



Renown Health and DRI Study Aims to Change the Way Nevada Thinks About Health
Collaboration with 23andMe will offer community access to DNA tests for free

RENO, Nev. (Sept. 15, 2016) – [Renown Health](#) and the [Desert Research Institute](#) (DRI) today announced a new collaboration with [23andMe](#), a leading personal genetics company, to launch one of the first community-based population health studies in the U.S. that will combine health, population and genetic information with environmental data and return 23andMe genetic results to study participants.

Funded by Renown Health Foundation and Nevada’s Knowledge Fund, this pilot study will offer community members the opportunity to volunteer for research while also gaining access to their individual genetic information at no cost.

23andMe’s Genotyping Services for Research platform will enable local researchers to review genetic data and health-related survey responses from study participants. Combining genetic data with health and population data from Renown, as well as information from environmental databases, DRI scientists will analyze and model public health risks ranging from disease and illness, to the effects of air quality on the health of Nevadans.

“This collaboration addresses one of the fundamental tensions in medicine: Which is more important nature or nurture?” explained Anthony Slonim, M.D., DrPH, Renown Health president and CEO. “Clearly, both are important and by combining Renown’s de-identified health data, such as 300,000 health histories that are five years or longer and patient population demographics, with other determinants, like social and environmental, we can begin to better understand the health and healthcare needs of the people and communities we serve.”

The study is open to the first 5,000 northern Nevada residents who qualify.

“This is the ultimate example of population health in action in a community based setting,” Dr. Slonim added.

Each participant will receive 23andMe’s Personal Genetic Service, including more than 65 personalized genetic reports on their health, wellness, traits and ancestry. 23andMe is the first direct-to-consumer genetics company to provide reports that meet FDA standards.

“We see this as an innovative approach to population health that will benefit Nevadans, and could serve as a model for other states,” said Andy Page, president of 23andMe. “It’s exciting to have Renown and DRI, leaders in healthcare and research, come together for a comprehensive study of this scale, and to see such a great application of our Genotyping Services for Research platform.”

Nevada Governor Brian Sandoval, who announced his participation as one of the first Nevadans to complete 23andMe’s simple DNA test as part of this study, said this offers an unprecedented opportunity for residents of the Silver State.

“Nevada’s greatest resource is, and always has been, our people,” said Governor Sandoval. “Renown’s forward-thinking approach to community healthcare, combined with DRI’s data and environmental expertise, will create incredible potential for new scientific discoveries and encourage citizens just like myself to take a proactive role in self-care and ultimately change the way we think about our health moving forward.”

“This is a very proud moment for DRI and for Nevada, made possible because of Governor Sandoval’s vision for innovation through the Knowledge Fund,” added Dr. Robert Gagosian, DRI acting president.

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Researchers hope to build an infrastructure to apply the population health pilot to all Nevada residents – approximately 2.8 million people. In doing so, researchers could build predictive models and look for significant population health factors across demographic variables such as gender, age, income, location; and distinct population health strata that consider community health, individual health, and chronic disease variables, as well as their interactions.

“Through this study, we will begin to understand how environmental factors can help predict who may be at risk, allow for quicker diagnoses, and encourage the development of more precise treatments,” said Joseph Grzyski, Ph.D., AIC senior director and principal investigator of the study.

“That understanding, combined with the information we will deliver back to study participants, are the first steps toward a future where access to your personal health data will contribute to a higher overall quality of life for all Nevadans.”

For more information and to sign up for the study, visit www.partners.renown.org or call (775) 982-6914.

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Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving a 17-county region comprised of northern Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region’s largest private employers with a workforce of more than 6,000. It comprises three acute care hospitals, a rehabilitation hospital, skilled nursing, the area’s most comprehensive medical group and urgent care network, and the region’s largest and only locally owned not-for-profit insurance company, Hometown Health. Renown has a long tradition of being the first in the region to successfully perform leading-edge medical procedures. For more information, visit www.renown.org.

Desert Research Institute (DRI), the nonprofit research arm of the Nevada System of Higher Education, is a world leader in environmental sciences through the application of knowledge and technologies to improve people’s lives throughout Nevada and the world. Supported by Nevada’s Knowledge Fund, the DRI Applied Innovation Center (AIC) aims to aid and improve the new, knowledge-based economy in Nevada by integrating DRI’s core areas of expertise in hydrologic, atmospheric, earth and ecosystem sciences with data analysis and informatics, visualization, modeling and simulation. More information about DRI’s Applied Innovation Center is available at www.dri.edu.

23andMe, Inc. is the leading personal genetics company. Founded in 2006, the mission of the company is to help people access, understand and benefit from the human genome. 23andMe has more than one million customers worldwide, with over 80 percent consented to participate in research. 23andMe, Inc. is located in Mountain View, CA. More information is available at 23andme.com/researchers

Media Contacts:

Stacy Kendall, Director of Communications and New Media, Renown Health
(775) 691-7308
news@renown.org

Justin Broglio, Communications Officer, Desert Research Institute
(775) 673-7610
media@dri.edu

Andy Kill, Media Relations, 23andMe, Inc.
(650) 963-8985
akill@23andMe.com