

# HealthData Management

## Chronic Care: Your SUV Will See You Now

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By Gary Baldwin

One day your car may know as much about your health as your physician does. Well, not quite. But Ford Motor Co. is in the midst of a research and development effort to create "the car that cares," says Gary Strumolo, global manager, health and wellness research, at Ford Research and Innovation.

Ford's vehicles already have voice-activation technology available, which drivers can use to dial someone on their cell phone or access music off their iPhone in a hands-free manner. "You can keep your eyes on the road and hands on the wheel," says Strumolo. "You don't have to be fumbling with a device."

Ford has a project underway to adapt the same technology to consumer-oriented health care applications, such as allergy alerts and health maintenance alerts. It's working with three vendors, Medtronic, WellDoc and SDI, to explore different services. SDI runs pollen.com, a Web site with 200,000 registered users, says Jody Fisher, vice president of marketing. The site offers a consumer app that brings allergy alerts to a smartphone, he says. About 80,000 people have downloaded it. If the set-up proves successful, consumers could activate the app while driving, with the technology reading aloud the latest air quality report based on location of the car. "Allergy sufferers want to make sure they won't be debilitated if they are going to the ball game," Fisher says.

WellDoc provides remote diabetes monitoring, with patients sending in their blood sugar scores via smart phone. Before taking off on a trip, the driver could take a reading, send it to WellDoc, and get back a text response-which the car would convert to speech. "The car is not going to be a medical device," cautions Strumolo. "We don't want the car to get FDA approval. The car becomes the communications facilitator."

The Ford technology could be available within a couple of years, Strumolo says.