

HEALTH INTEGRATOR:

supporting the prevention of type 2 diabetes



Changing behaviour for better outcomes

Changing behaviour is difficult, so Health Integrator goes beyond telling people they're at risk and highlighting the importance of making healthier lifestyle choices. Instead, it provides a platform and a dedicated health coach to help them do it. The health coach works collaboratively with the individual to identify all the physical and psychological challenges associated with making long-lasting lifestyle changes. Together, they agree the changes that are needed, set realistic, achievable goals and identify which services could help. Crucially, the platform also facilitates access to these services in an end-to-end experience.

"This is about empowerment – helping patients to make the lifestyle changes necessary, by making sure they receive the support they need."

– Jan-Philip Beck,
CEO EIT Health

A new approach to funding

The team recognised that despite the benefits of preventing NCDs, funding for preventative services is low, due to the ongoing pressures on healthcare budgets. So, the answer was a platform underwritten by pension funds, using a health impact bond. By helping to prevent type 2 diabetes, we're helping to reduce the economic burden of treatment and deliver a societal impact. Funding innovation in this way means we can avoid putting further pressure on existing – already stretched – healthcare budgets, and could actually reduce their burden if patients are able to remain healthier.

"The simple fact is, we know we have to move beyond treating diseases and find better, more effective ways of preventing them."

– Fredrik Söder
CEO Health Integrator

Time to rethink preventative services

Preventative services must identify those at risk and provide them with the support they need to change their lifestyles, at the time it can have a positive impact. This support must include practical, pragmatic approaches to educating people from a young age about risk, nutrition and healthy habits. Identifying risk and working with people early, means there's an opportunity to intervene and not only improve health outcomes, but to reduce the number of people being diagnosed with NCDs altogether.

"This has given me the tools to make a positive change in my life. And should give everyone hope ... whoever you are, it's not too late to change your lifestyle."

– Selma,
Diagnosed with pre-diabetes

spotlight

Tackling the crisis of non-communicable diseases

Ageing and unhealthy lifestyles are leading to more and more people being diagnosed with non-communicable diseases (NCDs) such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular disease.¹

The five major NCDs (diabetes, cardiovascular diseases, cancer, chronic respiratory diseases and mental disorders) account for an estimated 86% of the deaths and 77% of the disease burden in Europe.¹

And there's an economic burden too. In the EU alone, at least 25% of total healthcare budgets are spent on treating NCDs.²

Spotlight on type 2 diabetes

There are around 60 million people living with type 2 diabetes in Europe and the disease makes them 2-3 times more likely to experience heart failure or suffer a heart attack or stroke.^{3,4} And the prevalence of diabetes is increasing among all ages, mostly due to obesity, unhealthy diets and physical inactivity. But in many cases, type 2 diabetes can be managed – and even prevented – through lifestyle changes, such as achieving a healthy weight, having a good diet and becoming more physically active.⁵ The challenge however, is that many people struggle to make those changes without support and currently, only 3% of EU healthcare budgets are spent on preventative services as healthcare services are already overwhelmed with treating the sick.⁶

So what is the solution?

Finding a solution to this growing problem is possible, as Jan-Philip Beck, CEO EIT Health explains:

"A large amount of NCDs can be prevented, if people who are at risk get the support they need at the right time.⁷ The key is to move to a more balanced funding of treatment and prevention. Health Integrator is a fantastic example of what's possible when we approach prevention with innovative funding solutions that don't rely on traditional healthcare funding models"

To address the issue of a stretched healthcare budget, the Health Integrator team worked with EIT Health to develop a new funding model. Fredrik Söder, CEO of Health Integrator explains: "We have issued a health impact bond, that bridges the funding gap between prevention and reactive healthcare. It allows us to use pension funds to invest in preventative health"

Fredrik explains how the platform works: "Health Integrator combines existing services and solutions into a personalised function. It's open and designed to be accessible for each and every user. We also recognised that changing behaviour is incredibly hard. This is why Health Integrator is different. We don't just tell people who are at risk to get healthy, but provide a platform and a dedicated health coach to help them do it."

Together with EIT Health, the Health Integrator team is now looking at how to scale the platform across Europe so that many others can benefit.



[1] Who.int. 2021. Non communicable diseases.

Available at: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/noncommunicable-diseases> [Accessed November 2021].

[2] Vandenberghe, D. and Albrecht, J., 2019. The financial burden of non-communicable diseases in the European Union: a systematic review. *European Journal of Public Health*, 30(4), pp.833-839.

[3] Euro.who.int. 2021. Data and statistics. [online] Available at: <https://www.euro.who.int/en/health-topics/noncommunicable-diseases/diabetes/data-and-statistics> [Accessed November 2021].

[4] European Federation of Pharmaceutical Industries and Associations (EFPIA). 2021. DIABETES:EUROPE'S SILENT HEALTH

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[5] Cdc.gov. 2021. Prevent Type 2 Diabetes | Diabetes | CDC.

Available at: <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/prevent-type-2/index.html> [Accessed November 2021].

[6] Ec.europa.eu. 2021. 3% of healthcare expenditure spent on preventative care. [online] Available at: <https://ec.europa.eu/eurostat/web/products-eurostat-news/-/ddn-20210118-1> [Accessed November 2021].

[7] Srinath Reddy, K., 2015. Prevention and control of non-communicable diseases. *Oxford Textbook of Global Public Health*, pp.1476-1483.