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April 2016

Rick House, Interim County Administrator  
Members of the Board of Supervisors  
Wayne County  
26 Church Street  
Lyons, NY 14489

Report Number: S9-15-1

Dear Mr. House and Members of the Board of Supervisors:

A top priority of the Office of the State Comptroller is to help county officials manage their resources efficiently and effectively and, by so doing, provide accountability for tax dollars spent to support county operations. The Comptroller oversees the fiscal affairs of local governments statewide, as well as compliance with relevant statutes and observance of good business practices. This fiscal oversight is accomplished, in part, through our audits, which identify opportunities for improving operations and governance. Audits also can identify strategies to reduce costs and to strengthen controls intended to safeguard assets.

In accordance with these goals we conducted an audit of six counties throughout New York State. The objective of our audit was to determine if the applicable county departments were adequately monitoring the State's Ignition Interlock Program to ensure proper use and compliance. We included Wayne County in this audit. Within the scope of this audit, we examined the county departments' policies and procedures and reviewed the record of actions taken to comply with monitoring requirements of the Ignition Interlock Program for the period January 1, 2010 through December 19, 2014. This audit was conducted pursuant to Article V, Section 1 of the State Constitution and the State Comptroller's authority as set forth in Article 3 of the New York State General Municipal Law.

This report of examination letter contains our findings and recommendation specific to the County. We discussed the findings and recommendation with County officials and considered their comments, which appear in Appendix A, in preparing this report. County officials generally agreed with our recommendation and indicated they planned to initiate corrective action. At the completion of our audit of the six counties, we prepared a global report that summarizes the significant issues we identified at all of the counties audited.

## Summary of Findings

Department officials generally monitored the ignition interlock device (IID) installations and negative activities of offenders as required. However, five of 42 installations (12 percent) were installed after the required 10 business days, on average 30 days late. The monitors also reported these late installations in only one of the five instances. In addition, the monitors did not report two cases with negative activity,<sup>1</sup> among the 33 completed installations,<sup>2</sup> to the court and district attorney in a timely manner.

## Background and Methodology

Wayne County is governed by a 15-member County Board of Supervisors (Board) and has a population of approximately 93,000. The County's fiscal year 2015 budgeted appropriations totaled \$135 million. The County's Probation and Correctional Alternatives Department (Department) monitors the installation and activity of court-ordered ignition interlock devices (IIDs) using three probation officers and a probation assistant as monitors. As of December 9, 2014, the County was monitoring 386 open cases<sup>3</sup> that required an IID installation.

"Leandra's Law," a New York State law enacted November 18, 2009,<sup>4</sup> is intended to protect the safety of the public. It requires, among other things, that – as a condition of being sentenced for certain alcohol related offenses occurring on or after August 15, 2010 – a convicted individual install and maintain a breath alcohol IID on any vehicle owned or operated by that individual for a certain period of time.<sup>5</sup> An ignition interlock device installed in a vehicle requires the operator to provide a breath sample in order to start the car.

The New York State Division of Criminal Justice Services (DCJS) has regulations for, among others, counties in regard to establishing standards for the usage and monitoring of IIDs ordered by criminal courts for these alcohol-related sentences.<sup>6</sup> The County's Probation Department is responsible for monitoring court-ordered IIDs for both individuals sentenced to probation and

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<sup>1</sup> For audit purposes, a negative event (activity) is the result of an individual's actions that are not in compliance with listed events in 9 NYCRR Section 358.7 (d) (1).

<sup>2</sup> Nine of the court cases selected were closed at the time of our testing, which limited the County's ability to access the IID vendor records on those cases.

<sup>3</sup> Composed of 190 probation cases and 196 conditional discharge cases

<sup>4</sup> The Child Passenger Protection Act (Chapter 496 of the Laws of 2009) is commonly referred to as Leandra's Law, which amended provisions of the Vehicle and Traffic Law (VTL), Executive Law and Penal Law. Provisions addressing the ignition interlock device became effective August 15, 2010, and Chapter 169 of the Laws of 2013, which strengthens certain provisions of Leandra's Law, took effect on November 1, 2013 (see Appendix B for additional detail). After this audit began, the Penal law was further amended to provide that when a court sentence includes a condition that an IID be installed and maintained by a defendant, and the court later declares that individual to be delinquent, the condition to have the IID installed continues to be in effect during the period of delinquency. The court may also extend the period of the IID installation by the period of the delinquency (see Chapter 440 of the Laws of 2015, effective November 20, 2015).

