



Helix To Help Expand Healthy Nevada Project

Community-driven population health study prepares to significantly increase public enrollment

Reno, Nev. and San Carlos, Calif. (Tuesday, January 9, 2018, 09:00am EST) - Fifteen months after launching the state's landmark [Healthy Nevada Project](#), Renown Institute for Health Innovation (Renown IHI) is taking steps toward significantly expanding public enrollment in its community-based population health initiative. Today, executives and research team members proudly announce they have partnered with personal genomics company, [Helix](#) for the next phase of this study.

Utilizing Helix's proprietary Next Generation Sequencing (NGS) technology and uniquely personalized suite of DNA-powered products, research teams at [Renown Health](#) and [the Desert Research Institute \(DRI\)](#) plan to offer an additional 40,000 Nevadans the opportunity to have their DNA sequenced and participate in phase two of the Renown IHI study expected to open for enrollment in spring 2018.

"From the beginning, our focus with the Healthy Nevada Project has been on delivering personalized health data to our communities that will ultimately drive positive change for our state," said Anthony Slonim, M.D., DrPH, president and CEO of Renown Health, and president Renown IHI. "We are very excited about the opportunities the next phase of this groundbreaking study will offer. Community participants will be able to gain deeper, actionable insights into their DNA data, while our research teams gain unprecedented access to the largest clinical DNA sequencing facility in the world."

Unlike other companies that use microarray technology, Helix uses NGS to sequence a proprietary assay called Exome+ that provides 100 times more data than was previously available. Exome+ includes all 22,000 protein-coding genes as well as additional regions known to be of interest. Helix sequences each participant's DNA sample once, and then securely stores that information so the user can choose to explore many DNA-powered applications throughout their lifetime. All samples are processed in Helix's CLIA- and CAP-accredited sequencing lab powered by Illumina (NASDAQ:ILMN) NGS technology, using the Exome+ assay.

"Our mission is to empower every person to improve their life through DNA. We invested heavily in our Exome+ assay, partner infrastructure, and CLIA- and CAP-accredited laboratory – which is now the largest clinical exome sequencing facility in the world – with the vision of empowering individuals with access to data about themselves and the DNA-powered products that enable them to take a more active role in their health," said Robin Thurston, CEO of Helix. "Helix is proud to support this important project which will empower people to make better health choices and will contribute to novel genomics discoveries."

The Healthy Nevada Project offers community members the opportunity to receive a product through [Helix.com](#), at no cost, by volunteering for research. The Healthy Nevada Project will offer study participants a DNA kit from Helix that provides information on personal traits or ancestry, and a [Helix.com](#) account which will enable them to explore additional DNA-powered products through the Helix App store if they choose.

Researchers and data scientists leading the Healthy Nevada Project are combining genetic data with health and population data, as well as information from environmental databases to create a large health determinants data set. This health determinants platform is being used to identify and model public health risks ranging from disease and illness to the effects of environmental factors such as air quality on the health of Nevadans. The pilot phase of the study enrolled 10,000 participants in less than 48 hours and then completed subsequent DNA sample collection from each participant in just 60 working days. Participants in the pilot phase of the study range from ages 18-90 years old

from 135 zip codes in northern Nevada. Socioeconomic survey information was also collected during the pilot phase using an advanced, confidential online survey tool.

Northern Nevada's diverse healthcare catchment spans 100,000 square miles, an area the same size as New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania combined; and serves almost 1 million community members. These unique elements – the population, the comprehensive provider network offered by Renown Health, generational healthcare data and innovative combination of new research tools – make the region an ideal location for advanced health science.

“Our pilot phase used genotyping, which was a great start, but moving to exome sequencing and inviting an additional 40,000 people to participate will dramatically accelerate what we can learn about the human genome and has the potential to greatly improve preventative health and create incredible potential for new scientific discoveries,” said Joseph Grzymalski, Ph.D., an associate research professor at DRI, co-director of Renown IHI, and principal investigator of the Healthy Nevada Project.

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Renown Institute for Health Innovation is a collaboration between Renown Health - a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California; and the Desert Research Institute - a recognized world leader in investigating the effects of natural and human-induced environmental change and advancing technologies aimed at assessing a changing planet. Renown IHI research teams are focused on integrating personal healthcare and environmental data with socioeconomic determinants to help Nevada address some of its most complex environmental health problems; while simultaneously expanding the state's access to leading-edge clinical trials and fostering new connections with biotechnology and pharmaceutical companies. Learn more at www.healthynv.org.

Helix is a personal genomics company with a simple but powerful mission: to empower every person to improve their life through DNA. We've created the first marketplace for DNA-powered products where people can explore diverse and uniquely personalized products developed by high-quality partners. Helix handles sample collection, DNA sequencing, and secure data storage so that our partners can integrate DNA insights into products across a range of categories, including ancestry, entertainment, family, fitness, health and nutrition. From profound insights to just-for-fun discoveries, Helix is here to help people live a fuller life. Helix is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area, and has a CLIA- and CAP-accredited Next Generation Sequencing lab in San Diego powered by Illumina (NASDAQ:ILMN) NGS technology. Helix was created in 2015 with founding support from Illumina, its largest shareholder. Learn more at www.helix.com.

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