

2009 Innovations Awards Program APPLICATION

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ID # (assigned by CSG): 09-S-07KY

Please provide the following information, adding space as necessary:

State: Kentucky

Assign Program Category (applicant): Public Safety/ Corrections (Use list at end of application)

- Program Name: Kentucky MethCheck
- Administering Agency: Kentucky Justice and Public Safety Cabinet
- Contact Person (Name and Title): J. Michael Brown, Cabinet Secretary
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- Web site Address: www.justice.ky.gov

Please provide a two-sentence description of the program.

- MethCheck allows all pharmacies in Kentucky to capture PSE transaction data electronically, either through a secure Web portal or an interface with pharmacy point-of-sale systems, eliminating the need for paper logs. Law enforcement agencies can monitor suspicious buying patterns in real time and "watch" specific individuals who exceed the legal limits imposed by federal or state law.

How long has this program been operational (month and year)? Note: the program must be between 9 months and 5 years old on March 2, 2009 to be considered.

- In 2005, Kentucky became the first state in the nation to launch a pilot program designed to fight the rise in methamphetamine production. The success of the pilot was one of the reasons Kentucky launched the Statewide MethCheck Program in June 2008. In October 2008, Governor Steve Beshear launched Public Safety First, a statewide initiative to protect citizens and reduce crime. MethCheck became a major part of that initiative.

Why was the program created? What problem[s] or issue[s] was it designed to address?

- The growth of illegal methamphetamine labs is prompting law enforcement agencies and pharmacies to work together to end this increasing threat to our communities. MethCheck electronically connects law enforcement with pharmacies in an effort to cut off the main source of meth lab operations....the purchase or pseudoephedrine (PSE), a key ingredient in meth production.

Describe the specific activities and operations of the program in chronological order.

- In March 2005, then Governor Ernie Fletcher signed Senate Bill 63, which restricts the sale of PSE to pharmacies and requires identification and log book.
- In November 2005, the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy partnered with Operation UNITE (Unlawful Narcotics Investigations Treatment and Education) Drug Task Force in eastern Kentucky to launch a MethCheck pilot project in Laurel County. Within the first year, Operation UNITE charged 22 people who purchased more than the legal limit of pseudoephedrine; of these, 16 were charged with manufacturing methamphetamine. The program has also helped locate purchases made by 26 people involved in a methamphetamine manufacturing conspiracy case.
- In July 2007, Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy launched Statewide MethCheck Pilot.
- August 2007, the process of writing administrative regulations began.
- January 2008, KAR 1:160 are adopted by General Assembly. Pharmacies are required to begin electronic reporting by June 1, 2008
- January 2008: an introductory letter is sent to the pharmacist in charge at all retail independents explaining the program. All chain stores are contacted through their corporate offices.
- February 2008: conducted the first of 16 voluntary pharmacy training sessions.
- May 2008: began a series of training sessions for state police drug enforcement units.
- June 2008: Kentucky Statewide MethCheck fully launched

Why is the program a new and creative approach or method?

- The MethCheck solution replaces manual logbooks with a single nationwide electronic database. The solution provides real-time access to this database for law enforcement and solves the compliance challenges facing the pharmacies. MethCheck has been designed to meet the needs of both the pharmacies and the law enforcement agencies, and the public that need the product.

In this day and age, public protection requires sophisticated technology, which is the cutting edge for not only crime detection, but crime prevention. We believe Kentucky MethCheck is the country's most comprehensive program for using technology to help solve the illegal use of pseudoephedrine.

What were the program's start-up costs? (Provide details about specific purchases for this program, staffing needs and other financial expenditures, as well as existing materials, technology and staff already in place.)

- Start up costs totaled \$360,360.00; the program was implemented utilizing current staff of Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy.

What are the program's annual operational costs?

- \$504,000.00

How is the program funded?

- Currently funded through COPS Methamphetamine Technology Grant.

Did this program require the passage of legislation, executive order or regulations? If YES, please indicate the citation number.

