Payers Use Healthtech to Improve PATIENT OUTCOMES, LOWER COSTS

▶ *Trend Watch: Healthtech Mobile App Market Continues To Grow*

Payers Offer Free Wearables

UnitedHealthcare, Aetna, and John Hancock have all implemented programs that offer free Apple Watches to customers, if they exercise daily.

The latest organization to announce its plan, UnitedHealthcare, is offering the option to acquire an Apple Watch Series 3 to its customers as part of its Motion program, with the Apple wearable device potentially free if daily fitness goals are met for a six-month period.

This Motion program is also available to employers covered by UnitedHealthcare who want to offer employees the Apple Watch, but their employees will have to pay taxes and shipping for the device.

For every day of a six-month period, users must complete three components of a "FIT" program, representing three different targets. For F, frequency, the participant needs to complete 500 steps in seven minutes an hour apart at least six times a day, while the I — intensity — target requires 3,000 steps in 30 minutes once per day, and the T, or tenacity, target asks for at least 10,000 steps per day.

For completing their goals, the Apple Watch-receiving participants get up to $4 for each day toward the cost of the device, with the remaining balance required to be paid to the insurer. Those who earn more than the value of the Apple Watch can earn extra rewards on top via their health savings account, with the maximum amount available per person being $540.

Aetna launched a similar program back in 2017, first for its 50,000 employees and then to 500,000 (a fraction of its 23 million) members in 2018, before the talks of the company being acquired by CVS had started.

John Hancock has expanded its three-year-old Vitality initiative, a behavior change platform, to include all of its life insurance policyholders; all current John Hancock policies will convert to Vitality policies in 2019. John Hancock started this model of "interactive life insurance" in 2015. Policyholders can reduce their premiums and also earn gift cards and other product rewards, if they exercise regularly, as shown by their wearable device.

"The remarkable results of our Vitality offering convinced us this is the only path forward for the industry," says Brooks Tingle, president and CEO of John Hancock Insurance, in a statement. "We believe this is the future of our industry, and I encourage other insurance companies to follow suit."

Jim Cavan

Backpack Health and Partners Donate RARE DISEASE HEALTH MANAGEMENT APP

Backpack Health and Care Beyond Diagnosis (CBD), in conjunction with Professor Chris Hendriksz, M.D., CEO of FYMCA Medical, have partnered to offer Backpack Health's health management application to members of rare disease patient organizations in low-income countries.

"CBD is an important initiative for supporting those diagnosed with a rare disease, especially in developing countries, and we are honored to serve CBD's community of rare disease patients to expand patient access to digital tools that will help them manage and control their own health journeys," says Jim Cavan, CEO and founder of Backpack Health. "Together, our efforts to support both patients and medical research will have an even greater impact on the rare disease community."

In addition to Backpack Health's health data management app, CBD, with medical oversight from Professor Hendriksz and his team at FYMCA Medical, will develop tools and assessments to further measure rare disease symptoms. This critical health data can assist with drug development and disease management.

CBD was in the early stages of developing its own health database initiative when it discovered Backpack Health's interface. Instead of building from scratch, it decided to join forces to offer rare disease patients a disease-specific platform.

Backpack Health, CBD, and FYMCA Medical were all developed after founders experienced a rare disease diagnosis on a personal level. By supporting patients with resources to manage their health data, connecting patients to disease-specific registries, and providing an easy means to contribute to medical research, Backpack Health and CBD's partnership will further improve the lives of those suffering from rare diseases.

Quest and LabCorp add Apple's Health Record App TO HEALTH DATA MANAGEMENT PLATFORMS

Quest Diagnostics, a provider of diagnostic information services, has updated its MyQuest app to support Health Records on iPhone, as has LabCorp, a global life-sciences company integrated in guiding patient care, for its LabCorp Patient accounts. In both cases, the updates make it easier for patients to access laboratory test results from an iPhone. Health Records on iPhone brings together hospitals, clinics, and the existing Apple Health app, making it easier for patients to see their medical data from multiple providers.

More than 6 million patients track and access their lab results and health data through Quest Diagnostics' MyQuest Website and mobile app. Additionally, the company provides genotyping test services on behalf of Ancestry's AncestryDNA and Blueprint Fit, the first athlete-specific direct-to-consumer service from Quest Diagnostics. In addition, Quest updated MyQuest with new features such as direct access testing, the ability to add dependents or other approved users, real-time scheduling and more.

