



Impact of Soberlink in In-Home Substance Use Treatment

Outcomes Report

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Impact of Soberlink in In-Home Substance Use Treatment

Executive Summary

Background

Soberlink is a comprehensive alcohol monitoring system designed to remotely monitor a person's Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). The Soberlink device is a professional grade handheld breathalyzer with wireless connectivity, real-time facial recognition, robust tamper detection, and real-time alerting. Soberlink partnered with Aware Recovery Care, an organization that provides in-home substance use treatment, to conduct a longitudinal outcomes study to better understand the impact of the Soberlink device on participant outcomes.

"I love the Soberlink device because it's simple and easy to use. I feel safer using it. It gives me peace of mind knowing I can't fool the device's facial recognition technology. The reporting is instant, so everyone knows if I have a problem immediately. It provides me with accountability to my wife and daughter, knowing that I'm being tested three times a day. I highly recommend Soberlink for helping me to maintain my sobriety."

- Study Participant

Data Collected and Participants

The study collected data on patient demographics, substance use, medical outcomes, and satisfaction with the Soberlink device. Throughout the study period, participants used the Soberlink device to monitor their BAC at least twice per day. Forty-two patients from Aware Recovery Care participated in the study for the full six-month duration. Sixty-seven percent of participants identified as male and the average age was 45 years old.

Key Findings



Participants **drank alcohol on an average of 3 days** during the six-month study period. The majority of Soberlink tests were negative (85%), **1% of Soberlink tests were positive**.



100% of participants would **recommend Soberlink to others**



97% of participants felt that **the Soberlink device was easy to use**



95% of participants felt that **using the Soberlink device was a good decision**



93% of participants felt that **the Soberlink device kept them accountable**

"Soberlink has been an asset to my client during their time in Aware Recovery Care. When a client first starts with Aware, they may not be able to attain long periods of sobriety, and addiction can make people ashamed of recurrences. At times they are unable to be honest with us, and Soberlink helps to hold a person accountable not only to the program, but to themselves. It's a tool used to motivate, keep accountable, and show client's progress within our program. Clients need the accountability, and stability of this device, and Aware Recovery Care to help them lead fulfilling lives in recovery."

- Elle C, LMSW (Aware Coordinator)

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Study Overview

Soberlink is a comprehensive alcohol monitoring system designed to remotely monitor a person's Blood Alcohol Concentration (BAC). The Soberlink device is a professional grade handheld breathalyzer with wireless connectivity, real-time facial recognition, robust tamper detection, and real-time alerting. See Appendix A for more information about the Soberlink device. Soberlink partnered with Aware Recovery Care, an organization that provides in-home substance use disorder treatment, to conduct a longitudinal outcomes study to better understand the impact of the Soberlink device.

The OMNI Institute served as the research partner and provided support with data collection, analysis, and reporting. OMNI is a non-profit research and evaluation consultancy with the mission of accelerating positive social change by supporting the public, nonprofit, and philanthropic sectors around the country with integrated research and evaluation, capacity building, and data utilization solutions. OMNI has more than four decades of experience conducting research and implementing best practices as they relate to substance use disorder treatment.

Soberlink and Aware Recovery Care's study collected data related to patient demographics, substance use, medical outcomes, Soberlink testing data, and satisfaction with the Soberlink device. Patients (participants) were asked to complete a baseline survey and monthly follow-up surveys for six-months after enrollment. The study protocol and materials were reviewed and approved by an Institutional Review Board (IRB). Data collection began in April 2019 and was completed in June 2020. A total of 87 individuals participated in the study.

