Fitbit Receives Army Award to Help Accelerate its COVID-19 Wearable Detection Technology

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Fitbit plans to initiate a prospective study with Northwell Health to help validate its algorithm for early COVID-19 detection.

SAN FRANCISCO--(BUSINESS WIRE)-- Fitbit (NYSE: FIT) Fitbit announced today it has been selected by the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command (USAMRDC) to receive nearly $2.5 million from the U.S. Department of Defense through a Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium (MTEC) award to advance development of a wearable diagnostic capability for the early detection of a COVID-19 infection. As part of the award, Fitbit is working to initiate a prospective study with Northwell Health’s Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research to validate a Fitbit COVID-19 early detection algorithm.

The award is part of MTEC’s efforts to help keep military personnel healthy and fully operational. Because carriers of COVID-19 can be contagious without symptoms, detecting the virus before symptoms emerge is key to slowing its spread. Fitbit was selected by USAMRDC based on the Company’s track record of innovation and the initial success of its COVID-19 research, specifically the role of wearable technology in early illness detection, as well as the ease of use and long battery life of Fitbit’s devices.

“We believe Fitbit is uniquely positioned to deliver on USAMRDC’s goals based on our deep wearables expertise and established user base of nearly 30 million users, our early research in machine learning algorithms for detection of presymptomatic COVID-19, and our production and manufacturing capabilities to scale solutions and make them available quickly,” said Amy McDonough, GM and SVP of Fitbit Health Solutions. “Our research shows that our bodies start to fight the disease before more visible symptoms appear and we believe Fitbit can reliably detect these signals, giving us an incredible opportunity to get ahead of this virus and help alert people that they could be...
sick before they unknowingly spread it to others. This award will help advance this important research.”

In connection with the award, Fitbit is working to initiate a prospective study with Northwell Health’s Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research. Northwell Health is the largest healthcare provider and private employer in New York State. We believe this collaboration will help expedite the development and validation of the Fitbit algorithm to detect COVID-19. As part of the prospective study, the parties plan to distribute several thousand Fitbit devices to Northwell Health employees, who will receive notifications of potential illness, as well as COVID-19 testing to assess and verify the results.

“The combination of Feinstein Institutes’ research expertise, Northwell’s COVID-19 testing capabilities and Fitbit’s promising algorithm in development, presents a unique opportunity to accelerate early detection of COVID-19, particularly for our frontline health care workers,” said Karina Davidson, PhD, senior vice president at the Feinstein Institutes. “Based on our learnings, we aim to work together to advise other large-scale health systems on this approach to minimizing the spread of COVID-19.”

This prospective study builds upon Fitbit’s work in COVID-19 research, which includes its collaborative research consortium with The Scripps Research Institute and Stanford Medicine that launched earlier this year. As part of that effort, Fitbit is conducting a retrospective study to determine whether it can develop an algorithm to detect COVID-19 before symptoms start. To date, the study has over 187,500 enrolled participants in the U.S. and Canada, including more than 2,700 confirmed positive cases of COVID-19. Early findings from that study show the Fitbit algorithm can detect nearly 50% of COVID-19 cases one day before participants report the onset of symptoms with 70% specificity. This is important because people can transmit the virus before they realize they have symptoms or when they have no symptoms at all. This study reinforces that breathing rate, resting heart rate, and heart rate variability (HRV) are all useful metrics for indicating onset of illness and are best tracked at night, when the body is at rest.

“The Department of Defense seeks rapid, accurate wearable solutions to identify and isolate pre-symptomatic COVID-19 cases and help track and prevent the spread of the virus. To address this need, our proposal selection process sought mature solutions that could be rapidly and widely deployed,” said Commander Christopher Steele, Director of the Military Operational Medicine Research Program at USAMRDC. “Wearable technologies, valuable data metrics and potentially rapid scaling solutions for broad availability, create ideal conditions for military and industry partnerships in the consumer wearables space.”

