

# Google shutter its Google Health division

## Article

**The news:** Google is dismantling its **Google Health** division, right after its VP David Feinberg jumped ship to become CEO and president of electronic health record giant **Cerner**, per Insider.

**How we got here:** Google Health was born in 2018 to silo all of Google's healthcare efforts under one business entity—but it hasn't progressed much since its inception.

- For example, Google Health worked with **Apple** to build a state-of-the-art COVID-19 contact tracing app—but it didn't have a significant impact on contact tracing efforts even though it

was made available to all US smartphone users for free.

- And Google Health caught flak after it was [slammed](#) with a lawsuit alleging it put millions of users' personal health information at risk.

**This isn't the first time Google dismantled a health unit:** Back in June, 130 Google Health employees were [reshuffled](#) to now Google-owned **Fitbit**. That's left behind 570 employees, but Google said there will only be a reshuffling of projects across the company and no layoffs, according to Insider's report.

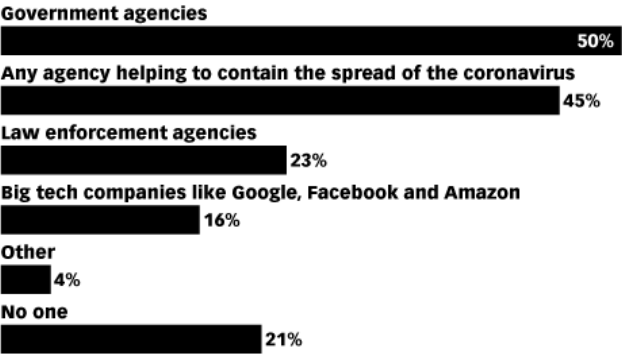
**What does this mean for Big Tech in healthcare?** Big Tech cos may have the tech power and product capabilities to build healthcare products, but they're struggling to rebrand as health tech companies.

- **We've seen this play out when Microsoft tried and failed at a personal health records business.** Microsoft HealthVault launched in 2007 but ultimately hung its hat in 2019 because of low adoption.
- **IBM was reportedly [mulling the sale](#) of its Watson Health business back in February.** This follows some speed bumps over the years—it came under fire for producing erroneous treatment recommendations for hypothetical cancer patients during an internal testing phase in July 2018, and it struggled to retain major hospital clients in 2018, citing softening demand.
- **And Facebook's digital health attempts haven't gained much traction, either.** Facebook launched a preventative health tool and even partnered with some top US hospitals to help with AI-driven research but its healthcare prospects were cut short in light of its Cambridge Analytica [scandal](#) and [media backlash](#) over privacy concerns—something the tech co hasn't fully recovered from.

**It's largely a matter of trust:** These tech giants have undergone a reckoning of consumer privacy practices for their data sharing practices. Since the future of healthcare is slated to be centered around the consumer experience, this may be an untraversable wall to climb for Big Tech: [56%](#) of consumers said they wouldn't trust tech companies to keep their health information anonymous.

**Which Parties Are US Adults Willing to Share Health-Related Search Data With to Help Stop the Spread of the Coronavirus?**

% of respondents, March 2020



Note: ages 18-74  
Source: CodeFuel, "The Privacy Pandemic: How Much Privacy Are We Willing to Sacrifice During the COVID-19 Crisis?" April 2020