- Yes. 906 KAR 1:160: Monitoring system for products containing ephedrine, pseudoephedrine, or phenylpropanolamine.

What equipment, technology and software are used to operate and administer this program?
MethCheck has three primary components:

- **MethCheck Transaction Application Program Interface (API)** – The MethCheck Transaction API allows pharmacy chains with an existing point of sale (POS) application to submit purchase transactions to the MethCheck environment and receive various responses based on the transaction. This API allows for real-time, or batch, submission of transactions to the national MethCheck database.
- **MethCheck POS Portal** - The MethCheck POS Portal is a fully functional web based point of sale portal for recording purchase transactions. The transaction portal is a thin-client application that requires only a current web browser to access. The portal has the capability of collecting purchaser information and recording the purchase transaction in real-time by interacting directly with the MethCheck database. The portal also allows each store to locally print a date range based transaction log, compliant for the State, which could be provided to a law enforcement agency. The MethCheck POS portal can also support the use of an optional 2D Bar Code reader for automatically reading a government issued photo ID to collect purchaser data. This reader requires an open USB port on each machine.
- **MethCheck LE Portal** – MethCheck LE is the law enforcement interface module of MethCheck. This web based application provides extensive reporting on purchase patterns. Law enforcement is able to run queries based on single person's purchases, a store's transactions, or roll up summary reports by store, county, or state. MethCheck LE also allows law enforcement agencies to subscribe watches on specific user transactions for immediate notification when a transaction appears in the MethCheck data environment.

To the best of your knowledge, did this program originate in your state? If YES, please indicate the innovator's name, present address, telephone number and e-mail address.

- Yes. The program originated with the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy. Van Ingram, Acting Executive Director

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Are you aware of similar programs in other states? If YES, which ones and how does this program differ?

- While other states (Arkansas and Oklahoma) now have similar programs, Kentucky was the first state to launch a pilot MethCheck program, and, because of the critical feedback received through that pilot from pharmacies and law enforcement, was able to tailor its program specific for Kentucky use.

Has the program been fully implemented? If NO, what actions remain to be taken?

- Yes, the program has been fully implemented.

Briefly evaluate (pro and con) the program's effectiveness in addressing the defined problem[s] or issue[s]. Provide tangible examples.

- In its first nine months of operation, MethCheck has recorded more than 850,000 sales of pseudoephedrine, and has successfully blocked more than 13,000 transactions that would have violated state and federal laws.

How has the program grown and/or changed since its inception?

- New features have been added to the MethCheck program since its inception at the request of law enforcement, such as the ability to highlight suspicious transactions. In addition, Kentucky has just embarked on a cross-state, pilot partnership with several border counties in Indiana to offer the MethCheck program to those municipalities. This is direct response to statistics indicating that individuals are crossing the Ohio River into Indiana to thwart are monitoring laws, and purchasing PSA to manufacture meth.

What limitations or obstacles might other states expect to encounter if they attempt to adopt this program?

- Cost would be the number one factor. Also, states would need to dedicate staff during the initial start up phase to field questions and provide support for pharmacists and law enforcement. Once the implementation is complete, the staffing requirement is minimal.

2009 Innovations Awards Program Program Categories and Subcategories

Use these as guidelines to determine the appropriate Program Category for your state's submission and list that program category on page one of this application. Choose only one.

Infrastructure and Economic Development

- Business/Commerce
- Economic Development
- Transportation

Government Operations

- Administration
- Elections
- Public Information
- Revenue

Health & Human Services

- Aging
- Children & Families
- Health Services
- Housing
- Human Services

Human Resources/Education

- Education
- Labor
- Management
- Personnel
- Training and Development
- Workforce Development

Natural Resources

- Agriculture
- Energy
- Environment
- Environmental Protection
- Natural Resources
- Parks & Recreation
- Water Resources

Public Safety/Corrections

- Corrections
- Courts
- Criminal Justice
- Drugs
- Emergency Management
- Public Safety

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This application is also available at www.csg.org, in the Programs section.