<sup>5</sup> See VTL Sections 1193, 1198; see also Executive Law Section 259-c.

<sup>6</sup> See VTL Section 1193 (1) (g) and 9 NYCRR Part 358 – Handling of Ignition Interlock Cases Involving Certain Criminal Offenders.

those sentenced to conditional discharge.<sup>7</sup> Probation cases with an IID order requirement are generally assigned to one of three probation officers who specialize in DWI cases. All conditional discharge cases are monitored by a probation assistant. Monitoring is a key component for ensuring that a vehicle operator is complying with a court order and for protecting the safety of the public.

Installation and activity requirements that must be monitored include the following:<sup>8</sup>

- The monitor shall receive court notification of an order for the IID within five business days from sentencing.
- The operator is required to have an IID installed within 10 business days of the court order or if sentenced to imprisonment, upon release from imprisonment, whichever is applicable.
- The operator shall submit to service visits at defined intervals (see Appendix B for details).
- The monitor shall notify the appropriate court and district attorney, within three business days, of the following:
  - Operator failure to install an ordered IID;
  - Operator non-compliance with a service visit requirement;
  - Any report of alleged tampering with or circumventing of the IID or an attempt thereof;
  - Any report of a lock-out mode, and/or any report of a failed test or retest when the BAC is 0.05 percent or higher.

Appendix B includes more details of monitoring requirements. The failure by an individual to comply with the Ignition Interlock Program may result in the conditional discharge or probation sentence being modified or revoked by the court.

To complete our audit objective, we conducted interviews with Department personnel and reviewed policies/procedures. We also reviewed court orders and information that the Department maintained for the IID records we sampled. We examined communications to ensure that appropriate monitoring actions were taken and tested records to confirm compliance. We conducted our audit in accordance with generally accepted government auditing standards (GAGAS). More information on such standards and the methodology used in performing this audit is included in Appendix C of this report. Unless otherwise indicated in this report, samples for testing were selected based on professional judgment, as it was not the intent to project the results onto the entire population. Where applicable, information is presented concerning the value and/or size of the relevant population and the sample selected for examination.

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<sup>7</sup> As a general premise, probation is a sentencing option for the court that permits the offender to remain in the community under conditions specified by the court, and involves some form of supervision or reporting requirement. A conditional discharge is a sentencing option which is generally used for minor violations that do not require probation supervision. The regulations provide, in part, that the county's ignition interlock program plan "shall specify monitoring by the probation department where the operator is subject to a period of probation supervision and may designate one or more alternative persons or entities, in lieu of the probation department, responsible for monitoring where an ignition interlock device has been imposed pursuant to a conditional discharge" (see, 9 NYCRR Section 358.4[c]).

<sup>8</sup> See 9 NYCRR Section 358.7.

## Audit Results

The County's Probation Department is responsible for monitoring court-ordered IIDs for both individuals sentenced to probation and those sentenced to conditional discharge.

Department officials generally monitored the IID installations and negative activities of offenders as required. However, five of 42 installations (12 percent) were installed after the required 10 business days, on average 30 days late. The monitors also reported these late installations in only one of the five instances. In addition, the monitors did not report two cases with negative activity, among the 33 completed installations,<sup>9</sup> to the court and district attorney in a timely manner.

IID Installations – We selected 81 court orders<sup>10</sup> requiring IID installation for offenders sentenced to probation or conditional discharge to determine if the Department adequately monitored the installations and notified the court of violations as required. Forty-two of the 81 IIDs ordered were installed, while the remaining 39 cases had individuals who indicated that they did not own or operate a vehicle. We tested and confirmed that none of them had a registered vehicle during the IID order period. However, five of the 42 installations (12 percent) occurred after the required 10 business days, on average 30 days late. Further, the monitor reported the violations to the court for one of the five late installations but not the other four. Department monitors attributed the lack of reporting to the cases being transferred from another county, suspended license issues and court paperwork needing clarification.

Negative IID Activity – We reviewed the negative IID activity reported by the vendor for 72<sup>11</sup> of the 81 court orders. Of these, 33 had IIDs installed, while the other 39 cases had individuals who did not own or operate a vehicle. We tested and confirmed that none of them had a registered vehicle during the IID order period. As a result, no device was installed and no device activity was available for review. We also reviewed the reported negative IID activity from the vendor for all 33 cases (107 negative events)<sup>12</sup> and found that the monitor did not notify the court in a timely manner in two cases (28 negative events), which were reported three and 11 days after the required three-day period. The late notification events included missed service visits, failed tests due to BAC levels, missed start-ups and an IID lockout. The monitor attributed the delay in notifying the courts<sup>13</sup> to being out of the office and monitoring an IID that is shared by two separate individuals required to have IIDs.

