

Technology

Denver tech company enters rehab market with wearable alcohol detection band

The company's new product is a fitness-style, waterproof wristband that reads blood-alcohol levels.



By Nikki Wentling – Reporter, Denver Business Journal

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Denver-based SOBRsafe (Nasdaq: SOBR) released Tuesday a wearable alcohol-detection sensor and announced a new partnership with a local rehabilitation center that purchased 1,150 of the wristbands.

SOBRsafe CEO David Gandini described the new sensor, called SOBRsure, as a fitness-style, waterproof wristband that reads blood-alcohol levels. If a patient drinks, the rehabilitation center, [North-Star Care](#), will be notified and can immediately intervene. If the band is removed, an alarm is triggered.

The technology is the same as SOBRsafe's flagship product, SOBRcheck, a device installed at workplaces, such as warehouses, manufacturing facilities and construction sites. Employees place two fingers on a sensor that reads their identity, checks their blood-alcohol levels and alerts their supervisors if there's any alcohol detected.

SOBRsafe's partnership with North-Star Care marks its entry into the rehabilitation industry, which Gandini views as having the potential to become a large market for the company.

"We developed this band and doors opened up, like the rehab market," Gandini said. "There's a significant opportunity in rehab where we can make a difference. Here's a place where we can really plant our flag."

North-Star Care, based in Seattle, relies on technology to treat alcohol-use disorder. It's operated through telehealth and a mobile application. Patients are issued a virtual reality headset, which they use to join VR peer support groups with an avatar that they create. According to its website, a main component of its system relies on using the "latest in at-home medical monitoring" to track blood-alcohol levels.

In its partnership agreement with SOBRsafe, North-Star Care committed to initially purchasing 1,150 wristbands that it will send to patients through the end of 2022. Those wearing the wristbands will pay a monthly subscription fee to SOBRsafe to use them.

"Our mission is to change the conversation about alcohol use disorder and guide our patients to wellness, where they are not held to unrealistic expectations, but rather, have control over their choices around alcohol consumption," Amanda Wilson, founder and CEO of North-Star Care, said in a statement. "SOBRsafe's alcohol-monitoring band is an innovative new technology... that increases insight into patients' progress and enables vastly more accurate and effective treatment."

In addition to rehabilitation centers, SOBRsafe is looking to apply its technology for use in other markets. Starting in January, it plans to launch a wearable wristband for the consumer market, with a specific focus on using them to monitor teen drivers, Gandini said.

SOBRsafe began trading as a public company on the Nasdaq in May. The company listed May 16 at \$4.25 per share for more than 2 million shares of common stock. On Tuesday, SOBRsafe's stock was trading for \$0.95 per share.

"Now, our work is cut out for us to make sure that everybody knows who we are and what we're doing, and we have a significant strategy around that," Gandini said. "We're just heads down, producing and signing customers."

SOBRsafe employs 10 people at its Denver headquarters at 6400 S. Fiddlers Green Circle. It plans to double its headcount this year by adding more staff for its sales and data teams. SOBRsafe outsources its manufacturing, engineering, testing and customer service, Gandini said.

The company crossed the line into revenue in the first quarter of 2022, and it raised \$17.5 million in investments as of May.