Methods

At the time of enrollment in the Aware Recovery Care program, patients were assessed to determine if they met the study criteria. There were twelve enrollment criteria:

- 1. Between 21-75 years old
- 2. Admitted to the program with an American Society of Addiction Medicine (ASAM) score of 1.5-2.5
- 3. Primary or secondary Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD) diagnosis
- 4. Willing to use the Soberlink device
- 5. Willing to discuss Soberlink test results with Aware Recovery Care Team
- 6. Willing to sign a Soberlink Client Agreement
- 7. English speaking and reading
- 8. Residing in the US for the duration of the study
- 9. Not using anti-alcohol/craving medications (e.g. Antabuse, Campral, Vivitrol)
- 10. Not cognitively impaired or diagnosed with a mental health disorder involving depersonalization or active psychotic symptoms
- 11. Not in active withdrawal or alcohol use within 72 hours
- 12. Not using Soberlink data for a child custody or legal consequence

After determining that they met the enrollment criteria participants received the Soberlink device. A member of the Aware Recovery Care Team provided an overview of how to use the device and assisted participants with performing their first BAC test.

There were three surveys administered by a member of the Aware Recovery Care Team during the study.

- 1. The Brief Addiction Monitor¹ (BAM) is a 17-item measure of substance use severity. It includes items that assess risk factors for substance use, protective factors that support sobriety, and self-reported substance use. This tool was originally developed by Veterans Affairs (VA) with items from valid and reliable measures. In this study, the BAM was administered at baseline and every month throughout the study for a total of seven timepoints.
- 2. The Soberlink Use survey² is an 11-item survey that is designed to assess satisfaction with the Soberlink device. This survey was administered to participants at the end of the study.
- 3. The Positive Outcome Measures survey³ is a 9-item measure of program engagement. This survey was administered twice, at baseline and at the end of the study.

In addition to the survey measures, research staff also compiled data from the Soberlink device. Participants were required to use the Soberlink device during pre-determined testing times at least twice per day. Participants were given a 2-hour test window and a 1-hour late grace period to submit the test. Finally, administrative medical outcomes data were also collected as part of the study including number of ER visits, hospitalizations, detox program admissions, and residential program admissions during the study period.

Study Participants

Of the 87 participants who enrolled in the study, 42 (48%) participated in the study for the full sixmonth duration of the study (178 - 205 days) and are included in the analysis of this report. Forty-five (52%) participants did not complete the study for the following reasons:

Reason for not completing the study	Number of participants
Voluntarily left the study	23
Failed to participate in the study	8
Left the Aware Recovery Care program	4
Lost medical coverage	4
Referred to a higher level of care	2
Discharged for administrative reasons/moved out of state	3
Referred to medication assisted treatment (MAT)	1

Of the 42 participants who completed the study, approximately two-thirds identified as male (67%) and one-third identified as female (33%). Participants' age ranged from 23 to 64 with an average age of 45 years old.

¹ Cacciola, J. S., Alterman, A. I., Dephilippis, D., Drapkin, M. L., Valadez, C., Jr, Fala, N. C., Oslin, D., & McKay, J. R. (2013). Development and initial evaluation of the Brief Addiction Monitor (BAM). *Journal of substance abuse treatment*, 44(3), 256–263. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jsat.2012.07.013

² This survey was developed by Soberlink

³ This survey was developed by Aware Recovery Care

Findings

Soberlink Testing Data

Throughout the study period, participants used the Soberlink device to monitor their BAC at least twice per day. The results of each test were categorized as negative if their BAC was zero, positive if their BAC was greater than zero or their identity was not confirmed via facial recognition, or missed if they did not complete the test during the specified time period.



Participants completed an **average of 485 tests** using the Soberlink device. The total number of tests completed by each client ranged from 284 to 736.



of Soberlink tests were negative⁴



of Soberlink tests were missed⁴



of Soberlink tests were positive⁴



Participants **drank alcohol on an average of 3 days** during the six-month study period.

Medical Outcomes

The Aware Recovery Care Team tracked participants' medical outcomes over the study period. Most participants did not need medical care during the study. During the six-month study period:



- Four (10%) of the 42 participants visited an emergency room one or two times
- Four (10%) of the participants were admitted into the hospital
- Two (5%) of the participants were admitted into a residential treatment program

⁴ The average number of negative tests was 409 (range from 165 to 712), missed tests was 71 (range from 0 to 381), and positive tests was 4 (range from 0 to 37).

