

## Headspace and Ginger Merged INTO HEADSPACE HEALTH

► *Trend Watch: Advancing Digital Health and Therapeutics Support Mental Health Crisis*



CeCe Morken, CEO, Headspace

Headspace, a global leader in mindfulness and meditation, and Ginger, a leader in on demand mental healthcare, have merged into Headspace Health, which aims to be the world's most accessible and comprehensive digital mental health and wellbeing platform.

"We are witnessing a mental health crisis unlike anything we've experienced in our lifetimes, yet the majority of mental healthcare today is neither broadly accessible nor affordable," says CeCe Morken, CEO of Headspace. "Together, as Headspace Health, we will address the systemic challenges of access and affordability in a fundamentally different way by creating the world's most holistic, scalable, and effective mental health and wellbeing company."

Since their beginnings, Headspace and Ginger have relied on research and evidence to drive the development of their products and services to deliver tools and interventions rooted in behavioral science.

A published study conducted at Google and Roche showed that eight weeks of Headspace re-

sulted in a 31% decrease in anxiety symptoms and a 46% decrease in depressive symptoms among healthy adults.

Ginger's on-demand, team-based care model, which includes behavioral health coaching, therapy, and psychiatry, has been shown to produce an average of 59% improvement in anxiety and 70% improvement in depression.

Ginger has built one of the world's largest mental health data sets through its Mood Matters study, having conducted research with eight of the top 10 academic medical centers in the U.S. and over 40 medical institutions nationwide. This data, combined with Ginger's internal studies and data-driven quality assurance program, help Ginger to continually improve the high standard of care they deliver, at scale.

Using technology, Ginger provides people with the fastest access to care right from a smartphone. Ginger members can chat via text with a coach live, 24/7, 365 days a year. If needed, members can secure a video session with a therapist or psychiatrist more quickly than most in-person appointments.

Powered by AI and data science, Ginger's care team utilizes a system that analyzes chat transcripts, clinical assessments, member satisfaction, engagement data, and more to help them provide personalized and effective care for each member - and ensure that no one falls through the cracks.

Ginger is reimbursed as a virtual in-network benefit through fully-insured, self-insured, and government-funded programs, such as Cigna and AmeriHealth Caritas District of Columbia, a Medicaid program.

## Carbon Nanotube Thread Lets CLOTHES MONITOR HEALTH

Researchers at Rice University have created flexible carbon nanotube fibers that can be incorporated into clothing to function as wearable health monitors. The new thread is highly conductive, washable, and strong allowing it to function as an unobtrusive component of clothing. So far, the researchers have incorporated the fibers into a sports shirt that can monitor heart rate and obtain a continual electrocardiogram. The technology could act as a replacement for uncomfortable or impractical wearables, such as chest straps.

The technology is based on highly conductive carbon nanotubes that have been woven together to form a strong and flexible thread that can be machine sewn into fabrics, allowing the researchers to position it where they want, including where it makes maximal skin contact or in an area of interest, such as the chest for heart monitoring.



As well as functioning as sensors that obtain data from a wearer's skin, the fibers act as electrodes that can be attached to a device, such as a Bluetooth transmitter, allowing for wireless data transfer to a smartphone.

## Cancer Patients' Own Cells Used in 3D Printed Tumors TO TEST TREATMENTS

Researchers have used brain cancer patients' own cells in a form of 3D printing material to make a model of their tumor to test the efficacy of potential treatments before using them for real inside the body.

The scientists extract "a chunk" of the tumor from the brain of a patient with glioblastoma - an aggressive cancer with a very poor prognosis - and use it to print a model matching their MRI scans, says Professor Ronit Satchi-Fainaro, who led the research at Tel Aviv University.

The patient's blood is then pumped through the printed tumor, made with a compound that mimics the brain, followed by a drug or therapeutic treatment.

While previous research has used such "bio-printing" to simulate cancer environments, the Tel Aviv University researchers say they are the first to print a "viable" tumor.

A treatment is deemed promising if the printed tumor shrinks or if it lowers metabolic activity against control groups.

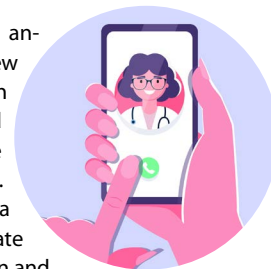
The research was published in the journal Science Advances.

## Government Funding for TELEHEALTH EXPANSION

The Biden Administration announced \$19 million in new funding to expand telehealth in rural and underserved areas. The money will be distributed to 36 recipients. Programs funded include a \$4.3 million effort to create mentorship programs to train and support primary care providers in the treatment of complex conditions like long COVID and substance use disorder.

The funding expands telehealth innovation, including funds for incubators to pilot new telehealth services, track outcomes and publish telehealth research that will establish an evidence base for future telehealth programs.

The funding will help build clinical networks, educational opportunities and trusted resources to further advance telehealth, said HRSA acting Administrator Diana Espinosa. Investments include Telehealth Technology-Enabled Learning Program, Telehealth Resource Centers, Evidence-Based Direct to Consumer Telehealth Network Program, and Telehealth Centers of Excellence Program.



## Verily's Acquisition of SignalPath Expands CLINICAL RESEARCH CAPABILITIES

Verily, an Alphabet company, has acquired SignalPath, a privately held company that makes clinical research software based in Raleigh, has successfully closed.

