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Company says it has next weapon in fight against meth

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By Melissa Swan

A Louisville company says it has the next, best weapon in the fight against meth labs.

This company is very familiar to Louisville for another law enforcement mission. This newest meth lab weapon comes from Appriss, the same people who brought you the VINE system that notifies victims when criminals get out of jail. Now Appriss is taking on meth and they have a Kentucky pilot program they say proves meth labs and the meth cookers can be stopped.

Welcome to a high-tech weapon against meth labs.

Computers help law enforcement zero in on meth makers.

Right now, Kentucky pharmacists and cops are buried under the logs kept to track those who buy pseudo-ephedrine, a main ingredient in meth.

"This is one month's worth of transactions from one store, a Wal-Mart, and so for them to go back through this and identify who's been buying it's nearly impossible," says Mike Davis of Appriss..

Enter MethCheck. With the swipe of the customer's ID the pharmacist types in two pieces of information -- the type of pill and the amount.

"So, if someone goes to Wal-Mart, to CVS, to Rite Aid and buys too much of the product, goes over the legal limit, they're name starts to appear on the list," says Davis.

The makers of MethCheck say this meth lab bust in London, Kentucky last year is their proof the system works.

"In the first six weeks we busted the first meth lab that's ever been busted in the state as a result of the log data," Davis says.

Since the London, Kentucky pilot program began a year ago, there have been 15 meth lab busts credited to MethCheck program.

I talked to Van Ingram, Kentucky's drug control policy chief by phone. He says he wants MethCheck, or something like it, statewide.

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“This is the next step to putting the last nail in the coffin to meth labs in Kentucky,” he says.

And death to meth labs will mean a better life for many.

“Every lab you have the potential of the community being a victim, neighbors being victims, children are victims,” Ingram says. “Property that has to be remediated there’s a lot of issues that go with each and every lab.”

How do you keep innocent people -- someone with just a bad cold -- from being identified by Meth Check? It only spotlights those who buy above the legal limit -- about 300 pills.

But Kentucky may not be launching an electronic system any time soon. It takes money at least \$500,000 a year and state officials are still looking for the funds.

Web story produced by Jay Ditzer.