

CASE STUDY

Justice Sector



sobrcheck™

BACKGROUND

At over 5,000 square miles, Big Horn is Montana's 6th largest county in landmass - though just the 30th in population density. Big Horn County is representative of the challenges present in alcohol testing accuracy and accountability in rural America. According to the U.S. Census Bureau, about 46 million Americans—15% of the US population—live in rural areas. Public services, probation programs and court systems are often limited for those in a rural population. Challenges include:

- ✚ Inability of courts to monitor participants in a vast area
- ✚ Providing the resources for accurate alcohol testing
- ✚ Easy access to recovery-oriented systems of care
- ✚ Small budgets which often lead to limited staff and a lack of fiscal resources

Big Horn County was using traditional breathalyzer tests for its 24x7 Sobriety Program. The tests required dedicated staff and had to be manually administered, often leading to logistical and travel complications. For the staff, breathalyzer administration was expensive and cumbersome. It could take hours for County staff to process a group of individuals. The costly and time-consuming breathalyzer procedures were not only inefficient, but they also introduced potential health hazards to a vulnerable population.

When the COVID-19 pandemic occurred, breathalyzers were no longer administered by staff and participants had to rely on third party vendors. Those options were often limited, expensive or the distance to drive made it impossible to manage.

"It wasn't an ideal situation for our participants or our staff," said Sabrina Allred, Big Horn County Misdemeanor Probation and Pre-Trial Services Officer. "Income-wise, access to test sites was definitely an issue. Many participants had to travel to our neighboring county, which is about 45 miles away. GPS monitors and alcohol bracelets are expensive and not an option for many participants with a limited budget."

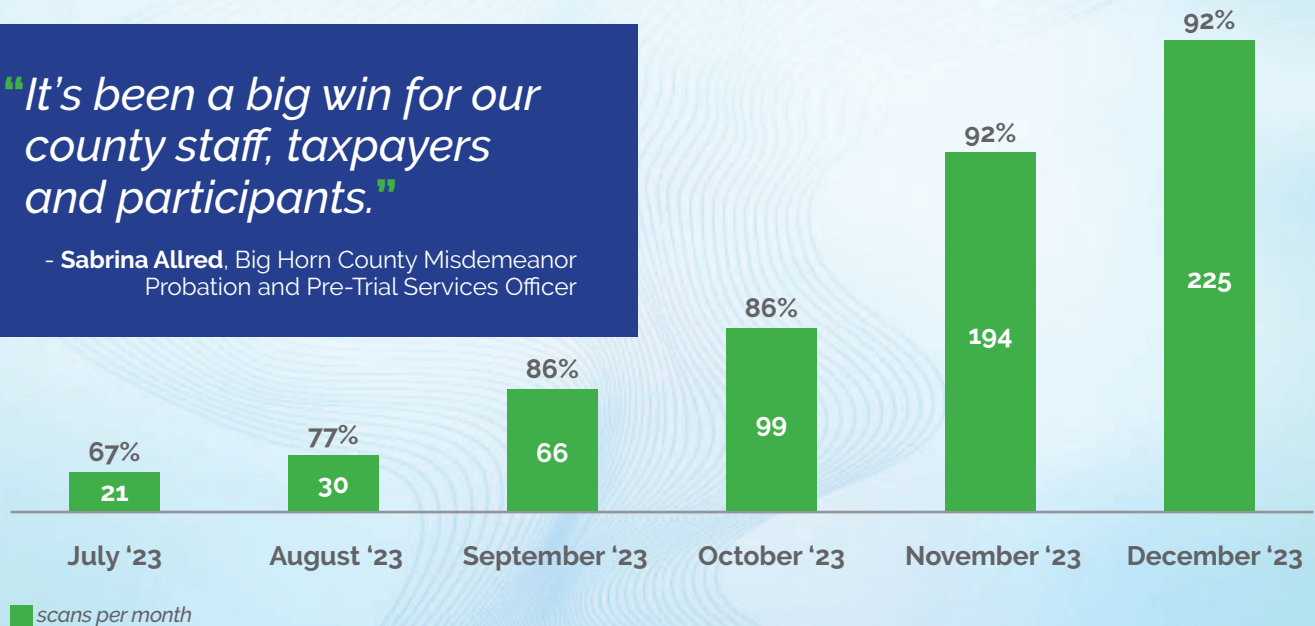
PROGRAM

Upon learning of SOBRsafe's technology from another justice sector installation in the state, Big Horn County deployed the alcohol detection platform SOBRcheck™ in July 2023, in two locations within the County building. The unstaffed testing procedure was straightforward: participants simply placed their hand on SOBRcheck, confirming their identity and completing an alcohol screen in approximately 10 seconds. The results were transmitted in real-time to an administrative portal, with alerts sent to mobile devices.

Total Pass Rate % by Month

"It's been a big win for our county staff, taxpayers and participants."

- Sabrina Allred, Big Horn County Misdemeanor Probation and Pre-Trial Services Officer



RESULTS

With the help of SOBRsafe, Big Horn County has created an efficient, cost-effective template for court-mandated, passive alcohol screening outside of major metro areas. The program is hygienic, rapid, and convenient. It enhances accountability and accessibility, while reducing costs and improving safety. Since initiating the program, Big Horn County has been able to provide cost-effective monitoring services for more than 100 community members.

"Both participants and our staff are given back hours in their days to be more productive. I believe this will also lead to more successful results for our those in court-mandated programs, as it is no longer cost-prohibitive to participate. We hope to expand our testing network with satellite SOBRcheck units installed in other towns within the county, reducing drive time and costs for our participants and enhancing the effectiveness of our alcohol screening program," followed Allred.