

Fitbit just acquired a cloud-based health care company that you probably haven't heard of



Fitbit announced today that it has acquired a small, Boston-based software startup called Twine Health for an undisclosed amount.

Twine Health probably isn't a name that will resonate with a lot of people who don't follow digital health closely, but it's a collaborative software platform aimed at workplace wellness providers. It tracks chronic diseases and connects patients with health coaches and doctors for guidance. It was founded in 2014, and according to Crunchbase, had raised nearly \$10 million in funding prior to being bought.

A spokesperson for Fitbit said that "nearly all" of Twine Health's employees will join Fitbit, specifically Fitbit's Health Solutions Group, and that Twine co-founder and chief executive John Moore will become Fitbit's medical director. Fitbit also says there won't be "disruption in service," and that Twine customers will still have access to the platform.

The Twine Health acquisition is the first one of the year for Fitbit, which previously bought its way into the smartwatch market through strategic acquisitions of Coin, Pebble, and FitStar. Fitbit seems determined now to dive deeper into more serious health-tracking through partnerships with companies like Dexcom; the company has also said it's working on a solution for tracking sleep apnea.

Apple, Fitbit's biggest competitor in wearables in the US, is also trying to take consumer health-tracking to the next

level, by introducing advanced heart-rate sensing in the Apple Watch and launching a heart health study in collaboration with Stanford University and American Well. Apple is also rumored to be working on a needle-less blood sugar monitor.

But for Fitbit, and some other wearable makers that have ducked out of the market entirely, there are still plenty of challenges around providing value both for current smartwatch wearers and potential customers. In other words: wearable makers not named Apple are still struggling to get people to wear their wearables. Fitbit has also seen its business contract in the past few quarters, though it hasn't yet reported its fourth quarter (holiday season) results from 2017.

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