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## Healthcare Industry Alliance launches, to improve health through ICT

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The [Continua Health Alliance](#), one of the world's largest industry alliances, is launching with events in London and Harrogate. Continua is an open industry group that aims to establish interoperability standards for personal health products and services, to enable new models of healthcare for people worldwide.

The formation of Continua was announced 6 June in San Francisco, with founding members including Cisco Systems, GE, IBM, Intel, Kaiser Permanente, Medtronic, Motorola, Panasonic (Matsushita Electric), Royal Philips Electronics, Samsung, Sharp, Tunstall and Welch Allyn.

Richard Foggie of the Department of Trade and Industry's electronics & IT services unit said: "Continua will play a key role in accelerating the development of scalable, cost-effective solutions for the care of older people and those with long-term conditions. The UK is pioneering the use of telecare and telehealth solutions on a large scale, through initiatives including the Government's £80M Preventative Technologies Grant. As Tunstall is the UK and world leader in telecare, I believe their contribution to the Alliance will be particularly important in terms of market experience, developing interoperability and reducing the overall costs of these solutions."

James Buckley, CEO of Tunstall said: "We are standing on the verge of an incredible opportunity to change the face of healthcare delivery throughout the world, to the benefit of those most in need. We are delighted to be at the table with the world's leading companies and the creation of the Continua Alliance will play a key role in improving the quality of life for millions. It will allow members to develop interoperable devices and services, enabling health care providers and individuals to develop truly personalised health solutions. This will result in better quality care programmes, helping to reduce healthcare costs and Tunstall is thrilled to be a part of this exciting venture."

"First and foremost, this alliance is about helping to empower people with the information they need to better manage their health and the health of their loved ones," said David Whitlinger, Chairman of the Continua Health Alliance and Director of Healthcare Device Standards in Intel's Digital Health Group. "We are creating an organisation where several seemingly disparate industries can work together to combine their products and services through connectivity standards and provide millions of people with the tools they need to better manage their health and the health of their families."

The Continua Health Alliance will enable patients, carers and healthcare providers to break barriers of adoption and better address current and emerging care issues, such as the rapid growth in chronic conditions and the aging population. These issues are driving the management of personal health from hospitals and institutions and into peoples' homes.

Continua's efforts will focus on 3 areas: chronic disease management, monitoring the healthcare needs of older people, and proactive health and fitness. By enabling a network of interoperable, connected health and medical devices, people with chronic illness such as heart / lung conditions or diabetes will be able to share information on vital signs with their doctors. Carers can also be assured that older or vulnerable people are able to live safely and independently in their own homes.

Continua's design guidelines will not create new networking standards but will be based on proven connectivity standards, including Bluetooth, USB and Wi-Fi, among other established standards. The group plans to deliver its guidelines within the next 18 months.

The group also intends to establish a product certification program with a consumer-recognisable logo signifying the promise of interoperability with other certified products.

By collaborating with national regulatory bodies, Continua will provide methods for safe and effective management of products and services from a global network of vendors.

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