

## W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute Joins Launch of NIH *All of Us* Research Program

*Enrollment set to open nationwide for historic research effort to advance precision medicine*

On May 6, 2018, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) will open national enrollment for the *All of Us* Research Program in collaboration with partners like the W. Montague Cobb/NMA Health Institute (Cobb Institute) located in Washington, DC. People living in the United States ages 18 and older, regardless of health status, will be able to participate in *All of Us* along with the 25,000 participants already enrolled as part of a year-long beta test. In addition to an online event marking the official launch, special events will be held nationwide in diverse communities. For instance, the Cobb Institute, a noted Engagement Partner, will convene significant regional activities that highlight enrollment and opportunities to further this momentous effort to advance prevention, treatment and care for people of all backgrounds.

According to Dr. Randall Morgan, Executive Director of the Cobb Institute, “our collaboration with *All of Us* has great potential to help level the playing field toward greater participation of diverse populations in improving precision medicine’s impact on society.” Launched by the National Medical Association (NMA), and building on a rich legacy of advocacy on behalf of the medically underserved, his Institute hosts the *Journal of Racial and Ethnic Health Disparities* and offers strategies and programs informed by research and policy analysis for eliminating racial-ethnic disparities in health and healthcare. In addition to supporting enrollment, the Cobb Institute has engaged in significant awareness-raising among African American communities and their healthcare providers regarding *All of Us*.

Precision medicine is recognized as a promising, emerging approach to disease treatment and prevention that considers differences in people’s lifestyles, environments and biological makeup, including genes. By enrolling one million or more volunteers while oversampling communities underrepresented in research, *All of Us* will

essentially create the largest, most diverse and broadly accessible resource of its kind toward improving health—while ensuring privacy and nonidentification of participants. Also in future phases of the program, children will be able to enroll, and the program will add more data types, such as genetic data.

“All of us are unique, but today we live mostly in an era of ‘one-size-fits-all’ medicine,” says Eric Dishman, director of the *All of Us* Research Program. “I’m alive today because of precision medicine and I think everyone deserves that same opportunity no matter the color of your skin, your economic status, your age or your sex or gender. In other words, it will truly take *all* of us.”

Significantly, *All of Us* seeks to transform the researcher-participant relationship into a partnership. Participants will be asked to share health and lifestyle information, including through online surveys and electronic health records, and possibly visit a local partner site to provide blood and urine samples and basic physical measurements, such as height and weight. In the future, participants might also be invited to share data through wearable devices and to join follow-up research studies, including clinical trials. In turn, participants will be able to access their own health information, summary data about the entire participant community and resulting studies and findings, thereby bringing them together as partners to inform the program’s directions, goals and responsible return of research information.

“The time is now to transform how we conduct research—with participants as partners—to shed new light on how to stay healthy and manage disease in more personalized ways. This is what we can accomplish through *All of Us*,” said NIH Director Francis S. Collins, M.D., Ph.D.

The Cobb Institute, one of more than 100 organizations funded by NIH to be *All of Us* partners, will continue to lead regional workshops on All of Us through August when they host their 12<sup>th</sup> Annual W. Montague Cobb Symposium and Lectureship, “An Introduction to the NIH-*All of Us* Research Program: Our Role in the Launch of a Precision Medicine Cohort” on August, 12, 2018 at the 116<sup>th</sup> NMA Annual Convention and Scientific Assembly in Orlando, FL. Healthcare providers and the public are invited to bring comments. According to Dr. Rodney Hood, Chairman of the Board of

the Cobb Institute and an instrumental facilitator of provider workshops on *All of Us*, “understanding the unique genetic makeup of our diverse population in the African American community is critical to improving outcomes and eliminating the inherent bias of racism on health.” The efforts of he and other colleagues at Cobb Institute and NMA, as well as featured guest speakers including Dr. Dara Richardson-Heron who is the Chief Engagement Officer of *All of Us*, and their comments and hopes for *All of Us* will be highlighted at this Symposium. Additional details will be available soon at [www.thecobbinstitute.org](http://www.thecobbinstitute.org).

On May 6, 2018, in conjunction with the *All of Us* launch, people may take part in social media activities (#JoinAllofUs) or tune in at <https://Launch.JoinAllofUs.org> to watch speakers across the country talk about precision medicine and the power of volunteering for research.

To learn more about the program and how to join, please visit <https://www.JoinAllofUs.org>.

“All of Us” is a registered service mark of the U.S. Department of Health & Human Services (HHS).

###