Survey Outcomes

Brief Addiction Monitor (BAM) Survey

The Brief Addiction Monitor (BAM) is a 17-item measure of substance use severity. The BAM was administered at baseline and every month throughout the study for a total of seven timepoints. The items are divided into three sub-scales that assess substance use, risk factors for substance use, and protective factors that support sobriety. A copy of the BAM survey can be found in Appendix B.

Participants' substance use decreased between baseline and the 1-month follow-up and stayed low through all follow-up time points.

The substance use subscale scores range from 0 to 12 with higher scores indicating more substance use.

High Use



Participants' risk factors associated with substance use decreased between baseline and the 1-month follow-up and stayed low through all follow-up time points.

The risk factor subscale scores range from 0 to 24 with higher scores indicating greater risk.

More Risk Factors



Participants' protective factors associated with substance use were similar across all time points.

The protective factors subscale scores range from 0 to 24 with higher scores indicating greater protection.

More Protective Factors



Some Protective Factors

Less Protective Factors

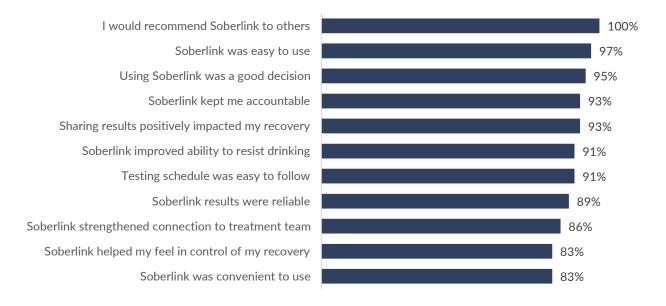
Baseline Month 1 Month 2 Month 3 Month 4 Month 5 Month 6

Soberlink Satisfaction Survey

Participants were asked to rate 11 statements about the Soberlink device on a five-point scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Somewhat disagree, 3 = Neither agree or disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree). The following figure displays the percentage of participants who selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement. A copy of the Soberlink satisfaction survey can be found in Appendix B.

Participants reported positive feelings about the Soberlink device across all 11 satisfaction survey items.

Each bar represents the percentage of participants who selected 'agree' or 'strongly agree' for each statement.



Positive Outcome Measure Survey

The Positive Outcome Measures survey is a 9-item measure of program engagement at Aware Recovery Care. Participants responded 'yes', 'no', or 'not applicable' for each item. This survey was administered twice, at baseline and at the end of the study. The number of 'yes' responses were averaged to create a composite measure of the survey. A copy of the POM survey can be found in Appendix B.

The average number of positive outcomes that participants reported increased between baseline and follow-up.

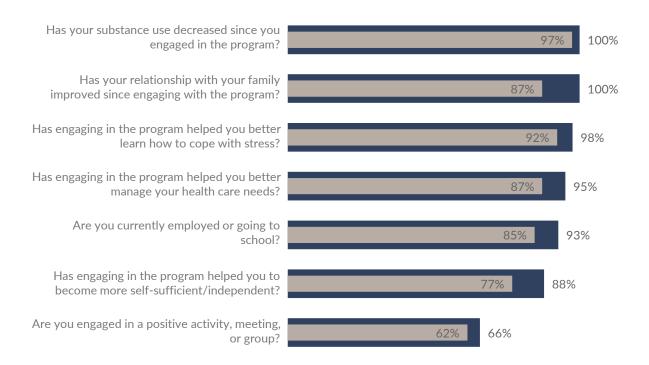
The number of possible positive outcomes ranged from 0 to 9.



The percentage of participants who responded 'yes' on each of the items on the Positive Outcome Measure Survey at baseline and follow-up are reflected below. Participants indicated positive change on all items from baseline to follow-up except on two items:

- 100% of participants indicated they felt supported by the Aware Recovery Care Team at both baseline and follow-up
- Two clients (5%) indicated they "obtained legal charges since starting the program" at follow-up

The percentage of participants who selected 'yes' for each of the following positive outcomes increased from baseline to follow-up.



