

# Local Companies Are Offering a New Kind of Connectedness

## MEDTECH: Devices Aim to Provide Seniors With Low-Cost Care

By JOYCE THORNE

As aging baby boomers strain traditional health care resources, some local companies are taking the growing senior health technology space in a new direction: Treat at home, monitor at home, thrive at home.

Visionaries are offering products that transform senior health care from the traditional fee-for-service model into "value-based care" at home that offers comfort, convenience, lower costs and potentially lighter loads for doctors, clinics and hospitals.

Rory Moore, CEO of EvoNexus, the innovative local startup incubator, said the market for senior tech is growing and there's a tremendous need for health care alternatives for self-help and wearable devices.

"Thank God there's new tech coming... the health care system can't handle the boomers," he said.

Five local companies are among those tapping into the senior health technology trend by focusing on home-based solutions:

### INDEPENDA INC.

Independa Inc.'s software-embedded TV allows multiple caregivers to effectively coordinate and manage care for seniors from a distance through a web or phone app.

"A simple click on the remote control invokes a wide range of services," said Amy Johnson, senior director of operations. "And it is supported by a telephone-based secondary system that will phone the care recipient when a television-based message, reminder or check-in is missed."

Services include medicine reminders, health measures and reports, an emergency call feature and video chat.

The initial cost for the system includes the TV, HD camera and setup, plus an ongoing subscription fee. A set-top box is set for release later this month that can be used on any TV with an HDMI input.

Johnson said Independa is growing from subscription software sales and the company continues to seek venture funding for growth and expansion.

### REFLEXION HEALTH

Reflexion Health uses motion-tracking technology to reimagine rehabilitation for seniors, with physical therapy and fall prevention programs at home and in senior communities; therapists can remotely monitor multiple patients instead of only one patient.

"Through our 'Stand Tall' pilot, we're proving that Microsoft Kinect and the interactive avatar named Vera are highly usable and engaging with seniors," said Reflexion CEO Dr. Joseph Smith. "We know that certain exercises help prevent falls and we're demonstrating we can deliver those exercises in a way that translates to seniors actually engaging and consistently participating in their fall prevention exercises."

Stand Tall is in trials funded by the national Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, and is also getting revenue from a leasing model with its custom-



Photo courtesy of Independa Inc.

Independa's TV features include medicine reminders on the large screen

ers. Reflexion is working with Carlsbad-based WESTliving to implement Stand Tall in 3 of its California senior living facilities.

### TOSENSE

CoVa from toSense looks like a fashionable necklace, but it's actually a sensor worn at home only a few minutes a day that allows medical professionals to remotely monitor seniors with chronic illnesses, including congestive heart failure, chronic obstructive pulmonary disease, hypertension and kidney failure through simple wireless data transmission.

ToSense co-founder and Chief Technology Officer Matt Banet said he was motivated to develop CoVa because of

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his family's history of cardiac disease; his brother and sister also work at the company.

"Congestive heart failure is a really expensive disease and people keep getting readmitted to the hospital," Banet said. "It's a vicious cycle where weak hearts don't pump enough blood."

He said with one low-cost device (about \$400), CoVa takes the place of several other devices and reports results faster, possibly preventing more catastrophic outcomes for patients.

ToSense gets its funding from private equity.

### GREATCALL INC.

GreatCall Inc. was ahead of the senior tech trend when it started 10 years ago with a simple premise: get easy-to-use cellphones into the hands of older customers. Now, the Jitterbug Flip phone, Jitterbug Smart phone, Lively wearable and Splash emergency response devices are embedded with the latest technology – but still easy to use.

Seniors have many health-related services at their fingertips, depending on which device they select, including: access to emergency response, 24/7 access to registered nurses, medication management, fall detection, and an app to keep caregivers connected to customers.

"GreatCall is one of the only companies actually gaining traction in connected health solutions for seniors," said CEO David Inns. "Rather than focusing only on cool technology, we focus on helping older consumers actually adopt technology through exceptional cus-

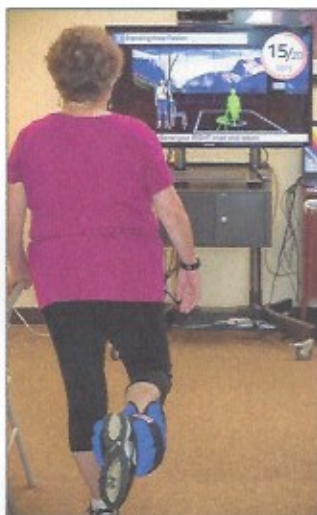


Photo courtesy of Reflexion Health  
Reflexion Health offers monitored physical therapy and fall prevention programs from the comfort of home

tomers service and customized solutions. Helping seniors stay independent in their homes longer is the key to the future of reduced costs of care."

Officials said GreatCall's revenue comes mainly from its menu of services. The company has not raised external capital since 2008 and is completely self-funded. Current revenue is \$250 million.

### MEDIPACS INC.

Medipacs Inc. has developed a wearable, wireless medicine infusion device that could keep more seniors out of the hospital, cut costs and reduce the chance



Photo courtesy of toSense  
The CoVa necklace from toSense monitors seniors with chronic illnesses



Photo courtesy of GreatCall Inc.  
GreatCall's "Lively" wearable offers activity tracking and emergency response plus fall detection when worn on a lanyard around the neck

of infection and errors.

The Mini-Infuser is lightweight, disposable and accurate without the moving parts of traditional bulky medicine pump systems, said Medipacs President and CEO Mark McWilliams.

The device can be custom programmed to dispense medicine to people with pain, diabetes, chronic heart failure and other conditions. The Mini-Infuser's wireless transmission capability allows therapies to be monitored remotely by medical professionals.

The \$100 Mini-Infuser can be pre-loaded with drugs and is much more cost-effective than conventional pump systems,



Photo courtesy of Medipacs Inc.  
Medipacs' wireless Mini-Infuser medicine delivery system can be worn under clothing or on the hand

McWilliams said.

Medipacs is working on capitalization for commercialization of the human Mini-Infuser in the near future, he said. A canine version is being used commercially by veterinary health care professionals.

Startup veteran Dave Purcell, founder and CEO of ProtoStar Inc. and inventor of the new LifeWalker Upright walker, is bullish on San Diego for senior health care technology:

"There's broad interest for our products across the U.S.," Purcell said. "The intellectual stimulation that's here is second to none."

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