



Why This Conversation Matters

Impaired driving is not a “one-time mistake” problem

Pretrial is the *first* and often *only* reliable intercept point

Traditional models focus on compliance, not stabilization

We cannot supervise our way out of a behavioral health crisis.



The Scale of the Crisis: El Paso County

El Paso County DWI Charges (01/01/2024 to 02/19/2026): 4,804 total

- 2,347 DWI 1st
- 172 DWI Under 21
- 365 DWI 2nd
- 391 DWI 3rd+
- 1,142 BAC \geq 0.15
- 288 Open Container
- 94 w/Child Under 15
- 27 Intoxication Manslaughter

*This is a population
that is:*

- *High-volume*
- *High-risk*
- *High-lethality*

RESEARCH: A PERSON
MAY DRIVE IMPAIRED
80 TO 1,600 TIMES
BEFORE THEIR FIRST
ARREST.

THE FIRST ARREST IS
NOT THE FIRST
INCIDENT - IT'S THE
FIRST *OPPORTUNITY*.



The Hidden Reality

The Complexity of the Impaired Driving Population

- Undiagnosed/untreated SUD
- Co-occurring mental health issues
- Cognitive impairments
- Social instability (housing, employment, transportation)
- Denial/minimization → low motivation for change

Traditional pretrial models don't touch these drivers.

Where Traditional Pretrial Falls Short

- Heavy focus on monitoring (SCRAM, interlock)
- Light focus on stabilization
- No structured treatment engagement pre-disposition
- Limited access to transportation or sober housing
- Conditions that assume readiness for change

Result: High recidivism, low engagement, missed opportunities.



Reimagining Pretrial: A Recovery- Oriented Intercept

Introduce
the shift:

- From compliance to stabilization
- From punishment to engagement
- From gatekeeping to recovery-oriented support

A close-up photograph of a hand holding a set of keys. The keys are silver and have a dark, octagonal head. The background is a blurred indoor space with warm lighting, suggesting a home or office environment. The text "Key Pretrial Issues & Opportunities" is overlaid in the center of the image in a white, serif font.

Key Pretrial Issues &
Opportunities

Early Identification & Risk Assessment



DWI-specific screening



Behavioral health assessment
at first appearance



Judicially informed release
decision

Release & Supervision Decisions



TREATMENT-INFORMED
CONDITIONS



GRADUATED
RESPONSES



STABILIZATION BEFORE
ABSTINENCE

Early
Engagement
in
Treatment

Pretrial DWI Intervention Track

Motivational Interviewing

Same-day referrals

Peer recovery support

Environmental & Social Stability



Transportation



Sober housing



Employment support

Data & Accountability

1

Track pretrial
outcomes

2

Evaluate
condition
effectiveness

3

Use data to
refine
decisions



Oh, The Judges...

The Judicial Bench Card

Introduce the tool:

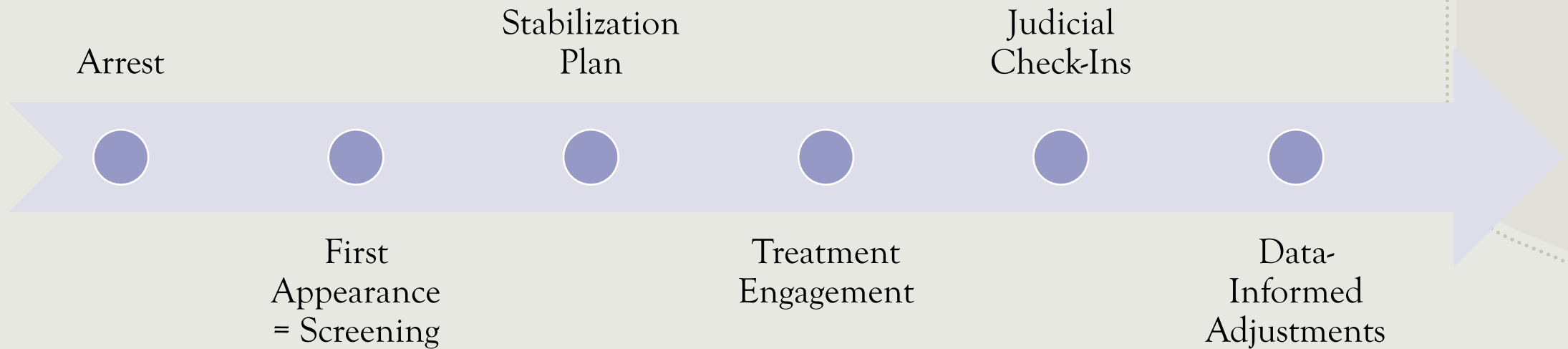
Helps judges identify stabilization needs