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<sup>9</sup> Nine of the court cases selected were closed at the time of our testing, which limited the County's ability to access the IID vendor records on those cases.

<sup>10</sup> See Appendix C for methodology.

<sup>11</sup> Nine of the 81 court cases selected were closed at the time of our testing, which limited the County's ability to access the IID vendor records on those cases.

<sup>12</sup> A "negative event" is counted each time an individual's actions are not in compliance with listed events in 9 NYCRR Section 358.7 (d) (1). For example, each of the following is counted as a separate "event" for a total of three negative events even though the three events occur in one attempt to start a vehicle: a breath sample is given at a BAC of 0.05 percent, a sample is not given for a re-test, and a lock-out results.

<sup>13</sup> The monitor reported only to the courts, not the District Attorney.

While the IIDs potentially stop intoxicated individuals from starting and driving their vehicle with a BAC higher than 0.025 percent,<sup>14</sup> courts rely on county monitoring to ensure an individual is following sentencing conditions and to protect the public. A failure to adequately monitor the IID program and report violations could prevent a court from knowing about noncompliance and from deciding whether an individual's sentence needs to be modified or revoked to keep the county roadways safe.

## **Recommendation**

1. Department officials should address the causes of monitors' late or missed reporting of IID Program violations to the court and district attorney, and institute procedures, as necessary, to help ensure that all violations are reported in a timely manner.

The County Board has the responsibility to initiate corrective action. A written corrective action plan (CAP) that addresses the findings and recommendations in this report should be prepared and forwarded to our office within 90 days, pursuant to Section 35 of the General Municipal Law. For more information on preparing and filing your CAP, please refer to our brochure, *Responding to an OSC Audit Report*, which you received with the draft audit report. We encourage the Board to make this plan available for public review in the Clerk of the Board's office.

We thank the officials and staff of the Wayne County Probation Department for the courtesies and cooperation extended to our auditors during this audit.

Our office is available to assist you upon request. If you have any further questions, please contact Ann Singer, Chief Examiner of the Statewide and Regional Projects Unit, at (607) 721-8306.

Sincerely,

Gabriel F. Deyo  
Deputy Comptroller

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<sup>14</sup> See 9 NYCRR Section 358.5 (c) (2).

## **APPENDIX A**

### **RESPONSE FROM COUNTY OFFICIALS**

The County officials' response to this audit can be found on the following pages.

**Wayne County**  
**Department of Probation**  
**and Correctional Alternatives**

Public Safety Bldg • 7376 Route 31-Suite 1100 • Lyons, New York 14489  
Phone 315-946-7448 Fax 315-946-7427

**Richard O. Stevens**  
DIRECTOR OF PROBATION  
**Dale E. Mead**  
DEPUTY DIRECTOR



**Mark D. Ameele**  
**Pamela J. Phillips**  
PROBATION SUPERVISORS

October 8, 2015

Ann C. Singer, Chief Examiner  
State Office Building, Suite 1702  
44 Hawley Street  
Binghamton, New York 13901-4417

Re: Ignition Interlock Program Examination Response

Ms. Singer:

First, we would like to extend our appreciation to the Comptroller's Office for conducting the Audit of our Ignition Interlock Program; and the professional effort made by the on-site auditors to minimize the interruption of our regular business. Additionally, please note that this letter is our "Response to the Draft Audit Report" and our "Corrective Action Plan."

Response to Audit

We have reviewed the Draft Report and concur with your office's findings.

Corrective Action Plan

Wayne County, prior to the Draft Report, has implemented protocols to address program deficiencies found in the report; as follows:

- The Department of Probation and Correctional Alternatives has moved a senior clerical staff member into the Conditional Discharge monitoring office to assist the Probation Assistant with the duties of monitoring the Conditional Discharges with Ignition Interlock.
- It is anticipated, and tentatively budgeted, to amend the senior clerical position to an additional Probation Assistant position. This would expand our capacity to adequately monitor all Conditional Discharges with Ignition Interlock requirements and to provide coverage for each working day despite vacations and periods of sick leave.
- Protocols have been established with adjacent County Monitors to minimize delay in enrollment of transfer cases.
- Many Local Magistrates have very little understanding of Ignition Interlock requirements/statutes and the Probation Department has undertaken the task of meeting with those Magistrates to ensure compliance by the judiciary.

