

IDx and IBM Watson Health Forge Alliance for Eye Health

IBM Watson Health to Distribute IDx-DR Offering in European Economic Area

CAMBRIDGE, Mass. and IOWA CITY, Iowa, March 16, 2017 /PRNewswire/ -- IBM (NYSE: [IBM](#)) Watson Health and [IDx, LLC](#) today announced a five-year strategic alliance to advance eye health through cognitive computing applications. The alliance aims to help primary care providers, hospitals, health systems, and integrated delivery networks deliver value-based care to patients with diabetic retinopathy and other serious eye conditions such as glaucoma and age-related macular degeneration. The alliance expands IBM Watson Health's focus on eye health.

The alliance leverages more than a decade of IDx's ophthalmic image analysis work and IBM's cognitive healthcare offerings and global reach. As part of the alliance, IBM Watson Health has the option to distribute IDx offerings. Initially, IBM Watson Health intends to distribute IDx-DR -- an automated solution for diabetic retinopathy screening currently available in the 31 countries that comprise the European Economic Area. IBM Watson Health may expand its distribution of IDx-DR to Australia, Canada, and the United States upon regulatory approvals of the product.

There are 415 million adults with diabetes across the world today, with the number expected to grow by 50% to over 600 million by 2040. Each of these individuals is at high risk of developing diabetic retinopathy, which is one of the leading causes of preventable blindness in working age adults. Most people that develop diabetic retinopathy have no symptoms until irreversible vision loss had occurred, making early disease detection critical to prevent blindness.

"Over the past decades, productivity in healthcare has not kept pace with other sectors. Patients and providers worldwide are paying the price. Our mission at IDx has always been to transform the quality, accessibility, and affordability of global healthcare through the automation of medical screening to support physicians' diagnoses. We are incredibly pleased to partner with IBM Watson Health, which shares this vision, and believe they will help us scale the IDx mission to its fullest potential," said Dr. Michael Abramoff, Founder and President of IDx.

"IDx-DR complements Watson's existing focus in eye health and brings to Watson a novel, secure server-based screening technology that prioritizes patient safety -- pairing expert clinician knowledge with transparent, human brain-inspired algorithms," said Anne Le Grand, vice president of Imaging for Watson Health.

It is further the intent of IBM and IDx to work together to jointly develop and deploy new eye-related offerings leveraging each company's expertise and assets.

This announcement comes shortly after IBM announced that [IDx joined the global IBM Watson medical imaging collaborative, which includes 24 members worldwide](#). The collaborative has a working group on eye health which aims to accelerate Watson's understanding of a range of high-impact diseases -- such as glaucoma, age-related macular degeneration, and cardiovascular disease -- using various imaging modalities including fundus and optical coherence tomography (OCT).

IDx-DR version 2.0 has CE marking as a Class IIa Medical Device for sale in the European Union. IDx products have not yet been cleared by the FDA and are not currently for sale in the United States. IDx is currently conducting [a U.S.-based clinical trial of IDx-DR](#) scheduled for completion this summer.

About IDx

IDx is an advanced medical technology company that recognizes the eye as a window to our current and future health. IDx is committed to transforming the quality, accessibility and affordability of healthcare through the automation of medical diagnosis and treatment. With IDx-DR, for the automated detection of diabetic retinopathy in front line care settings, IDx is a leader in developing automated medical image analysis solutions. New developments include algorithms for the detection of macular degeneration, glaucoma, Alzheimer's disease, cardiovascular disease, and stroke risk. For more information on IDx, visit:

eyediagnosis.com.

About IBM Watson Health

Watson is the first commercially available cognitive computing capability representing a new era in computing. The system, delivered through the cloud, analyzes high volumes of data, understands complex questions posed in natural language, and proposes evidence-based answers. Watson continuously learns, gaining in value and knowledge over time, from previous interactions. In April 2015, the company launched IBM Watson Health and the Watson Health Core cloud platform (now Watson Platform for Health). The new unit will help improve the ability of doctors, researchers and insurers to innovate by surfacing insights from the massive amount of personal health data being created and shared daily. The Watson Platform for Health can mask patient identities and allow for information to be shared and combined with a dynamic and constantly growing aggregated view of clinical, research and social health data. For more information on IBM Watson, visit: ibm.com/watson. For more information on IBM Watson Health, visit: ibm.com/watsonhealth.

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SOURCE IBM Watson Health