The acquisition will strengthen and expand Verily's existing clinical trial system and evidence generation platform, known as Baseline. The Baseline platform enables better and faster clinical trial execution, improved data aggregation and analysis, flexible study options designed for decentralized and hybrid trials, and the ability to capture real-world data, such as that generated by novel sensors and biomarkers. The SignalPath clinical trials management system (CTMS) brings state-of-the-art software to clinical research sites that improves the ease, quality and efficiency of conducting clinical research.

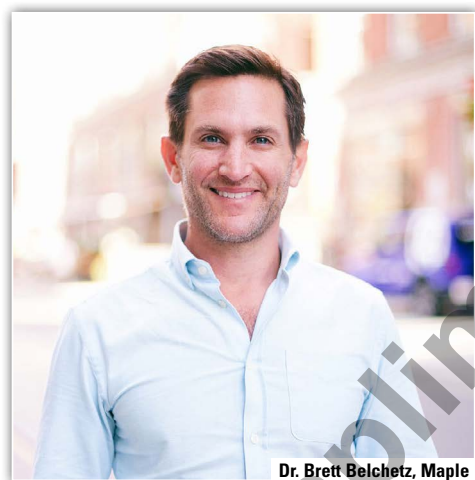
"Joining forces helps us to accelerate our shared ambition to make clinical research work better for everyone involved, and get medicines and devices to patients more quickly," says Amy Abernethy, MD, PhD, president of Clinical Studies Platforms at Verily. "Together, we'll bring more comprehensive and digital solutions to the clinical



Dr. Amy Abernethy, Verily

trial ecosystem and modernize the way clinical research is conducted."

SignalPath co-founder and CEO Brad Hirsch, MD, and his leadership team will remain with the company and continue their work. The company's approximately 100 employees will join Verily as part of Verily's clinical research business. SignalPath will remain in its current Raleigh location, drawing on the abundance of healthcare and technology talent in the Triangle, and increasing Verily's footprint with a new location in North Carolina.



Dr. Brett Belchetz, Maple

Maple, Canada's leading virtual care provider, has expanded its digital health services into the delivery of personalized, proactive virtual mental health support. Mind by Maple is a groundbreaking new solution that provides employees with holistic mental health care, including self-service and healthcare provider-guided solutions to improve their mental health and well-being. Mind by Maple brings together Canada's largest network of virtual health professionals, including physicians and mental health therapists, to support patients wherever they are on their journey of mental or physical well-being.

"Mind by Maple offers a full spectrum of men-

## Maple Launches New Mental Health Offering, MIND BY MAPLE

tal health support, from booking a visit with a mental health therapist to serving up engaging and relevant content to regular, clinically validated screenings to track patients' mental health progress over time," says Dr. Brett Belchetz, CEO and co-founder of Maple. "Our goal with Mind by Maple is to support Canadians with innovative and comprehensive health tools to improve mental healthcare for some of the most pressing types of concerns."

Additionally, Maple is in a partnership with Headspace which provides users with access to guided meditations, mindfulness practices, and evidence-based content to improve mental well-being, further supporting a holistic, whole-person approach to proactive and reactive mental healthcare.

The need for mental health support for employees has become a necessity, especially as a result of the ongoing global pandemic. A recent poll conducted on behalf of Maple showed that as many as 60 per cent of working Canadians feel that their employer could be doing more to support their mental health, and over half of working Canadians are looking for more mental health support from their employer as they return to the office.

## Payers, Including CMS, Respond to NEED TO PAY FOR TELEHEALTH



CMS is proposing to pay providers when they give certain mental or behavioral health services to patients via audio-only telehealth calls, but only when certain conditions are met. This would include counseling and therapy for opioid treatment. CMS is also proposing to allow certain services that have been added to the Medicare telehealth list to remain on that list through the end of Dec. 31, 2023. This will ensure there is a "glide path to evaluate whether the services should be permanently added to the telehealth list following the COVID-19 [public health emergency]," a fact sheet on the rule said. Currently, the public health emergency is expected to last through 2021, and CMS has asked Congress for more flexibility to make telehealth changes permanent.

In similar news, Cigna and Oscar Health, Inc are expanding their virtual primary care program to Tennessee and Georgia in order to increase access to care for small business owners and employees. Pending regulatory approval, Oscar Virtual Primary Care will be available to Cigna + Oscar health plan members starting in 2022. Oscar Health first launched the virtual primary care program in July 2020, aiming to provide members with access to quality, convenient, and affordable care. Members can attend unlimited virtual appointments with primary care physicians through the service, as well as receive support for chronic disease management, preventive care, and specialty care, the press release stated. The virtual primary care program offers a zero-dollar copay that accompanies many of the services, including unlimited primary care visits. Members can also access lab results and attend initial specialist visits for free as long as both are initiated by an Oscar Primary care provider.

The program provides members with access to monitoring kits that can help improve communication between patients and providers in virtual care. "We've seen a huge shift in how care is delivered over the past few years. Today, people are more likely to engage with a virtual provider than ever before," says Meghan Joyce, chief operating officer and executive VP of platform, Oscar Health.

Also, Oscar Health launched a new tool to improve the experience of transgender and non-binary members as they navigate the healthcare system. The updated interface allows members to input their name, pronouns, and gender identity, in a move to be more inclusive of members who identify as transgender or non-binary. <sup>PV</sup>