Additional Comments

Wayne County is of the opinion, that though the Ignition Interlock Legislation was passed with good intentions, it was ill conceived and without much thought given to implementation. Instead, as with so many new legislative actions by New York State, the burden of design, implementation and operation is left to the local governmental entity. Additionally, New York State indicated that there would be no fiscal impact on localities with this legislation. Nothing could be further from the truth, and what we have here is just another example of an underfunded mandate.

Very truly yours,

Richard O. Stevens, Director  
Wayne County Department of Probation & Correctional Alternatives

ROS/rel

cc: James Hoffman, Chairman, Wayne County Board of Supervisors  
James Marquette, Wayne County Administrator  
Dale E. Mead, Wayne County Probation Deputy Director

## APPENDIX B

### CERTAIN DEFINITIONS AND MONITORING REQUIREMENTS<sup>15</sup>

#### Definitions

*“Ignition Interlock Device”* – Any blood alcohol concentration equivalence measuring device which connects to a motor vehicle ignition system and prevents a motor vehicle from being started without first determining through a deep lung breath sample that the operator’s equivalent blood alcohol level does not exceed the calibrated setting on the device as required by standards of the department of health.

*“Monitor”* – The local probation department where the operator is under the probation supervision or any person(s) or entity(ies) designated in the county’s ignition interlock program plan for any operator granted conditional discharge.

#### Monitoring Requirements

Minimum standards for the usage and monitoring of ignition interlock devices imposed by a criminal court for a felony or misdemeanor under the Vehicle and Traffic Law or Penal Law are provided, in part, as follows.

- Any monitor shall receive notification pursuant to its county plan of all operators which it has responsibility to monitor within five business days of the sentencing court’s order imposing the condition of an ignition interlock device and of an operator’s release from imprisonment. Such monitor shall obtain proof of installation by the operator and installation/service provider.
- Every operator shall have installed and maintain a functioning ignition interlock device in any vehicle(s) he or she owns or operates within 10 business days of the condition being imposed by the court or if sentenced to imprisonment upon release from imprisonment, whichever is applicable; within three business days of installation, submit proof of installation to the court, county probation department, and any other designated monitor.
- Qualified manufacturers notify the monitor and county probation department when an ignition interlock device has been installed on an operator’s vehicle(s) within three business days of installation. Where a monitor learns that the operator owns or operates a motor vehicle in which an IID has been installed, the monitor may issue letter of de-installation directly to the installation/service provider which

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<sup>15</sup> See Title 9 NYCRR Part 358, Handling of Ignition Interlock Cases Involving Certain Criminal Offenders, available on the DCJS website: <http://www.criminaljustice.ny.gov/opca/ignition.htm>.

authorizes removal of the device. The monitor selects the class of IID and features to be used in the county.

- Upon learning of the following events: (i) that the operator has failed to have installed the ignition interlock device on his/her own vehicle(s) or vehicle(s) which he/she operates; (ii) that the operator has not complied with service visits requirements; (iii) a report of alleged tampering with or circumventing an ignition interlock device or an attempt thereof; (iv) a report of a failed start-up re-test; (v) a report of a missed start-up re-test; (vi) a report of a failed rolling re-test; (vii) a report of a missed rolling re-test; and/or (viii) a report of a lockout mode; the applicable monitor shall take appropriate action consistent with public safety. Where under probation supervision, the county probation department shall adhere to Part 352. With respect to any operator sentenced to conditional discharge, the monitor shall take action in accordance with the provisions of its county ignition interlock program plan. At a minimum, any monitor shall notify the appropriate court and district attorney, within three (3) business days, where an operator has failed to have installed the ignition interlock device on his/her own vehicle(s) or vehicle(s) which he/she operates, where the operator has not complied with a service visit requirement, any report of alleged tampering with or circumventing an ignition interlock device or an attempt thereof, any report of a lock-out mode, and/or any report of a failed test or re-test where the BAC is 0.05 percent or higher. The monitor may recommend a modification to the operator's condition of his or her sentence or release whichever is applicable as otherwise authorized by law, including an extension to the IID period, a requirement that the operator attend alcohol and substance abuse treatment and/or drinking and driving program, referral to the Department of Motor Vehicles to determine whether the department may suspend or/ revoke the operator's license, or recommend revocation of sentence or release. Where the operator is under supervision by the Division of Parole, the monitor shall coordinate monitoring with the Division and promptly provide the parole agency with reports of any failed tasks or failed tests.
- Any monitor may disseminate relevant case records, including failed tasks or failed reports not otherwise sealed or specifically restricted in terms of access by state or federal law to, among others, appropriate law enforcement authorities. In all such instances, those to whom access has been granted shall not secondarily disclose such information without the express written permission of the monitor that authorized access.
- Every operator shall submit to service visits within thirty (30) calendar days of prior installation or service visits for the collection of data from the ignition interlock device and/or for inspection, maintenance, and recalibration purposes where the device does not automatically transmit data directly to the monitor; and submit to