Virta Health Embarks on a PAY-FOR-PERFORMANCE MODEL

Virta Health, a start up that uses digital coaching and monitoring to help patients reverse type 2 diabetes, has implemented a pay for performance business model: a health plan (or employer) will pay Virta only if its program works for the patient. Payment guidelines require that the patient be sufficiently engaged with its program after one month to earn the initial fee. The second payment comes after a year, only if patients have lowered their A1C to a certain level, determined on a case-by-case basis. This means that if patients don't substantially improve, then employer and health plan partners don't pay.

Virta does not view this as much of a risk as results from patients who have participated in the Virta Health Registry shows:

- 61% of patients achieved diabetes reversal
- 77% of diabetes-specific medication prescriptions were eliminated amongst patients
- a 90% patient retention rate at one year.

Virta estimates cost savings of $9,600 on average per patient in pharma and medical costs in the first 24 months of the program alone.

"Now that we have both clinical trial and commercial results showing that we can reverse type 2 diabetes and reduce costs on a population level, we are ready to fully align our economic incentives with those of our patients and payer partners," says Sami Inkinen, Virta co-founder and CEO.

Abbott Nabs Approvals for DRG Invisible TRIAL SYSTEM

Users can get a trial run of the neuromodulation therapy before having the Proclaim DRG system implanted.

Abbott Laboratories has nabbed approvals for a chronic pain treatment device that patients can try before getting an implanted version of the technology. The Dorsal Root Ganglion (DRG) Invisible Trial System now has a CE mark and a nod from FDA. Abbott company officials said patients who find adequate pain relief with DRG therapy can then have the Proclaim DRG System implanted.

The Proclaim DRG includes an implantable neuromodulator that stimulates the dorsal root ganglion, an Apple iPad for programming the device, and an iPod touch for patient control.

"Abbott's DRG Invisible Trial System is very much focused on the person who is seeking pain relief," says Allen Burton, M.D., medical director of neuromodulation, at Abbott. "This evaluation period can give insight into whether the technology will provide meaningful relief to people who have oftentimes tried many failed therapies previously. This unique ability to test drive the procedure before committing to fully implanted therapy is an important part of our patient-centric DRG therapy."

Here's how the technology works. During a minimally invasive outpatient procedure, thin wires are placed in the spinal column near the DRG and a small, external battery is hidden discreetly under clothes. It provides the ability for the patient to go along with their daily activities without bulky medical cables. For about a week, patients use an iPod touch to manage their pain relief — changing the stimulation settings within prescribed limits to evaluate how DRG therapy targets their body's chronic pain symptoms.

FDA Launches Digital Tool to Help Capture Real-World Data from Patients to HELP INFORM REGULATORY DECISION-MAKING

The FDA unveiled the MyStudies app, a new mobile technology to foster the collection of real-world evidence via patients' mobile devices. As part of the agency's work to foster greater opportunities around real-world evidence, the FDA partnered with Kaiser Permanente on a pilot study to measure the functionality and engagement of the MyStudies app.

The FDA is now releasing the open source code and technical documents that will allow researchers and developers to customize and use the FDA's newly created MyStudies app to expand the diversity of health information available for clinical trials. By providing the open source code, the agency is providing a tool that sponsors and developers can adapt to advance their specific clinical trial and real-world evidence needs, while also remaining compliant with the FDA's regulations and guidance for data authenticity, integrity and confidentiality.

For example, patients may be able to securely enroll in and contribute data to traditional clinical trials, pragmatic trials, observational studies and registries. Sponsors may be able to customize their apps to administer questionnaires assessing patient-reported outcomes, symptom scales or patient reports of prescription and over-the-counter medication use.

The overall effort was led by David Martin, M.D., associate director for real world evidence in the Office of Medical Policy in the FDA's Center for Drug Evaluation and Research, with a grant from the Department of Health and Human Services' Patient Centered Outcomes Research Trust Fund. The open source code, as well as specifications for a secure patient data storage environment, were developed through a collaboration with Harvard Pilgrim Health Care Institute, LabKey, and Boston Technology Corp.