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Imperative Health Boosts New Market Focus With \$4M

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Imperative Health Ltd. has raised \$4 million in new funding as the company re-launches its wireless monitoring technology with a new focus on high-risk health conditions.

Existing investors New Venture Partners and Unilever Ventures participated in the fund-raising alongside members of Imperative Health's management team. Valuation of the round, which closed this month, was not disclosed.

Imperative Health was founded by Unilever Ventures in 2008 as a spin-out using technology developed at Unilever. The company previously raised at least GBP3.25 million through Unilever Ventures, according to VentureWire records.

Imperative Health, which has changed its name from MiLife Coaching Ltd., plans to use the new funds to support a re-launch of that same technology. The company previously focused on behavioral change for fitness and weight loss, but found that consumers' interest in those goals often was short-term, said Imperative Health Chairman and Chief Executive Chris Jessop.

"We felt that we had a product that really worked but wasn't fully relevant for this product positioning," Jessop said.

To pursue a new focus on high-risk disease, Imperative Health has created a program to include its original wireless activity monitor and a new heart-rate monitor, scale, online coaching system, and telephone and e-mail communication with health experts. The new product offering will target patients with conditions including diabetes, high cholesterol or blood pressure and obesity.

Imperative Health also plans to maintain a second program for its original customers without access to the heart-rate monitor or health experts. Those customers can choose from that program, with improved presentation and functionality, or choose to upgrade, Jessop said.

"The company is positioned more as a medical service provider rather than just a products company," New Venture Partners Partner and Imperative Health board member Anton Arts said of the new focus.

Imperative Health, which launched its new product offering this month, currently has several hundred individual customers, according to Jessop. The company's U.K.-based customers include corporations, primary-care trusts and the Blood Pressure Association. The company will also target individual customers.

The company plans to target the U.S. market next, which may prompt additional fund-raising before the end of the year, Jessop said. Imperative Health is already working with Unilever to explore strategic relationships in the U.S.

Bedford, U.K.-based Imperative Health, with 14 employees, plans to relocate to London this year.