



Ford aims to bridge medical devices, services to its Sync system

By Larry Dignan | May 18, 2011, 9:49 AM PDT

Ford, Medtronic, WellDoc and SDI Health on Wednesday demonstrated how healthcare apps and devices could work with its Sync in-car technology system. The plan is to develop a mobile "wellness connectivity portfolio."

The demonstrations are notable since monitoring chronic illnesses like diabetes, asthma and allergies can be integrated into in-car systems and apps into mobile health management. Ford has been collaborating with multiple companies such as Google and mobile app makers such as Pandora.

Consumer health apps are increasingly popular on smartphones and Ford's plan is to take that popularity to its cars. The initial focus will be on allergies, asthma and diabetes.

Among the key items in Ford's health monitoring plan:

- Ford is working with SDI Health and its pollen.com site to meld Sync and SDI's Allergy Alert app. This combination would be enabled via Ford's AppLink, which allows apps to be voice controlled. The pollen alert would deliver location-based indexes for pollen levels and forecasts.



- WellDoc, which offers personal health services, will combine its cloud-based management tools for asthma and diabetes through Sync. Ford and WellDoc envision a scenario where patients would get real-time coaching in the car.
- Medtronic and Ford have developed prototypes that allow glucose monitoring devices to connect with Sync via Bluetooth connectivity.

Ford maintains that there are driving safety benefits to these health app plans. For instance, a driver with diabetes could become light headed and crash with low glucose. A monitoring system could warn that driver to head off an accident and boost his glucose levels.

Indeed, Ford and the Massachusetts of Technology have been studying the impact of stress—due to health—on driving safety.