an initial service visit within thirty (30) calendar days of installation and service visits within sixty (60) calendar days of prior service visits where the device either automatically transmits data directly to the monitor for inspection, maintenance, or recalibration purposes or the device head is sent to the qualified manufacturer every thirty (30) calendar days for such purposes, including data download. However, an operator shall only remove the device head upon receipt of a new device head;

Chapter 169 of the Laws of 2013:

On July 26, 2013, Chapter 169 of the Laws of 2013 was signed into law to strengthen certain provisions of Leandra's Law and establish new safeguards to help keep impaired drivers off the streets. This Chapter law took effect November 1, 2013 and applies to those violations committed on and after such date. Among its provisions are as follows:<sup>16</sup>

- Extending the period of interlock restriction to a minimum of 12 months (from six months) for individuals convicted of DWI and/or other alcohol-related offenses.<sup>17</sup>
- Authorizes imposition of IIDs to be installed prior to sentencing as a preventive measure. The period of IID restriction will commence from the earlier of the sentencing date, or installation date in advance of sentencing.
- Establishing that a court can waive the installation of an IID only where the defendant asserts under oath that he/she is not the owner of any motor vehicle and that he/she will not operate any motor vehicle during the period of interlock restrictions, except as may be otherwise authorized pursuant to law.
- Ensuring that youth adjudicated as Youthful Offenders of DWI and/or other alcohol related offenses will be subject to Leandra's Law provisions, including the IID requirement.
- Expanding upon the Class E felony, Aggravated Unlicensed Operation 1st Degree to capture operators who were given the benefit of a conditional license after a DWI and/or alcohol-related offense and then drive impaired again.
- Clarifies that operators provide proof of installation compliance with the IID requirement to the court and the probation department or other monitor where such person is under probation or conditional discharge supervision.

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<sup>16</sup> See Leandra's Law – Reform and Ignition Interlock Program Plan Updates, State of New York Division of Criminal Justice Services, Office of Probation and Correctional Alternatives, dated April 14, 2014.

<sup>17</sup> VTL Section 1193(1) also provides that “such period of interlock restriction shall terminate upon submission of proof that such person installed and maintained an ignition interlock device for at least six months, unless the court ordered such person to install and maintain an ignition interlock device for a longer period as authorized...and specified in such order.”

## APPENDIX C

### AUDIT METHODOLOGY AND STANDARDS

We interviewed the County staff involved in the IID program for general background information and policies/procedures in place with respect to usage of ignition interlock devices and monitoring the compliance of an individual subject to installation of an ignition interlock device.

To determine if the Department is monitoring the IID program for both conditional discharge and probation cases, we obtained the list of individuals with a court-ordered sentence to install an IID. To verify reliability, we compared this list, which was pulled from the County Probation Department's computer system, to the New York State Office of Court Administration (Unified Court System) records showing required IIDs.

We first sampled 72 of 561 cases reported by the County from 2013 and 2014 for conditional discharge and probation cases to focus on current impact to the public. We sorted the list for the sample by separating conditional discharge from probation cases, selecting every tenth case for conditional discharge cases and every fifth case for probation. Nine of the court cases selected were closed at the time of our testing, which limited the County's ability to access the IID vendor records on those cases. Therefore, nine more cases were selected from 2014 for a total of 81 cases. We sampled cases based on dates in 2014, selecting one per month, beginning in April, in order to select current cases that have vendor history. We reviewed documentation in each individual file (hardcopy and electronic formats when available) to determine timing of installation of an IID and communications between the monitor and the courts/district attorneys. Further, we met with County staff to understand the actions taken for negative activity related to a case.

For the same cases sampled that were identified by court documentation as not having a vehicle and where no IID was installed, we used software tools to determine if the individual had any vehicle registered.<sup>18</sup>

We conducted this performance audit in accordance with GAGAS. Those standards require that we plan and perform the audit to obtain sufficient, appropriate evidence to provide a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives. We believe that the evidence obtained provides a reasonable basis for our findings and conclusions based on our audit objectives.

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<sup>18</sup> The software accesses only public records reported in electronic format.