Early detection is critical, and Fitbit hopes to bring wearable illness detection capabilities to its users as soon as possible. Fitbit will engage with the appropriate regulators to determine the best path forward to bring these features to market.
About Fitbit, Inc. (NYSE: FIT)

Fitbit helps people lead healthier, more active lives by empowering them with data, inspiration and guidance to reach their goals. Fitbit designs products and experiences that track and provide motivation for everyday health and fitness. Fitbit’s diverse line of innovative and popular products include Fitbit Sense™, the Fitbit Versa™ family of smartwatches, Fitbit Charge 4™, Fitbit Inspire 2™, and Fitbit Ace 2™ activity trackers, and Fitbit Aria Air smart scale. Fitbit products are carried in approximately 39,000 retail stores and in 100+ countries around the globe. The Fitbit platform delivers personalized experiences, insights and guidance through leading software and interactive tools, including the Fitbit and Fitbit Coach apps, and Fitbit OS for smartwatches. Fitbit’s paid subscription service, Fitbit Premium™, provides advanced analytics and actionable guidance in the Fitbit app to help you reach your health and fitness goals. Fitbit Premium + Health Coaching provides one-on-one virtual coaching with expert health coaches and personalized plans based on your Fitbit data. Fitbit Health Solutions develops health and wellness solutions designed to help increase engagement, improve health outcomes, and drive a positive return for employers, health plans and health systems. Fitbit and the Fitbit logo are trademarks or registered trademarks of Fitbit, Inc. in the U.S. and other countries. Additional Fitbit trademarks can be found www.fitbit.com/legal/trademark-list. Third-party trademarks are the property of their respective owners.

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About US Army Medical Research and Development Command

The U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command is the Army’s medical materiel developer, with responsibility for medical research, development, and acquisition. USAMRDC produces medical solutions for the battlefield with a focus on various areas of biomedical research, including military infectious diseases, combat casualty care, military operational medicine, medical chemical and biological defense, and clinical and rehabilitative medicine.

About Medical Technology Enterprise Consortium

MTEC is a biomedical technology consortium collaborating with multiple government agencies under a 10-year renewable Other Transactional Agreement with the U.S. Army Medical Research and Development Command. To find out more about MTEC, visit www.mtec-sc.org.

About Northwell Health

Northwell Health is New York State’s largest health care provider and private employer, with 23 hospitals, nearly
800 outpatient facilities and more than 14,200 affiliated physicians. We care for over two million people annually in the New York metro area and beyond, thanks to philanthropic support from our communities. Our 74,000 employees – 18,500 nurses and 4,500 employed doctors, including members of Northwell Health Physician Partners – are working to change health care for the better. We're making breakthroughs in medicine at the Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research. We're training the next generation of medical professionals at the visionary Donald and Barbara Zucker School of Medicine at Hofstra/Northwell and the Hofstra Northwell School of Nursing and Physician Assistant Studies. For information on our more than 100 medical specialties, visit Northwell.edu and follow us @NorthwellHealth on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and LinkedIn.

About the Feinstein Institutes

The Feinstein Institutes for Medical Research is the research arm of Northwell Health, the largest health care provider and private employer in New York State. Home to 50 research labs, 3,000 clinical research studies and 5,000 researchers and staff, the Feinstein Institutes raises the standard of medical innovation through its five institutes of behavioral science, bioelectronic medicine, cancer, health innovations and outcomes, and molecular medicine. We make breakthroughs in genetics, oncology, brain research, mental health, autoimmunity, and are the global scientific leader in bioelectronic medicine – a new field of science that has the potential to revolutionize medicine. For more information about how we produce knowledge to cure disease, visit http://feinstein.northwell.edu and follow us on LinkedIn.

Forward Looking Statements

This press release contains forward-looking statements, within the meaning of the safe harbor provisions of the Private Securities Litigation Reform Act of 1995, that involve risks and uncertainties including, among other things, statements about the future availability of wearable early illness detection and/or diagnostic capabilities; production and manufacturing capabilities; expected results of any trials conducted; performance and/or benefits of products or services described in this release, including but not limited to ability to track and prevent spread of illness; and our ability to help users manage or improve their health and wellness.

These forward-looking statements are only predictions and may differ materially from actual results due to a variety of factors, including the effects of the highly competitive market in which we operate, including competition from much larger technology companies; any inability to successfully develop and introduce new products, features, and services or enhance existing products and services; product liability issues, security breaches or other defects; the impact of COVID-19; and other factors discussed under the heading “Risk Factors” in our most recent report on Form 10-Q filed with the Securities and Exchange Commission. All forward-looking statements contained herein are based on information available to us as of the date hereof and we do not assume any obligation to update these statements as a result of new information or future events.
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