

# Empathy Health Raises \$7.6M to Make Sober Sidekick the Standard in Relapse Prevention for Substance Use Disorder Care

*Funding comes amid significant global growth and expansion to support value-based partnerships with U.S. payers*

BENTONVILLE, AR, UNITED STATES, December 3, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Empathy Health Technologies, the makers of the [Sober Sidekick](#) platform, today announced a \$7.6 million funding round to advance its mission

to define relapse prevention as a measurable and system-wide outcome in modern healthcare. The round was led by [HealthX Ventures](#), with participation from Nina Capital, Ikigai Healthcare Funds, American Heart Association Ventures, Suncoast Ventures, Cortado Ventures and Wilson Sonsini Investment Company, bringing its total funding to \$11.4 million. The funding comes as the company grows its global membership and expands enterprise relationships with U.S. payers under value-based care (VBC) models.

Sober Sidekick has experienced significant growth and is now the world's largest peer-powered substance-use disorder (SUD) recovery platform, with approximately 1.1 million downloads, 145,000+ monthly active users and more than 2 million peer engagements. The platform leverages both its engaged community and predictive technology that includes its proprietary Empathy Algorithm, which analyzes millions of behavioral signals and language patterns to detect rising relapse risk, re-engage vulnerable members and activate support at the exact moment it's needed. When risk emerges, it triggers immediate peer response, a critical factor given that 88% of individuals who self-report relapse on the platform return to re-engage with the community.

This model represents a fundamental departure from traditional, reactive SUD care by focusing on continuous support and measurable prevention rather than episodic treatment alone.

"Recovery has always rewarded people for coming back after they fall," said Chris Thompson, Founder and CEO of Empathy Health. "We're building the infrastructure that helps people stay on their feet in the first place. What makes Sober Sidekick different is that we can see relapse forming in real time – in a post, a pattern, a plea – and respond before it turns into a crisis or a



## Sober Sidekick

Sober Sidekick is establishing a new standard in substance use disorder care.

claim. Our purpose is simple: keep people connected at the moment they're most at risk and do whatever it takes to address their social needs, because that's where long-term recovery is won."

In addition to the Sober Sidekick app being publicly available for anyone to download, Empathy Health also partners with payers under VBC models to prevent relapse and reduce medical claims costs. When integrating a payer's claims data, the company will employ a population-intelligence model that stratifies member acuity and engages individuals in ways that reduce the likelihood of relapse. By identifying real-time indicators of relapse, Sober Sidekick gets a proactive lens into member risk before costly episodes occur. Empathy Health's predictive models now demonstrate 86-88% accuracy in identifying individuals likely to experience high-cost events, giving health plans a way to turn relapse prevention into a measurable outcome.

The platform's Empathy Algorithm drives peer connection, while a "whole person" support philosophy ensures that human teams can intervene when social or environmental barriers put recovery at risk. Factors like Isolation, housing instability, transportation barriers and lack of access to care are all contributors to recurrence. The company's model is designed to intervene both through community support and coordinated navigation and behavioral signals that reveal when deeper outreach is needed. By bridging the space between help-seeking and system response, Sober Sidekick builds continuity where traditional care often loses people.

Approximately 86% of people living with SUD don't receive treatment for their condition, and of those that do, most are at significant relapse risk – with a majority relapsing an average of seven times. For payers, this population is incredibly hard to engage and costly due to increased emergency department visits, treatment for comorbidities, as well as recurring rehabilitation program admissions.

However, Sober Sidekick's peer-to-peer model and whole-person approach – combined with its Empathy Algorithm – have been incredibly effective, with a 100% peer-response rate within a few minutes and an average of 6.2 responses to every member post seeking support. As peer engagement rises, the risk of relapse drops drastically. While traditional SUD treatment comes with a 96% chance of relapse, Sober Sidekick members who engage just five times are 68% less likely to experience a relapse, according to an [analysis](#) by the Validation Institute.

Moreover, Empathy Health's VBC agreements provide attribution, risk modeling and financial accountability tied to recovery impact. Agreements have a low per-member, per-month (PMPM) model and a goal of achieving a 10% reduction in total SUD spend – with a 100% ROI make-whole guarantee for the first year. This model enables recovery support to function as both a member benefit and a population health lever.

"Most of the healthcare system sees relapse months after it happens, hidden in utilization data," said Kristi Ebong, Partner at HealthX Ventures. "Empathy Health is the first organization I've seen that can detect relapse risk while it's unfolding and intervene in the moment. Turning peer

engagement into predictive intelligence represents a novel model for how substance-use disorder is managed and measured. This is the shift that both individuals and payer organizations have been looking for, which is why we are enthusiastic to back the company and its team.”

Empathy Health’s new funding will be used to expand value-based partnerships with payers, enhance the Empathy Algorithm’s predictive capabilities and grow teams focused on member support, behavioral data science and care collaboration. Investments also will support the buildout of operational infrastructure to deliver relapse prevention at scale, across diverse populations and health delivery models.

#### About Empathy Health Technologies

Empathy Health Technologies is building the first relapse prevention category in substance-use disorder (SUD) care. Through Sober Sidekick, the world’s largest peer-powered recovery platform, the company delivers predictive, real-time relapse prevention at scale. Powered by the Empathy Algorithm and aligned with value-based partnerships with both commercial and public payers, Empathy Health is redefining lifelong recovery as a measurable outcome in modern healthcare. The company is backed by leading investors and is headquartered in Arkansas. Learn more at [www.sobersidekick.com](http://www.sobersidekick.com).

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