Conclusion

"I love the Soberlink device because it's simple and easy to use. I feel safer using it. It gives me peace of mind knowing I can't fool the device's facial recognition technology. The reporting is instant, so everyone knows if I have a problem immediately. It provides me with accountability to my wife and daughter, knowing that I'm being tested three times a day. I highly recommend Soberlink for helping me to maintain my sobriety."

- Study Participant

Soberlink, in partnership with Aware Recovery Care, engaged in a longitudinal outcomes study to better understand the impact of the Soberlink device in an in-home treatment setting. Forty-two individuals participated in the study for the full six-month duration and provided Soberlink testing data, medical outcome data, and survey data.

Summary of Findings

The majority of study participants identified as male and the average participant age was 45 years old. On average, participants consumed alcohol three times during the study period. Only 1% of Soberlink test results were positive, 85% were negative, and 14% were missed. While the majority of participants did not need medical attention during the study period, 10% visited the emergency room, 10% were admitted to the hospital and 5% were admitted into a residential program. Substance use was also assessed via the BAM survey. Self-reported substance use decreased between baseline and the 1-month follow-up and stayed low through all follow-up time points. There was also a decrease in risk factors associated with substance use between baseline and the 1-month follow-up. These risk factors also stayed low throughout the follow-up time points. Participants reported a high level of satisfaction with the Soberlink device and reported more positive outcomes at the end of the study compared to the beginning of the study.

Limitations

While every effort was made to collect data from all participants, some participants did not complete all surveys. In addition, there were twelve criteria to participate in this study. The sample of participants recruited for this study is a convenience sample and may not be representative of all patients at Aware Recovery Care or generalizable to other populations. Finally, participants self-reported on their feelings and behaviors on the study surveys. Participants may not respond accurately or truthfully due to memory or social desirability biases.

Recommendations for Next Steps

Soberlink seeks to become an evidence-based tool supported through outcomes data that demonstrates benefits to individuals with an Alcohol Use Disorder (AUD). The current study provides initial evidence that Soberlink positively impacts individuals seeking treatment for alcohol use, including sustained reduced alcohol use and positive whole health outcomes such as improved relationships, employment/school engagement, and management of health and stress. In addition, the Soberlink satisfaction survey suggest that individuals view the device positively and would recommend it to others.

Future research efforts may explore Soberlink's impact in other clinical contexts (for example in other outpatient treatment models or after discharge from residential treatment), examine other patient populations, or attempt to evaluate the impact of using the Soberlink device for individuals who do not seek formal treatment. Furthermore, future research could pursue more robust study methodology such as a randomized controlled trial of the Soberlink device (randomly assigning individuals to use or not use the device) to continue to build a body of evidence regarding the efficacy of Soberlink.

"Soberlink has been an asset to my client during their time in Aware Recovery Care. When a client first starts with Aware, they may not be able to attain long periods of sobriety, and addiction can make people ashamed of recurrences. At times they are unable to be honest with us, and Soberlink helps to hold a person accountable not only to the program, but to themselves. It's a tool used to motivate, keep accountable, and show client's progress within our program. Clients need the accountability, and stability of this device, and Aware Recovery Care to help them lead fulfilling lives in recovery."

- Elle C, LMSW (Aware Coordinator)

Appendix A: Soberlink

Soberlink Features

- Handheld breathalyzer with embedded camera
- Real-time facial recognition that ensures all identities are approved or declined minutes after the test is submitted
- Tamper detection sensors that detect if a person is trying to beat the system with artificial air
- Balancing sensors to ensure that a photo is being taken at the proper angle.
- Two device options to ensure all types of clients are covered
- Device options should include a device with embedded cellular module and another using Bluetooth and the power of a smartphone
- Automated scheduled retesting upon a positive test being received
- Automated scheduled retesting if the identity cannot be determined
- Device locks out for 15 minutes if a positive test is received to ensure that any contamination can evaporate before the re-test.
- Ability to schedule tests at all times of the day
- Automated retesting up to 6 retests to determine if alcohol is consumed or if the sample is contaminated
- Reporting based on artificial intelligence that uses logic to report proper results
- Case load reporting to evaluate multiple clients on one page at a glance.
- Robust web portal that supports unlimited number of users to manage clients.

