

RENOWN HEALTH APPOINTS JOSEPH GRZYMSKI, PH.D., AS CHIEF SCIENTIFIC OFFICER

RENO, Nev. (Sept. 25, 2018) – Taking the next step toward expanding its landmark population health and genetics research initiative to a statewide and national level, [Renown Health](#) today proudly appointed Joseph Grzymski, Ph.D., a recognized leader in biomedical and translational research, as the organization's first Chief Scientific Officer (CSO).

An associate research professor of microbiology and computational biology at the [Desert Research Institute \(DRI\)](#), Dr. Grzymski has an extensive background in data analysis, bioinformatics and public health. He serves as senior director of DRI's Applied Innovation Center and principal investigator of the [Healthy Nevada Project](#) – a pioneering population health study launched in 2016 which initially enrolled 10,000 volunteers for free genetic testing in less than 48 hours, now has more than 35,000 enrollees, and is on track to include 10 percent of northern Nevada's population by the end of 2018.

Under the umbrella of the new Renown Institute for Health Innovation (Renown IHI) – a partnership between Renown and DRI Foundation – Dr. Grzymski will lead Renown's research and preclinical development efforts, while continuing to guide the extensive advances of the Healthy Nevada Project's model of actionable health improvement through the analysis and application of genetic data, clinical data, environmental data such as air and water quality, and social data.

To accelerate innovation at the national level, Dr. Grzymski will work to engage fellow scientists, researchers, physicians and health systems across the U.S. to build new strategic partnerships that will extend the Healthy Nevada Project wellness model to serve additional communities and populations.

"I know of no other health system with such dedication to predicting, preempting and preventing disease and I am truly honored to lead the research and scientific efforts at Renown Health," said Dr. Grzymski, who also holds an adjunct position in molecular biosciences at the University of Nevada, Reno.

"We are building a pipeline of healthcare innovation and transformative research with an incredible team assembled by Renown IHI," he added. "I look forward to continuing to expand our efforts and rapidly advancing the genomic and health information that is available to improve clinical care in Nevada and across the country and inform people at high risk for disease, so they can seek information and treatment if needed."

Dr. Grzymski is an internationally recognized leader in computational biology and genomics with an extensive record of innovative, integrative and forward-thinking leadership in both academia, healthcare and the sciences. He received a B.S. from Bowdoin College, was a Fulbright Scholar and received a Ph.D. from Rutgers University. He completed his postdoctoral research at Rockefeller University in Biophysics and Chemistry.

Working with support from Nevada's Knowledge Fund and the [Nevada Governor's Office of Economic Development \(GOED\)](#), Dr. Grzymski built the Applied Innovation Center at DRI into a strong data science research group that is leveraging more than 60 years of Institute expertise in environmental sciences to help accelerate Nevada's new economy. His team at DRI recently began delivering clinical genetic results for CDC Tier 1 conditions to Renown Health as part of phase two of the Healthy Nevada Project in partnership with [Helix](#), which operates one of the world's largest clinical-grade genetic sequencing laboratories.

In his role as CSO of Renown Health, Dr. Grzymski will lead the not-for-profit health system's organizational efforts to advance and expand its portfolio of genetic study participants to evaluate data to better understand the patterns that contribute to population-level health and disease while providing individualized feedback to participants, so they can modify behaviors to reduce risks and improve health. He will report to [Douglas G. Merrill, M.D., MBA, MA](#), Executive Vice President and Chief Medical and Academic Officer, Renown Health.

(more)

“Dr. Grzynski brings a broad range of expertise that spans genomic medicine and data science making him the perfect addition at a critically important time for Renown IHI. His work with the Healthy Nevada Project is already having a huge impact on our understanding of information to improve population health as well as the evaluation of health risks from genetic data. This work is an unprecedented opportunity to improve the health of Nevadans and now, people all across the country,” said [Anthony Slonim, M.D., Dr.PH., FACHE](#), President and CEO of Renown Health. “We look forward to his leadership as Renown IHI grows its portfolio and expands its range of relationships with statewide and national partners.”

Dr. Grzynski’s passion for improving health through genetics is also very personal. He has a family history of heart disease and cancer and lost his dad at age 58 to colon cancer. Based on his own Healthy Nevada Project results, Dr. Grzynski was made aware of risks for cardiovascular disease and has high cholesterol. Because of his genetic information and risk profile, he now eats a plant-based diet and exercises regularly.

To learn more and sign up to take part in the Healthy Nevada Project, please visit HealthyNV.org.

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About Renown Health

Renown Health is a locally governed and locally owned, not-for-profit integrated healthcare network serving Nevada, Lake Tahoe and northeast California. Renown is one of the region’s largest private employers with a workforce of more than 6,700. 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 renown.org.

About the Desert Research Institute

The Desert Research Institute (DRI) is a recognized world leader in basic and applied interdisciplinary research. Committed to scientific excellence and integrity, DRI faculty, students, and staff have developed scientific knowledge and innovative technologies in research projects around the globe. Since 1959, DRI’s research has advanced scientific knowledge, supported Nevada’s diversifying economy, provided science-based educational opportunities, and informed policy makers, business leaders, and community members. With campuses in Reno and Las Vegas, DRI serves as the non-profit research arm of the Nevada System of Higher Education. For more information, visit www.dri.edu.