



Reducing the use of pretrial electronic monitoring

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Electronic monitoring, or what is commonly called “tether” in Wayne County, is widely used pretrial, but there is not compelling evidence that it increases public safety.¹ A large number of people spend several months on such monitoring. According to Vera’s analysis of Wayne County Jail data, the longer people spend under electronic monitoring, the more likely they are to violate its rules and return to jail. While the

electronic monitoring program in Wayne County has effectively reduced the jail population, it comes at a cost: people assigned to monitoring pretrial pay fees of \$100 for enrollment and \$100 per month, which can cause them to incur significant debt paying for the cost of monitoring regardless of whether any unpaid fees result in reincarceration.

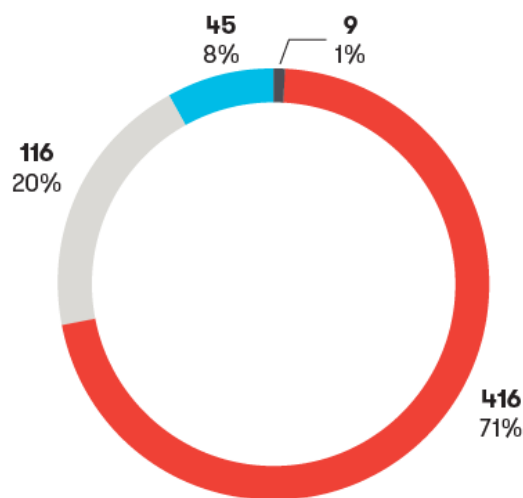
Key Findings

- Electronic monitoring is primarily used pretrial, with 71 percent of the average daily population under electronic supervision legally innocent.

Figure 8

Electronic monitoring ADP by legal status

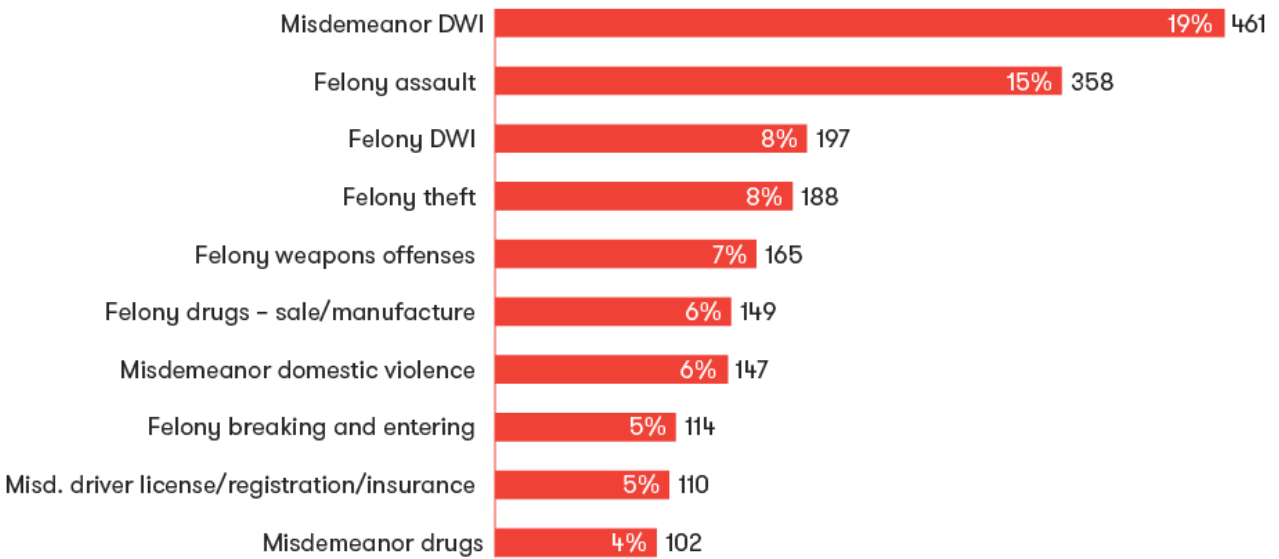
■ Hold ■ Pretrial ■ Sentenced ■ Parole or probation violation



- Many of those people under electronic supervision pretrial have been charged with misdemeanors or lower-level felonies.

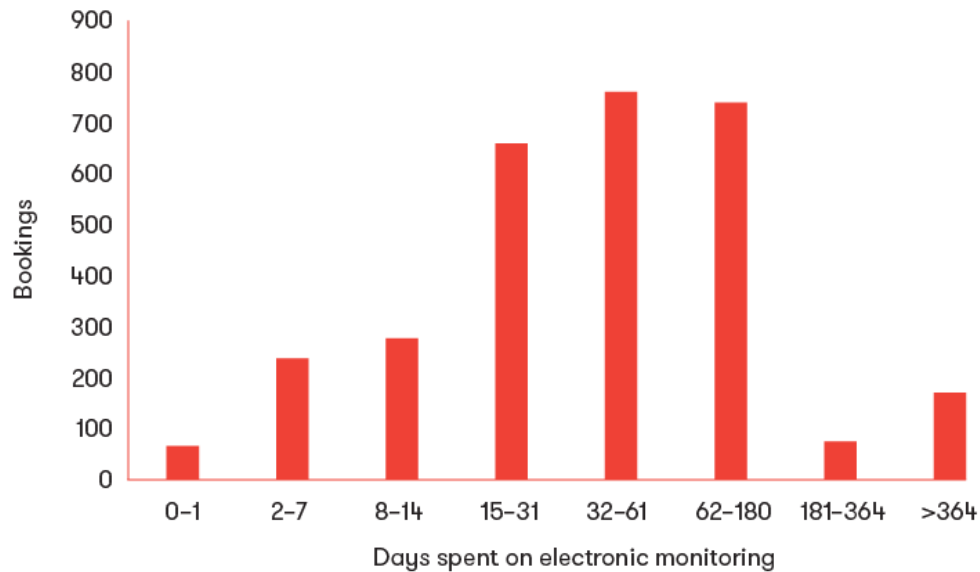
Figure 9

Pretrial electronic monitoring by top charge category



- Sixty-three percent of people released to electronic monitoring pretrial in Wayne County had a monetary bond set in addition to being assigned to monitoring.
- While the average amount of time spent under electronic monitoring was 58 days, a large number of people are monitored for between two and six months.

Figure 11
Length of time on electronic monitoring



Recommendation

Reduce the use of pretrial electronic monitoring and improve its administration in cases where it is used.

Wayne County should take steps to reduce the use of electronic monitoring pretrial, as many people can be safely managed in the community without such restrictions. If electronic monitoring is going to be used, Wayne County should limit its use to cases where there is a specific justification for monitoring that relates to an individualized assessment of a person's pretrial risk of reoffending. Even in cases where monitoring is considered necessary and a device is assigned, there are several ways Wayne County can improve its administration, such as by:

- assuring that conditions are the least restrictive possible to address the specific reason for ordering the monitoring;
- expediting a person's release from jail when electronic monitoring is assigned;
- limiting the amount of time people remain on electronic supervision;

- ordering release on personal recognizance, eliminating the practice of both assigning a monitor and setting a cash bond; and
 - reducing the financial burden of electronic monitoring by eliminating user fees.
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< Reducing incarceration of people presumed innocent

Reducing incarceration of people facing probation violations

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