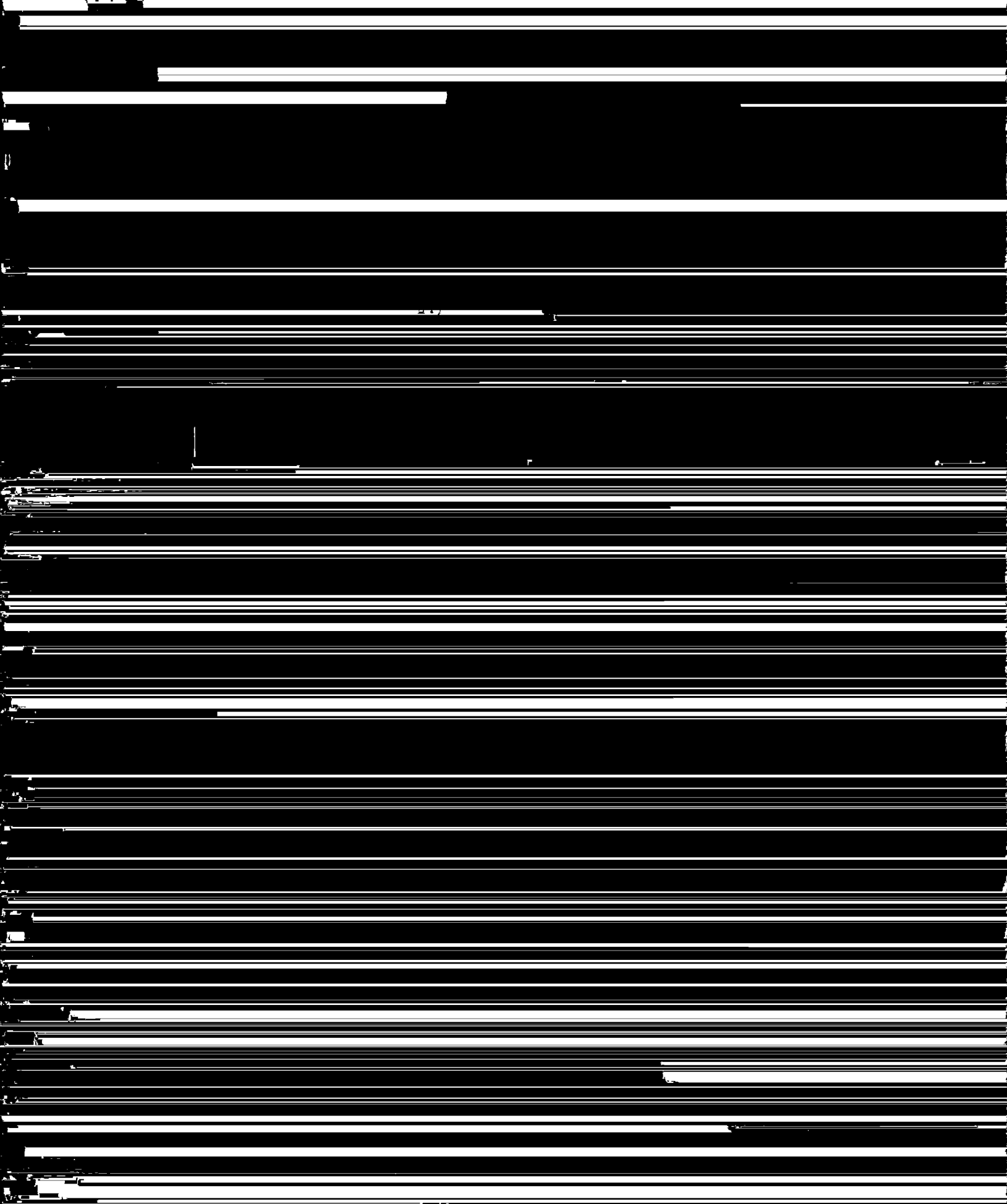


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proper self-management should be welcomed by all concerned. The program will initially focus on type 2 diabetes.

### **Walgreens has the chronic**

As for the worksite clinics, more and more employers are trying to provide primary care to their employees onsite. That's both to encourage them to get appropriate care and to reduce time away from the job.

Walgreens' Take Care division recently expanded this side of its business by opening an onsite medical center at **Intel's** facility in Hillsboro, Ore. Take Care also operates Intel's wellness and occupational programs in Washington, Oregon, California, Arizona, New Mexico and Massachusetts, and provides primary care services to Intel employees in Arizona.

With a primary care shortage in many areas and with the number of generalist doctors expected to decline further, these worksite clinics should help fill some of gaps. But they won't solve the whole problem, any more than community health centers will. We still need to train more primary care doctors and make the occupation attractive enough that medical students will want to go into it.

Regarding accountable care organizations, Walgreens' press release about the shareholders meeting said:

The company, through its pharmacy, health and wellness services, also is becoming a critical component of new accountable care organizations by expanding opportunities with health systems such as Northwestern Memorial Hospital in Chicago and Truman Medical Centers in Kansas City, Mo., as well as physician groups across America.

It's not clear what this means. But there's no doubt that the fledgling ACOs will need help from pharmacies and retail clinics as part of their effort to improve the coordination of care. Moreover, population health management requires the very kind of work that Walgreens is starting to do in patient education. So once again, this looks like an important player in healthcare stepping up to the plate.

Will Walgreens make money by expanding its healthcare operations? Undoubtedly. But beyond being a smart move, it's one that can help buoy the system as it goes through a painful transition.

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