With this data platform, you can monitor elderly loved ones without prying eyes

BY NANCY DAHLBERG

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CEO Shekhar Iyer poses for a portrait at the Data Driven Care corporate office in Plantation, Florida, on May 6, 2021. Iyer and his team at Data Driven Care tied for third place in the Miami Herald Pitch Competition. DANIEL A. VARELA *DVARELA@MIAMIHERALD.COM*

Whether we live across town or hundreds of miles away from our aging loved ones, we aren't there to observe them 24/7. We ask them how they are feeling but wonder if they are giving us the real story.

That's where Data Driven Care comes in. The Plantation startup leverages technology and data analytics to arm caregivers with information they can use to help manage their loved ones' health and well-being while they age in the comfort of their own homes. The platform can tell you if your normally active grandma is staying in bed all day, skipping meals, or getting up too many times at night to go to the bathroom — potential warning signs of underlying health conditions or depression.

Miami Herald judges saw value in the startup's market opportunity, too. Data Driven Care (datadriven.care) tied for third place in the 2021 Miami Herald Pitch Competition.

Founder and CEO Shekhar Iyer thought he had retired when he moved to Florida in 2018, leaving in the rearview mirror his 30-year career in technology, developing data platforms and enterprise solutions for the public and private sectors. But his inner entrepreneurial drive had other plans.

Six months after moving to Florida, he met up with his now-business partners Shane Robinett (chief technology officer) and Mario Pino (chief revenue officer), both serial entrepreneurs. "There was an underlying synergy in our thinking about our aging parents, their care and their quality of life. The one thing that was very clear was our passion for both data analytics and caring," Iyer said. "Mario and Shane have been very instrumental in all that is happening at DDC and where we are today is because of our collective effort."

The trio incorporated Data Driven Care in January 2020. The startup went through several iterations that resulted in an aging platform offered as a service, Iyer said. They call it Curasene, which in Latin means "care of the elderly."

The Curasene platform can be accessed through iPhone and Android apps, laptops and iPads. It provides the family and other stakeholders such as doctors, specialists and home health aides with a realistic view of activities and behavior, as well as safety and security, Iyer said.

Data Driven Care provides a kit of sensors that can be placed around the house in minutes. Once activated, the sensors transmit data to the platform, which uses proprietary algorithms to track

changes in the individual's behavior. Such shifts could be clues to an underlying medical or mental health condition.

An alert is then sent to the family. "It's the caregivers that determine the quality of care they need to provide," Iyer said.

Data Driven Care hit the market at the end of 2020. The company is running 8-10 pilot tests in the U.S. and has received international inquiries too, Iyer said. So far it has fulfilled a 200-kit order from Australia and a 50-kit order from the United Kingdom. Iyer said the company is discussing a substantial order from an organization in Miami-Dade County.

Data Driven Care is marketing the business to home-care and healthcare agencies through its business-to-business channel as well as directly to consumers, Iyer said. The consumer service is currently priced at $39 a month with a one-time kit cost of $199.

The startup has released the second version of its software and is continuing to make tweaks based on feedback. The founders have invested $200,000 and sweat equity so far. Data Driven Care is seeking to raise $1 million to $1.25 million in investor funding.

Broward startup CarePredict's wearable technology also detects behavioral changes and gives insights into potential health issues, yet Iyer doesn't see wearable device makers as competitors. Some could even be potential collaborators, he said. "We are partnering with companies who share data with us so we could take data from the wearable, like a Fitbit or Apple Watch, and apply all of that data along with what we capture. We also look at many things — kitchen activities, temperature, humidity sensors, all of that," Iyer said. "We want to provide a better picture, a more holistic picture, of what's happening."

For caregivers, there's another benefit. So your mother or grandmother hasn't been answering the phone this afternoon. Is something wrong, is she sick, has she fallen? Your Curasene app shows that your loved one is moving around the home normally (and simply ignoring the phone). Ahhh, peace of mind.
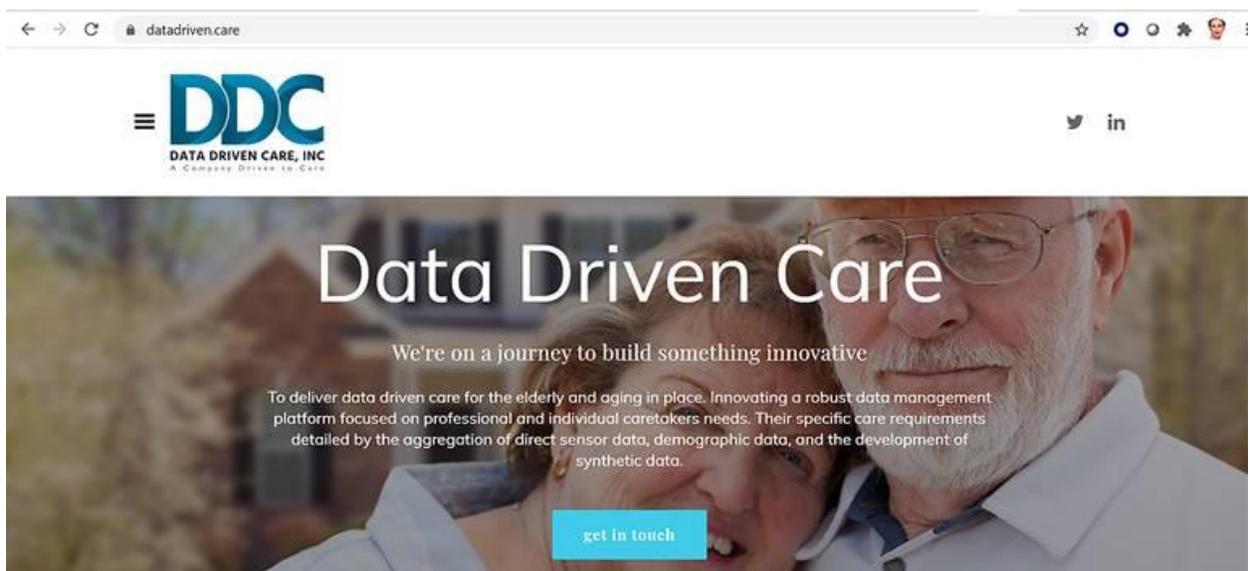
CEO Shekhar Iyer, center, and his partners, left to right, Mario Pino, David Greene, Vaidehi Dalvi, and Shane Robinett pose for a portrait at the Data Driven Care corporate office in Plantation, Florida, on Saturday, May 6, 2021. Iyer and his team at Data Driven Care are one of the winners of the Miami Herald Pitch Competition. DANIEL A. VARELA *DVARELA@MIAMIHERALD.COM*