How Soberlink Works

The Soberlink system consists of a wireless breathalyzer that uses a professional grade fuel cell sensor to detect alcohol levels at an accuracy of +/-.005 BAC. The device also has an embedded camera and uses facial recognition software to automatically identify the client at the end of the test. The participant will have a set testing schedule that consists of a minimum of 2 tests per day. The participant will have a test window of 2 hours with a late window of 1 hour.

When the participant blows into the Soberlink device, it will capture the BAC level while the embedded camera takes a photo of the participant during the test. The data is sent to the Soberlink web portal and analyzed in real-time. If the BAC is positive or if the identity could not be confirmed a retest is automatically scheduled by the system. This retest is considered a confirmation test to verify the results.

The system analyzes the test data and sends it to providers/caretakers in real-time or if chosen, documented in an automated report they can receive daily, weekly, or monthly. Soberlink's advanced reporting summarizes events with three color codes for simplicity: Green is a compliant test where there is a BAC of .000, their identity is confirmed. A yellow icon in the report means that the participant missed their test window. A red icon means that the participant had a non-

compliant event, which means they had a confirmed positive test or their identity was confirmed as declined. If the participant has a confirmed positive test, the participant will be asked to retest until they are compliant or retest 6 times. This automated retest cycle helps evaluate a series of events into one non-compliant report.

Treatment providers who monitor multiple clients have the option to choose a caseload report that groups all participants into one report showing either daily, weekly, or monthly test results in an at-a-glance view. As with all tests, Soberlink has built in sensors to evaluate the breath sample to confirm it's human breath and not artificial air or another air source that is sometimes used to tamper or "game" the system.

Appendix B: Survey Measures

Brief Addiction Monitor

1.	In the past 30 days, woul	d you say your	physical health ha	as been?	
	Poor	Fair	Good	Very Good	Excellent
2.	In the past 30 days, how	many nights dic	l you have trouble	e falling asleep or s	staying asleep?
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
3.	In the past 30 days, how throughout most of the d		e you felt depress	ed, anxious, angry	or very upset
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
4.	In the past 30 days, how	many days did y	you drink ANY ald	cohol?	
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
5.	In the past 30 days, how least 4 drinks (if you are a oz.) or 12- ounce can/bot	woman)? [One	drink is consider	ed one shot of har	
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
,	<u> </u>				
5.	In the past 30 days, how prescription medications?		you use any illega	I/street drugs or a	buse any
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
7.	In the past 30 days, how a. Marijuana (cannal		you use any of th	e following drugs:	
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
	b. Sedatives/Tranqu Phenobarbital, do		zos", Valium, Xan	ax, Ativan, Ambier	ı, "barbs",
	0	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30
	c. Cocaine/Crack?				
	Ο	1-3	4-8	9-15	16-30

u.	Adderall, "speed"			amme, Dexeume,	Kilaiiii,
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
e.	Opiates (e.g., Her (Tylenol 2,3,4), Pe	•		l, Oxycontin, oxy, c	codeine
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
f.	Inhalants (glues/a	adhesives, nail p	oolish remover, pai	nt thinner, etc.)?	
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
g.	Other drugs ((ste over- the-counte	•		pills, Benadryl, Eph	edra, other
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
8. In the use dr	past 30 days, how rugs?	much were yo	u bothered by crav	vings or urges to di	rink alcohol or
	□ Not at all	□ Slightly	□ Moderately	☐ Considerably	□ Extremely
	confident are you in the next 30 days		be completely ab	stinent (clean) fron	n alcohol and
	□ Not at all	□ Slightly	□ Moderately	☐ Considerably	□ Extremely
	past 30 days, how ort your recovery?	many days did	you attend self-he	elp meetings like A	A or NA to
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
might	past 30 days, how put you at an incre or things")?				
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
12. Does	your religion or spi	rituality help su	pport your recove	ry?	
	□ Not at all	□ Slightly	□ Moderately	☐ Considerably	□ Extremely
	past 30 days, how volunteer work?	many days did	you spend much o	of the time at work	k, school, or
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30

