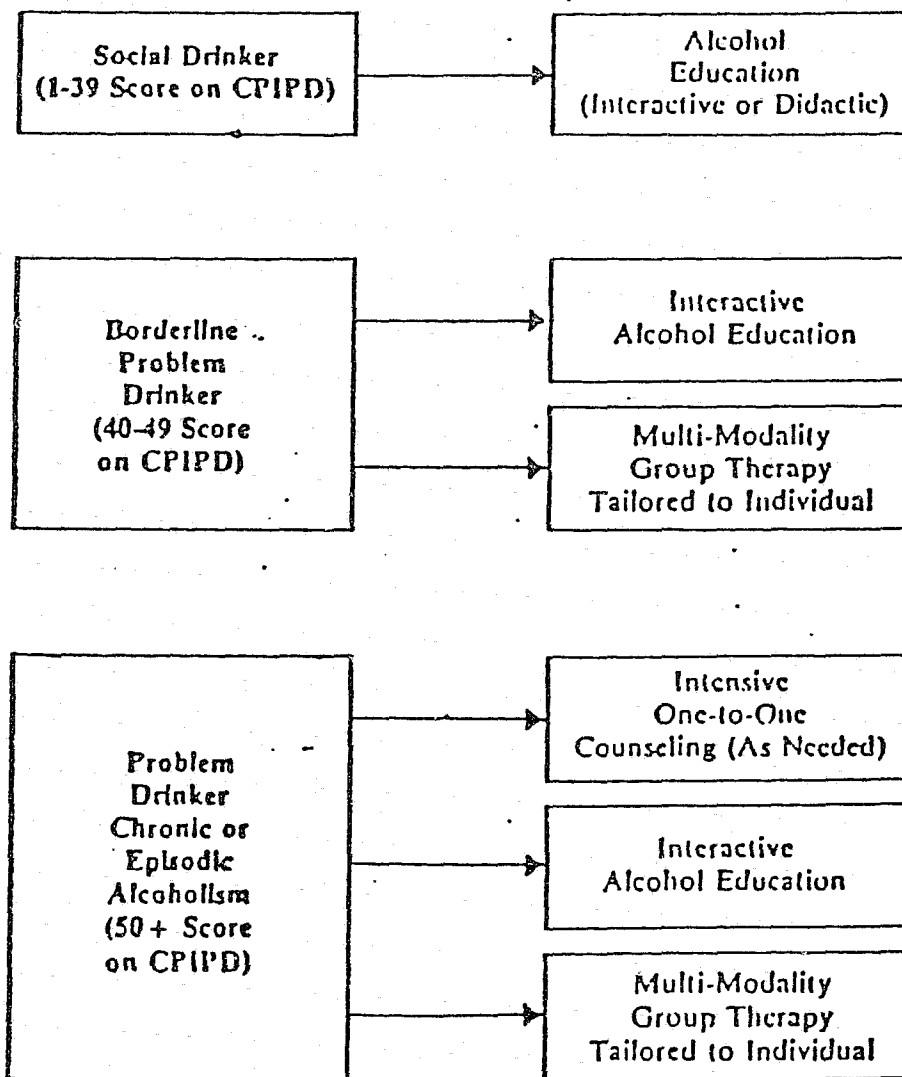
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**SUGGESTED
EDUCATION/
TREATMENT BY
DRINKER TYPE**



APPENDIX B: GUIDELINES FOR IDENTIFYING ALCOHOL DYSFUNCTION USING THE
MORTIMER-FILKINS, BLOOD ALCOHOL CONCENTRATION & PRIOR DWI ARRESTS

| | <u>TYPE OF PROBLEM</u> | | |
|---------------------------------|---|---|---|
| | <u>May Not Be a Problem Drinker</u> | <u>Highly Presumptive Evidence of Problem</u> | <u>Nearly Certain Evidence of Problem</u> |
| M/F | 39 or less | 40 - 49 | 50 or more |
| BAC | .05 to .14 | .15 to .19 | .20 or more |
| Previous DWI/DWAI Arrests | 0 | 1 - 2 | 3+ |