
Crain's Health Pulse

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Diabetes telehealth startup Fit4D inks deal with Humana

After gaining a foothold in New York City and Nebraska, Manhattan-based diabetes management firm Fit4D is expanding its reach through deals with two new partners this week: insurer Humana and digital diabetes startup Glooko, based in California.

The Humana deal will allow Fit4D to take its diabetes telehealth program to high-risk Medicare enrollees in Florida.

"We have the ability to virtually connect with them in between doctors' visits," said David Weingard, founder and chief executive of Fit4D.

Fit4D has sought to distinguish itself in the increasingly crowded digital diabetes market by adding a personal touch, Weingard said. In addition to digital content, the company offers online and phone-based coaching from a team of dietitians, exercise physiologists, nurses and social workers.

"The people we're dealing with are in denial," said Weingard. "They need an emotional connection with someone to help them control their diabetes. We've figured out how to make that scalable."

Weingard, who left Microsoft to start Fit4D in 2008, was inspired by his own experience after he was diagnosed with diabetes at age 36. He worked with a certified diabetes educator who "made all that information on the internet personal to me," he said.

Fit4D raised \$2.8 million in a series a round in 2015. Investors included Sovereign Health System, SJF Ventures and BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska.

At first Fit4D primarily contracted with pharmaceutical companies and medical device companies seeking to improve patient compliance with diabetes medication. The company signed a contract with Healthfirst, its first insurance client, after collaborating on a pilot funded by the New York City Economic Development Corp. in 2014. That led to collaborations with New York providers including Montefiore Health System, the Acacia Network and St. Barnabas Hospital. Fit4D also landed a contract with BlueCross BlueShield of Nebraska. Fit4D's coaching services will now also be available to clients of Glooko, a mobile app that helps patients manage their diabetes and compiles data for providers and payers.

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