Bridging the Gap: The Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) Program Pilot Study

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The objective of this paper is to provide an overview of a new training program, Advanced Roadside Impaired Driving Enforcement (ARIDE) Program, which was developed by the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) in association with the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police. ARIDE was created to address the gap in training between the Standardized Field Sobriety Testing (SFST) and the Drug Evaluation and Classification (DEC) Programs. This paper will provide a summary of the findings related to the pilot study which provided training and evaluated the impact of the training on impaired driving arrests.

In order to understand the need for a training program such as ARIDE, it is important to situate the course in terms of existing NHTSA training and strategies. The SFST Program trains officers to identify and assess drivers suspected of being under the influence of alcohol while the DEC Program provides more advanced training to evaluate suspected drug impairment. The SFST assessment is typically employed at roadside while a DEC Program evaluation is conducted in a more controlled environment such as a detention facility. ARIDE is intended to bridge the gap between these two programs by providing the officers general knowledge related to drug impairment and facilitate the use of drug evaluation experts (DREs) in the states that have the DEC Program. The ARIDE program also stresses the importance of securing the most appropriate biological sample in order to identify substance which may have caused impairment. Additionally, ARIDE promotes interaction with representatives from the state’s prosecution community and part of the course is intended to be taught by a local prosecutor or the state’s Traffic Safety Resource Prosecutor (TSRP).

The ARIDE program was piloted in Kentucky, Washington, Connecticut, and West Virginia. These states were selected based on NHTSA’s desire to have representation in the pilot study from states with and without the DEC Program. The seven pilot courses trained 205 law enforcement officers, prosecutors, and toxicologists. Law enforcement represented 186 (90%) of the participants. There was 67% from local agencies and 23% from state level agencies. The law enforcement officers who participated in the pilot training were required to submit pre- and post-training arrest data related to impaired driving.

The post-training data was collected during the six months immediately following the ARIDE course the officer attended. The pre-training arrest data was collected for the same six month period in the previous calendar year to avoid issues related to holiday and special event periods. The results of the analysis of arrest data showed an increase of more than 200 driving under the influence of drugs (DUID) arrests. In addition to these arrests, there was an increase in the number of DUID arrests in conjunction with drug paraphernalia (100) and possession (175).

The ARIDE Program is being deployed on a limited basis in New York, Virginia, and Pennsylvania as well as undergoing a curriculum review. It is expected the NHTSA will officially release the course materials during next six months. It is hoped that individual states will evaluate the impact of the ARIDE program at the state level to provide further quantitative data to provide supporting documentation as to the impact of law enforcement training on the impaired driving issues in their respective states.

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