

## GETTING PERSONAL: Tech Cos Develop 'Self-Care' Health Tools

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NEW YORK (Dow Jones)--Tajel Shah thought she'd never be able to have laser-vision surgery to correct her shortsightedness. The surgeon said she'd need to use eye-wetting drops every hour and take a medication for three weeks to ready her eyes for the procedure, a tough regimen to follow for Shah, as the mother of two young children who also works full-time.

"I thought there's no way I am going to be able to do this unless I have some sort of physical reminder," says the 38-year old from San Francisco.

Then a friend told her about the Zuri, an iPod-sized device that sends patients reminders to take their medications and records their compliance, which users and, if they choose, their doctors can track through a companion Web page. The Zuri's maker, ZumeLife, Inc., a San Jose start-up company, was looking for beta testers. Shah signed up.

Technicians inputted Shah's medication schedule into a Web page and downloaded the information into the device. When the device beeped, Shah could see which medication she needed to take on its screen, and by pressing a button confirm whether or not she'd taken it. Aided by the device, she was able to adhere to the surgeon's pre-operative care plan, enabling her to have had the surgery in January.

"I've got 20/20 vision now. It's made a huge improvement to my quality of life," Shah says.

ZumeLife's product is one a growing number of so-called "self-care" tools that companies, including Intel Corp. (INTC) and Microsoft Corp. (MSFT), are developing to help people monitor and manage their own health and receive timely feedback from caregivers. Possible applications include supporting pre-operative care, the promotion of health and wellness and the management of chronic conditions. More than 125 million Americans have at least one chronic disease, such as diabetes or high blood pressure, which cost upwards of \$500 billion a year to treat.

Health-care experts say these emerging technologies have the potential to lower health-care costs by making the delivery of services more efficient and by empowering consumers to take a more active role in their own care.

But technology companies need to make the tools easy to use, attractively priced, secure and private for them to take off. The monitoring devices can run up to several hundred dollars and users may need to pay monthly subscriptions for some services. Some products require a bit of tech savvy than some patients might have, or be clunkier than others would like.

#### Intel Inside The Home

Intel is hoping its in-home monitoring system for patients with chronic conditions will appeal to hospitals. Approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration in July, Intel's care-management tool, called Health Guide, combines an in-home patient device with an online interface that doctors can use to monitor and remotely manage care.

"With more people living with chronic diseases, we believe care can be increasingly moved outside of the hospital to the home," Louis Burns, vice president and general manager of Intel's Digital Health Group.

The in-home patient device collects readings from specific models of wired and wireless medical devices, such as blood pressure monitors and glucose meters, which it displays for the patient on a touch screen, and sends to a secure host server, where health care professionals can review the information and provide feedback via video conferencing and email. Patients can also monitor their health status, communicate with care teams and learn about their medical conditions, according to Intel.

Intel has tested Health Guide with patients and clinicians in the U.S. and the U.K., and expects to make the system commercially available through hospitals in both countries either in the fourth quarter of this year or the first quarter of 2009.

#### Adding Data To HealthVault

Meanwhile, Microsoft is working with home health and fitness device makers to integrate vital signs data into HealthVault, an online service the software giant recently launched that allows consumers to store, manage and selectively share medical data.

HealthVault account holders can presently add data from 50 devices, including heart-rate monitors and blood pressure machines from nine manufacturers, to their personal health records, where they can share it with several applications, such as the American Heart Association's blood pressure manager, which charts the results.

"We're looking to add more device categories, such as fitness equipment, and finding new applications to support the data from the devices," says Bert VanHoof, director of partner development at the Microsoft Health Solutions Group. The goal, he says, is provide more tools to help consumers stay healthy and manage any medical conditions they might have.

In order to set up the system, users install HealthVault Connection Center, a free software program, onto their computer which imports data from the devices (either through wireless or plug and play connections) and uploads it into HealthVault. Most of the devices cost between \$30 and \$150, some applications, such as the AHA's, are free, while others require a subscription, says VanHoof.

## Caring For Chronic Conditions

ZumeLife is also targeting consumers. Its main focus, however, is people with chronic conditions, such as diabetes, who need to adhere to complex treatment regimens while they're on the go. Unlike Intel's device, the Zuri doesn't need to be hooked up to specific medical devices to record biometric data, such as glucose levels. Instead, users take readings, hold down a button and speak the results into the device. Users plug the Zuri into a docking station which exchanges data with the web site via the phone line.

Rajiv Mehta, ZumeLife's chief executive, says the company is still testing the device and working out kinks based on users' feedback. He expects to launch a first version of the product next spring. The device will cost around \$200, and users will pay a \$40 or \$50 monthly subscription fee for the Web-based services.

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