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New Police Program for Testing Drunk Drivers

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A new program is being tested to determine the effectiveness of allowing officers to draw blood from drunken driving suspects.

Press Release Service – Wired PR News – Officers in Texas and Idaho are undergoing a training program for a new means of testing drunken or drugged driving suspects. As reported by the Associated Press (AP), the program seeks to determine whether such practices will be effective in prosecuting drunk drivers and decreasing such occurrences.

As noted in the report, the practice of blood being drawn by police officers was first implemented over a decade ago in Arizona, but has been a controversial issue. Steve Oberman, chair of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers' DUI Committee, is quoted by the AP as stating, "I would imagine that a lot of people would be wary of having their blood drawn by an officer on the hood of their police vehicle."

Alan Haywood, Arizona's law enforcement phlebotomy coordinator, and director of the current program is quoted by the AP as stating of Arizona's program, "What we found was that the refusal rates of chemical testing lowered significantly since this program began... Arizona we had about a 20 percent refusal rate in 1995, and today we see about an 8 to 9 percent refusal rate."

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