

For Immediate Release

## **Digital Diabetes Solutions Can Play Valuable Role in Workplace Diabetes Interventions, Says Northeast Business Group on Health Report**

NEW YORK, April 20, 2017 – Digital diabetes solutions are not a panacea but can offer employers valuable assistance in combatting diabetes among their populations, says a new report from Northeast Business Group on Health (NEBGH). The report, [“Digital Diabetes Solutions in Action: An Opportunity Study,”](#) profiles a pilot program begun within a segment of employees at Mount Sinai Health System that integrated *Livongo for Diabetes*, an interactive blood glucose monitoring system, into an advanced diabetes management program. NEBGH studied the Mount Sinai experience to provide other employers with insights as they consider the use of digital health solutions. Among the opportunities for employers highlighted in the report are significantly enhanced connection and engagement between employees and health services, and timely, secure and convenient collection of data that can lead to improved clinical care.

“Diabetes shows no signs of abating as a key concern for our employer members, despite investments in a wide range of targeted diabetes prevention and management strategies over the years, including biometric screenings, nutrition and exercise counseling, onsite clinics and incentives for diabetes medication adherence,” said Laurel Pickering, President and CEO of NEBGH. “So the question is whether investing in digital health solutions is a worthwhile addition to these strategies. Based on the Mt. Sinai pilot program as well as discussions with Iron Mountain, another employer who implemented the *Livongo for Diabetes* program, we think the answer is a qualified ‘yes’ – as long as employers are willing to set clear objectives, carefully select a digital partner, be prepared for challenges and decide in advance what measures they will use to gauge success.”

NEBGH’s report is based on research, data analysis, interviews with key individuals at Mount Sinai including patient care providers and an employee, and interviews with a benefits executive at Iron Mountain. Mount Sinai enrolled 80 employees in its *Livongo for Diabetes* program following an encouraging pilot with 200 of its high-risk Medicaid patients. Iron Mountain has been using *Livongo for Diabetes* for two years and has about 300 employees enrolled in the program. *Livongo for Diabetes* enables the recording of blood glucose data that is made available to users and others including providers, and sends alerts designed to stimulate user actions. If blood glucose levels are very high or low, employees are contacted by phone or text by a Certified Diabetes Educator.

“It’s too early for measurable results but we feel encouraged by what we’ve seen thus far with Mount Sinai’s use of *Livongo* and what’s been reported to us by Iron Mountain. Based on observations, we would encourage other employers to consider whether implementing a digital health solution – for management of diabetes or other chronic illnesses – might benefit their employee populations,” said Jeremy Nobel, MD, MPH and Executive Director of NEBGH’s Solutions Center, which conducted this work. “Employers will need to wrestle with challenges that accompany the use of digital tools, including getting them in the hands of

employees who most need them, sustaining engagement once employees are enrolled, and ensuring that employee data gets shared with care providers and others for maximum effectiveness. Enlisting employee champions can help with enrollment and continuing engagement, and value-based benefit design can encourage engagement and usage if co-pays for provider visits or medications are waived, for example. Health plans, pharmacy benefits managers and benefit consultants can also serve as important partners in identifying potential participants, crafting outreach communications, ensuring the appropriate use of shared data and encouraging provider collaboration.”

NEBGH’s report says the relationship between an employer and a digital partner can make or break a digital program’s success, and that a good digital partner will let the employer take the lead on selecting outcomes to be measured and other key decisions. It also says it’s essential for a champion in the organization to work closely with a digital vendor to help create the best experience for employees, while making sure the best data is collected to measure outcomes. NEBGH says digital diabetes initiatives, like any employer-sponsored population health programs, work best when the benefits of enrollment are well communicated to potential beneficiaries, benefit design is adjusted to encourage participation, and other risk factor reduction and related condition management support is coordinated with the digital initiative.

## **About NEBGH**

NEBGH is an employer-led coalition of healthcare leaders and other stakeholders with the mission of empowering members to drive excellence in health and achieve the highest value in healthcare delivery and the consumer experience. The Solutions Center is NEBGH’s research and discovery platform for identifying the most promising, innovative opportunities for improving health outcomes, focused on employers as the catalyst for change.

Boehringer-Ingelheim provided funding to NEBGH’s Solutions Center for its digital diabetes opportunity study.

The guide can be accessed [here](#).

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