



## Wellness predictor Allostatix hopes to be military's PTSD detector

July 20, 2009 by [Chris Seper](#)

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CINCINNATI, Ohio — The wellness company [Allostatix](#) has struggled to find a foothold selling Corporate America on the idea that its blood test can act as an early warning system for employee health problems.

Now, it's hoping to make a deal with the military to show that the same test can predict which soldiers will struggle most with [post-traumatic stress disorder](#) (PTSD).

Allostatix has been working with the [Department of Defense](#) to get the go-ahead to try to predict PTSD, which would begin with a study of active-duty soldiers and units of the [Kentucky Army National Guard](#). The company recently raised \$200,000, in part to be ready if the military approves the project, according to company executives and filings with the Securities and Exchange Commission. It's also in the midst of a second round of financing.

"That's the challenge with PTSD: it doesn't immediately manifest itself in physical symptoms," Allostatix President Gordon Horwitz said.

The 4-year-old company, located just off the Xavier University campus in Cincinnati, is built around a blood test that measures allostatic load: the concept that the body's stress response can accelerate disease and affect organs, including the heart. Allostatix's test measures the damage and predicts (as far as five years out with 85 percent accuracy, according to the company) where a person's health is heading.

Individuals see their health status along a spectrum of green (good), yellow (warning) and red (danger).

Anyone nationwide can take Allostatix's test right now — for \$350. The company has an agreement with [LabCorp](#) to administer the test and e-mail results to Allostatix, which then sends you test results and recommendations. Horwitz said the test price often drops to \$90 after it's offset by preventive medicine benefits in insurance policies.

The test was launched late last year. Allostatix wanted to offer it to companies, which could use the collective test results of its workforce to customize fitness offerings, hopefully heading-off costly illnesses and insurance payments for medical treatments. But Horwitz said the economy

sunk just as his company was preparing for deals and has since been told by potential customers to “come back in 2010.”

That’s a little surprising, considering wellness products continue to have quite a following. About four months ago, for example, insurance company Red Brick Health [landed \\$15 million](#) to expand its wellness services. Plus, health-care systems continue to build their wellness programs for patients and employees alike.

But Horwitz points out his company’s look at “future health” instead of present health breaks from the traditional model of health-risk assessments, which measure the risk of certain behaviors like smoking. “Many large providers have invested heavily in the health risk assessment model, and (that) will not be easy to change, even though our test is the ultimate ‘health risk assessment,’ ” he said.

Horwitz said the military study is one of a couple opportunities for his company this year. Allostatix hopes to test 10,000 members of the military and about 5,000 spouses, and follow them for about two years, said [Dr. Robert Ludke](#), a partner in Allostatix and a senior researcher at the [Center for the Study of Health at the University of Cincinnati](#). Participants would be tested before and after deployment.

Horwitz said if there is a connection between PTSD and allostatic load, the tests could help contribute to battle-readiness reports and provide help earlier to soldiers more likely to have problems. Ludke said the test eventually could expand to help predict other mental health problems.

Allostatix also hopes to build interest in its individual testing through LabCorp. The company is negotiating for a presence on a new health care talk show that sounded a lot like what is planned for Oprah-friendly [Dr. Mehmet Oz](#). But Horwitz would not say with whom he was negotiating.