Supports treatment-informed decisions

Encourages early engagement

Aligns conditions with behavioral science

What This Looks Like in Practice



Public Safety Impact



Public Safety Impact

Early engagement reduces recidivism

Stabilization reduces impaired driving risk

Treatment reduces long-term harm

Pretrial becomes a *protective* factor

Reduced jail
bookings



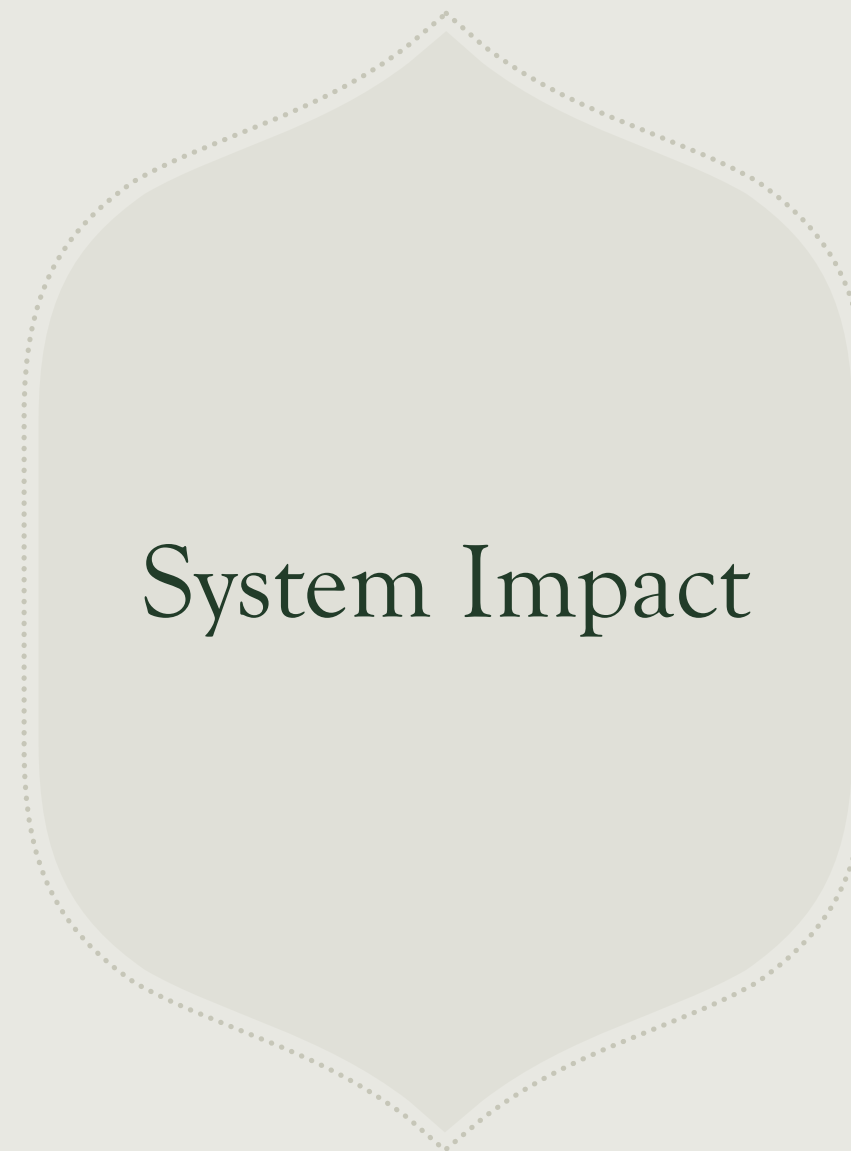
Reduced case
churn



Stronger cross-
system
coordination



Better outcomes
for high-risk
defendants



System Impact

Recommendations for the Field

- ♦ National DWI-specific pretrial framework
- ♦ Cross-system partnerships
- ♦ Pilot programs
- ♦ Judicial training
- ♦ Data collection & evaluation





In Closing

THE FIRST ARREST IS THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY.
PRETRIAL IS WHERE RECOVERY BEGINS.