

All of Us Research Program launches COVID-19 research initiatives

Banner Health and University of Arizona support national data collection effort to shed light on pandemic's spread and impact



PHOENIX (June 16, 2020) – The search to better understand and treat disease during the COVID-19 pandemic has reinforced the critical importance of medical research. [University of Arizona – Banner Health All of Us Research Program \(UA-Banner All of Us\)](#) will join national cohorts from the All of Us Research Program, part of the National Institutes of Health, in the effort to leverage its significant and diverse participant base to seek new insights into COVID-19 through antibody testing, a survey on the pandemic's impacts and collection of electronic health record information. The more we know about what makes people unique, the more customized health care can become.

All of Us will make data gathered through these activities broadly accessible to approved researchers over time, in future releases of its data platform, the [Researcher Workbench](#), now in beta testing. Analyses may help reveal the origins of entry, spread and impact of COVID-19 in the United States.

This research is only possible because of participation from the community. UA – Banner All of Us Research Program is unique in that its community includes more than 44,000 enrolled participants throughout Arizona and northern Colorado who made a crucial decision to contribute to research that could benefit all of us.

“We are excited that our program can contribute to the important research to move our understanding of COVID-19 forward,” said Andreas Theodorou, MD, UA-Banner All of Us Research Program principle investigator. “The collective effort of our community and participants, who shared their information, is making this initiative possible. This also highlights the importance of continuous engagement with the program.”

Antibody Testing

All of Us will test blood samples from 10,000 or more participants who joined the program most recently, starting with samples from March 2020 and working backward until positive tests are no longer found. The tests will show the prevalence of novel coronavirus exposure among All of Us participants, and help researchers assess varying rates across regions and communities.

Antibody testing, which uses blood samples, is different than the nasal swab tests health care providers commonly used to detect active infection. Antibody tests are generally done with people who do not currently have symptoms, to find out if they had the virus in the past.

The program will look for a certain kind of antibody produced in response to infection, IgG antibodies, using a test approved for emergency use by the Food and Drug Administration. Positive samples will potentially undergo further testing to determine if the positive finding is due to the new coronavirus specifically and to assess the level of the immune system's response.

COVID-19 Participant Experience (COPE) Survey

In addition to antibody testing, All of Us has deployed a new online survey to better understand the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on participants' physical and mental health. This 20- to 30-minute survey is designed both for participants who have been ill with COVID-19 and those who have not, and includes questions on COVID-19 symptoms, stress, social distancing and economic impacts.

Participants are invited to take the survey each month until the pandemic ends, so researchers can study the effects of COVID-19 over time and better understand how and why COVID-19 affects people differently.

Electronic Health Records

To round out its COVID-19 research efforts, All of Us is rapidly collecting relevant information from participants' electronic health records. More than 200,000 participants have shared their electronic health records with the

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program so far, offering a rich dataset for analysis. A number of participants have either been diagnosed with COVID-19 or sought health care for related symptoms. The program is working to standardize EHR information to help researchers look for patterns and learn more about COVID-19 symptoms and associated health problems, as well as the effects of different medicines and treatments.

While the program has temporarily suspended in-person biosample collection, new participants can still sign up at JoinAllofUs.org. Participants can complete most program activities online, including answering survey questions and agreeing to share electronic health records. The program removes personal identifiers from this information and stores it in a central platform, with safeguards in place to protect participant privacy. Over the course of the program, participants will receive information back about themselves and about studies that use All of Us data.

The University of Arizona-Banner Health Program is supported under the NIH All of Us Research funding award OT2OD026549 with previous awards UG3OD023171-01 and UG3OD023171-01S1.

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

About the All of Us Research Program

The mission of the All of Us Research Program is to accelerate health research and medical breakthroughs, enabling individualized prevention, treatment, and care for all of us. The program will partner with one million or more people across the United States to build the most diverse biomedical data resource of its kind, to help researchers gain better insights into the biological, environmental, and behavioral factors that influence health. For more information, visit www.JoinAllofUs.org and www.allofus.nih.gov.

About Banner Health

As one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country, the team at Banner Health is committed to ensuring all Banner locations are a safe place for care. Headquartered in Phoenix, Banner Health owns and operates 28 acute-care hospitals and an array of other services, including: Banner Imaging, Banner Telehealth and Banner Urgent Care. Team members are dedicated to protecting the health and safety of patients, be it a routine checkup, elective surgery or an urgent health service. Waiting room and employee workstation layouts maintain proper social distancing; screenings are conducted at hospital entrances to verify that all employees and visitors are well; and, all Banner physicians are equipped to visit patients remotely. Learn more about Banner's commitment to safety at bannerhealth.com/safecare.

About the University of Arizona Health Sciences

The University of Arizona Health Sciences is the statewide leader in biomedical research and health professions training. The UA Health Sciences includes the UA Colleges of Medicine (Phoenix and Tucson), Nursing, Pharmacy and Mel and Enid Zuckerman College of Public Health, with main campus locations in Tucson and the growing Phoenix Biomedical Campus in downtown Phoenix. From these vantage points, the UA Health Sciences reaches across the state of Arizona and the greater Southwest to provide cutting-edge health education, research, patient care and community outreach services. A major economic engine, the UA Health Sciences employs approximately 4,000 people, has approximately 800 faculty members and garners more than \$140 million in research grants and contracts annually. For more information: uahs.arizona.edu (Follow us: [Facebook](#) | [Twitter](#) | [YouTube](#) | [LinkedIn](#) | [Instagram](#))

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Editor's note: Interviews with local UA - Banner All of Us Research Program experts are available for media. To request an interview, please contact [Jen Fenter](mailto:jen.fenter@bannerhealth.com) by email.

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<http://bannerhealth.mediaroom.com/allofus-COVIDresearch>