

DRUG AND ALCOHOL TESTING – KEEPING THE “GOLD STANDARD” COST EFFECTIVE

by Chris Crucilla



Technological advancements have made an impact in many industries and the area of drug and alcohol testing is no exception. Scientific research has developed more variations of testing for drugs and alcohol, such as saliva, hair, and transdermal testing. Quality control in the work force has made it common practice to drug test employees by using all of these methods. However, the industry

that does the most drug and alcohol testing has remained loyal to the gold standard - urinalysis.

Government agencies, such as Probation, Drug Courts and DUI Courts have used urinalysis for many years, and urine testing has made its own advancements. On site kits are widely used by many of these agencies, although these on site kits only tests for presence of drugs, and many times lab result must be used for confirmation when sanctions are imposed.

Urine testing has remained the tried and true method for determining substance abuse because of its reliability. However, with the attempt to reduce over flowing correctional facilities, government agencies are becoming even more budget stressed with the amount of urine testing that is required. Although the cost to test urine can be as low as six dollars per test, the amount of time in the bathroom and the chain of custody can add about four to five dollars to each urine test. Officers are finding themselves spending more time in the bathroom and less time out in the field. Many agencies are resorting to hiring a dedicated urine staff. With caseloads growing, the cost and time of testing for drugs and alcohol is taking its toll and the gold standard is becoming entirely too expensive to use on all offenders.

With this in mind, StreeTime Technologies is looking at drug and alcohol testing at government agencies with a different approach – only test the population that needs to be tested. How do we determine who needs to be tested? With technology. We screen entire populations and only take uri-

nalisis on the population that is at high risk of substance abuse. Agencies using StreeTime Technologies' products only urine test 10 to 15 percent of their population.

To explain further, Officer Smith, who has 40 individuals on his caseload, would take once a week urine tests on each individual with pre-existing methods. Most substances are only present in the urine for 80 hours, so even though Officer Smith is spending a lot of time in the bathroom, he is working with a very narrow window of detection for confirming substance usage.

Our products offer different circumstances. Officer Smith can screen all 40 of his individuals every day if he chooses, at no additional cost. He only takes a urine sample if the screening product determines the individual to be a high risk for having used drugs or alcohol. His window of detection for confirmation is much broader with this method.

To screen individuals for drugs and alcohol abuse, StreeTime Technologies offers two methods – pupilometry and sleep pattern recognition. This new screening method-



The SleepTime Continuous Drug and Alcohol Monitor is being used in Adult and Juvenile Probation, Drug Courts, DUI Courts and Treatment Facilities, both government and private all over the United States to screen offenders for substance abuse.

ology is widely accepted since results from the screening products are not used for sanctioning. Screening allows an officer to classify the offender population into two groups, those at risk for drugs and alcohol use and those not at risk. Classifying these groups allows more focus to be placed on



Above is PassPoint.net, which features the latest technology in Drug and Alcohol Screening. PassPoint.net has been implemented in agencies in Texas, Nebraska, Colorado, New Jersey, Ohio, Arizona and California.

those offenders that need the most attention and help.

Urinalysis is only conducted on the high-risk population, cutting cost and creating a more positive work environment. Research indicates that most urine tests conducted on a population are negative for drug and alcohol use. By screening out the consistently clean offenders, they are then encouraged to stay clean.

StreeTime Technologies has two highly effective technological products, which incorporate this method. The first, the SleepTime Continuous Drug and Alcohol Abuse Monitoring System, looks similar to a wrist-watch, and can be worn on the wrist or ankle. The “monitor” has a highly sensitive accelerometer inside that continuously collects and stores daily activity, including sleep patterns. The sleep patterns are what give indications of drug and/or alcohol use. The National Institute of Health reports that our brains remain very active during sleep and a normal sleep cycle consists of five phases of sleep. These phases become inconsistent when alcohol or other drugs of abuse are consumed.

An offender wearing the SleepTime monitor reports to the agency twice a week to upload data stored in the monitor to a web-based server. Scientific algorithms are applied to the collected data and analyzed. The server immediately sends an email result back to the agency indicating whether the client is at high risk for possible use of drugs or alcohol. If the offender is not at risk, they are simply free to go. If the SleepTime monitor indicates the offender is at high risk, urinalysis can confirm usage, which is admissible in court. The entire upload process takes less than one minute.

The most recent product enhancement is the PassPoint.net Optical Scanner. Detecting drugs in the eye is not new science; law enforcement personnel have been shining flashlights in people’s eyes for years to determine substance impairment. The PassPoint.net system takes this technology even further, and can screen for post-impairment, as well as current impairment. Baselines are first established on a confirmed clean offender, and each subsequent scan is compared to their own baseline measurements. A typical baseline takes less than five minutes, and each subsequent scan takes 23 seconds. PassPoint.net is completely automated, generates reports, and can be interfaced with the agency’s database software, normally eliminating 90 percent of urinalysis.

StreeTime Technologies is further developing products and continuing to improve on the products already on the market to make it more economical for agencies to screen for drugs and alcohol, and eliminating the idea that the gold standard of urine testing must apply to all offenders.

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- DOT/NON DOT Screening
- 5, 8 and 10 Panel Drug Screen
- Same day drug screen results
 - SMASHA Certified Lab
 - MRO Services
- Over 11,000 Collection Sites Nationwide
 - Mobile Testing & Collections
- 24/7 Post Accident/Suspension Testing
 - Respiratory Clearance
 - Fit Testing • Hair Testing
 - DNA Testing
- Alcohol Testing • Audio Testing

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