

CVS Health tests self-driving vehicle prescription delivery

May 28 2020, by Tom Murphy



This undated photo provided by Nuro shows a package delivered to a Nuro vehicle. CVS Health said Thursday, May 28, 2020 it will partner with Silicon Valley robotics company Nuro on deliveries of medicines and other products to customers near a Houston-area store/ (Nathan Lindstrom/Nuro via AP)

CVS Health will try delivering prescriptions with self-driving vehicles in

a test that begins next month.

The drugstore chain said Thursday that it will partner with the Silicon Valley robotics company Nuro to deliver medicines and other products to customers near a Houston-area store.

A CVS spokesman said the prescriptions will routinely be delivered within an hour of being ordered. Customers will have to confirm their identity in order to unlock their delivery after the vehicle arrives.

Nuro has previously started partnerships to test the delivery of pizzas for Domino's or groceries for Kroger, also in the Houston area. This is the company's first venture into health care.

Drugstores like CVS and rival Walgreens Boots Alliance Inc. have been expanding home and office delivery services for a few years now to polish their reputations for convenience as online retail giant Amazon expands its influence.

Last September, Walgreens started testing drones capable of delivering some products five or 10 minutes after being ordered. But that test in Christiansburg, Virginia, did not include prescriptions.

Using unmanned vehicles to deliver potentially sensitive prescriptions is uncharted territory. Some hospitals in North Carolina have been testing drone delivery of medical samples and supplies.



This photo provided by Nuro shows a Nuro vehicle in front of a CVS Pharmacy. CVS Health said Thursday, May 28, 2020 it will partner with Silicon Valley robotics company Nuro on deliveries of medicines and other products to customers near a Houston-area store (Nathan Lindstrom/Nuro via AP)

CVS and UPS tried drone prescription deliveries last fall in Cary, North Carolina. The companies started offering the service earlier this month to a big retirement community in Florida.

Woonsocket, Rhode Island-based CVS Health Corp. said that for the Houston test, customers can chose the Nuro delivery option when they fill their prescriptions online. They can then track the vehicle's progress online through a Nuro portal.

Earlier this year, federal regulators gave Nuro temporary approval to run autonomous delivery vehicles on public roads for the first time without human occupants.

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