




DIABETES AND METABOLISM

Posted on May 31, 2011

US car manufacturer developing services to manage chronic illnesses on the road

 Submit a Comment

 Print

 Email

 BOOKMARK   

Those with diabetes and other chronic illnesses may soon have a series of in-car connectivity solutions to help manage their health while driving.

Researchers at Ford Motor Co. are developing voice-controlled, in-car connections for a variety of health aids, from glucose monitoring devices to asthma management tools to Web-based allergen alerts. This is a first for the car industry, according to a statement by Ford.

The health and wellness services will utilize the Ford Sync system, which is able to connect devices via Bluetooth, access cloud-based Internet services and control smartphone apps via voice control. The ongoing projects at Ford encompassing these needs include:

- ♦ **Glucose monitoring:** Ford researchers, in collaboration with Medtronic, have developed a prototype system that allows Ford Sync to connect via Bluetooth to a Medtronic continuous glucose monitoring device and share glucose levels and trends through audio and a center-stack display, as well as provide secondary alerts if glucose levels are too low.
- ♦ **Allergy alerts:** Researchers at Ford, SDI Health and Pollen.com are working to Sync-enable the smartphone Allergy Alert app through AppLink, giving users voice-controlled access to the app that provides location-based, daily index levels for pollen, asthma, cold and cough, and UV sensitivity, as well as 4-day forecasts.
- ♦ **WellDoc:** Ford and WellDoc are integrating in-car accessibility to WellDoc's cloud-based personalized solutions for people with asthma and diabetes through Sync services. Using voice commands, Sync users could access and update their WellDoc profile to receive real-time patient coaching, behavioral education and medication adherence support based on their disease history and current disease information.

"Health and wellness provides a tremendous opportunity for Ford to provide peace of mind and a personal benefit to drivers and passengers while they are in our vehicles," Gary Strumolo, global manager, Interior, Infotainment, Health & Wellness Research, Ford Research and Innovation, said in a press release. "As more and more devices and technologies lend themselves to such connectivity in the car, it is our responsibility, our philosophy, to examine those possibilities and open our doors to industry relationships that can help us do it intelligently, efficiently and economically."

The services are still in the prototype and research phase, according to the press release. However, Strumolo said many of the health and wellness features and services being explored at Ford have fairly short-term implementation requirements, such as the Allergy Alert app.