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April 10 letters

Senate bill cracks down on meth dealers, addicts

Kentuckians know far too well the devastation methamphetamine use can have on families. We have all heard stories about lives ruined — or worse, lives lost — to this dangerous, illegal product. We are fortunate to already have a proven, practical solution.

In 2008, Kentucky became the national leader in tracking meth production when it began using a real-time electronic tracking system called MethCheck.

Administered by the Kentucky Office of Drug Control Policy, MethCheck tracks retail sales of medicine containing pseudoephedrine and ephedrine, or precursors, which are the primary ingredients in methamphetamine. Because MethCheck is real-time, it can block any sale of cold medicines that exceed legal limits. Since its implementation, the system has blocked the sale of 10,000 grams of precursors per month.

When products containing precursors were first placed behind pharmacy counters, law enforcement saw a significant drop in the number of meth labs discovered. That number has recently begun to rise due in part to MethCheck's help in identifying the criminal element.

Senate Bill 211, which I sponsored, prohibits convicted meth offenders from purchasing cold medicine containing precursors. This bill, which passed the Senate, is aimed at recidivists and "one-pot" cooks, and will be a serious deterrent.

This will not cost the taxpayer. The manufacturers of these cold medicines pay for MethCheck through a multi-state program administered by the National Association of Drug Diversion Investigators. We must use proven technology to target meth abusers and protect legitimate access to commonly used medications. This is the right, common sense solution.

Sen. Robert Stivers
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