

Calls for More Focus on Treatment

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NAADAC is closely tracking the impact of DUI laws that took effect in the Commonwealth of Virginia on July 1, 2004. The laws are among the most stringent in the nation.

While the standard for charges remains at having a blood alcohol level of .08, those whose level is .15 could face a minimum of five days in jail and be required to use a dashboard breathalyzer. Offenders will have to pay hundreds of dollars for use of the device for six months.

"It is unfortunate that these new laws focus only on expensive punitive measures without any regard to treatment options," said NAADAC Executive Director Pat Ford-Roegner.

"One of the most cost-effective and sensible solutions to stopping DUIs is to ensure individuals receive sufficient treatment for their alcohol misuse. Under the new laws, once individuals are no longer incarcerated, they remain at risk for becoming repeat offenders if they continue to suffer from an addictive disorder," Ford-Roegner explained.

NAADAC remains very engaged in the issue of stopping DUIs, including working with the National Highway Transportation Safety Administration and the Surgeon General's office. Also, NAADAC is one of only a handful of entities nationwide that provide counselor training and testing for designations as Department of Transportation Substance Abuse Professionals, which pertain to the care of more than 8 million people in transportation-related fields.