	ou have enough incoortation, food and				as housing,
	□ No	□ Yes			
	past 30 days, how with any family me	•		y arguments or pro	oblems getting
	□ Not at all	□ Slightly	□ Moderately	☐ Considerably	□ Extremely
	past 30 days, how pers or friends who		•	•	any family
	0	□ 1-3	□ 4-8	□ 9-15	□ 16-30
17. How s	satisfied are you wi	th your progres	ss toward achievin	g your recovery go	pals?
	Not at all	Slightly	Moderately	Considerably	Extremely

Soberlink Satisfaction Survey

1.	The Soberlink Device w	as easy to use.				
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
2.	The Soberlink Device w	_	use.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	☐ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
3.	I found the Soberlink te	st results to be r	eliable.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
4.	I found the scheduled to	esting easy to fo	llow.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	☐ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
5.	The Soberlink Device ke	ept me accountal	ble to my recovery.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
6.	My recovery was positively influenced by Soberlink results being shared with my IHAT Care Team.					
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
7.	Soberlink improved my	ability to resist d	rinking.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	☐ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
8.	It was a good decision to	o use the Soberl	ink Device.			
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	
9.	I would recommend the disorder.	Soberlink Devic	e to others who are	struggling wi	th alcohol use	
	□ Strongly Disagree	□ Somewhat Disagree	□ Neither Agree or Disagree	□ Agree	□ Strongly Agree	

10. Use of	the Soberlink De	evice strengthene	ed my connection to	my treatmen	t team.
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
11. Use of	the Soberlink De	evice helped me t	feel in control of my	own recovery	y .
	Strongly Disagree	Somewhat Disagree	Neither Agree or Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree

Positive Outcome Measure Survey

1.	Are you currently employed or going to school?				
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
2.	Are you engaged in meet-ups)?	a positive activity, m	eeting, or group? (i.e. 12-step meeting, book club		
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
3.	Has your relationsh	ip with your family im	proved since engaging with the IHAT program?		
	□ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
4.	Do you feel supported by your Care Team?				
	□ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
5.	Has engaging in the program helped you to become more self-sufficient/independent?				
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
6.	Has engaging in the program helped you better learn how to cope with stress?				
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
7.	Have you obtained any legal charges since you started the program?				
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
8.	Has your substance use decreased since you engaged in the program?				
	□ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		
9.	Has engaging in the program helped you better manage your health care needs?				
	☐ Yes	□No	☐ Not Applicable		

Appendix C: Testimonials

"My SoberLink device has been a key factor in my recovery. The added sense of accomplishment and the accountability of staying sober throughout the day is very encouraging, and the weekly/monthly reports provide the documentation that reassures my family and clinicians."

- Study Participant

"Soberlink has been a true gift in my recovery process. I was ordered to use the device for legality sake a few years ago, and by choice now, I am still using Soberlink. My relapses occurred when I was not being monitored by Soberlink, and there were a few. Someday I will discontinue using the device, but for now, it has become my 'new best friend', replacing my 'old best friend' which was alcohol. So thank you Soberlink!"

- Study Participant

"Soberlink is a great aid in staying sober and keeping you accountable. I highly recommend Soberlink for anybody who has gone through treatment and is working their program. The device is easy to use and 100% accurate. It is one of the best ways to stay accountable in recovery."

- Study Participant

"As an employee of Aware for almost 4 years, I have seen the positive impact firsthand the Soberlink device has made on countless client's lives. Clients who choose to supplement their recovery journey with a Soberlink device have reported they feel an added level of accountability once they have it. Without the device, it is hard to accurately track a client's drinking patterns. However, once a client signs up and receives the device, our care teams are able to monitor a client's relationship with alcohol, and provide the client with a deterrent from drinking they otherwise wouldn't have. I am grateful to have Soberlink in my toolbox when it comes to helping clients succeed in recovery."

- Joe L (Certified Recovery Advisor)