



## **POPULATION HEALTH STUDY GOES STATEWIDE AND OPENS ENROLLMENT FOR 25,000 SOUTHERN NEVADANS**

The study could expand to a quarter million people, making Nevada the only state in the U.S. to offer such a program

**Las Vegas, Nev. (May 2, 2019)** – The Healthy Nevada Project, a first-of-its-kind, community-based population health study combining genetic, clinical, environmental and social data, is expanding enrollment to Las Vegas. The Project aspires not only to offer genetic testing to every Nevadan interested in learning more about their health and genetic profile but ultimately, to develop and expand the Project for communities across the United States to drive positive health outcomes nationwide.

### **Adding 25,000 Study Volunteers in Southern Nevada**

The Healthy Nevada Project is announcing a statewide expansion – opening 25,000 testing slots in Las Vegas.

With southern Nevada welcoming the study, the Healthy Nevada Project will offer no-cost genetic testing through a simple spit sample to 25,000 study volunteers. Study volunteers will take Helix's clinical-grade DNA saliva test and will receive their ancestry and traits, at no cost, through the My Healthy Nevada Traits app. Participants will then be given a chance to answer a follow-up health survey from Renown Institute for Health Innovation (Renown IHI), and upon survey completion, will be entered to win an iPhone.

In addition, study participants can agree to be notified about genetic test results that could impact their health, and which could be used to improve their medical care. This return of clinical results, plus genetic counseling and other genetic services as appropriate, will be provided by Genome Medical, the leading network of clinical genetics specialists.

### **Healthy Nevada Project's Evolution & Ongoing Expansion**

With more than 35,000 study participants enrolled in just over two years, the [Healthy Nevada Project](#) has become the fastest-enrolling genetic study in the country. The Project was created by Renown IHI – a collaboration between Reno, Nev.-based not-for-profit health network, [Renown Health](#), and the world leader in environmental data, [Desert Research Institute](#) (DRI). Leveraging Renown's forward-thinking approach to community health care and DRI's data analytics and environmental expertise, Renown IHI has grown its capabilities to lead a larger, more complex research study of significance that will analyze and model public health risks in Nevada and serve as a national model for future population health studies working to improve overall health through clinical care integration.

During the Project's pilot launch in September 2016, more than 10,000 community members signed up for DNA testing in just 48 hours. In March 2018, phase two offered full genomic sequencing through a simple spit test from Helix to northern Nevadans. In October 2018, the Project announced the return of clinical results for study participants, notifying them of their risk for CDC Tier 1 conditions including familial hypercholesterolemia, BRCA positive 1 and 2, and Lynch syndrome, a precursor to colon cancer. These conditions affect more than one percent of the population and are inherited so they impact family members as well. Now, the Project announced its next phase – expanding enrollment to 25,000 people in southern Nevada.

### **Serving as a National Model**

This expansion to Las Vegas truly makes this the "Healthy Nevada Project" with a statewide impact making Nevada the only state in the U.S. to offer such a program.



“Nevada was ripe to advance population health goals because, sadly, our state ranks near the bottom in health outcomes. The Healthy Nevada Project is working to change that,” said Anthony Slonim, M.D., DrPH, FACHE, president and CEO of Renown Health and president of Renown IHI. “Our researchers are working on a number of clinical programs and scientific studies to determine why in Washoe County, the county in which Renown Health is located, Nevada’s age-adjusted death rates for heart disease, cancer and chronic lower respiratory disease are 33 percent higher than the national rate. Imagine if we can gather more data like this on a national scale and use it to change the future of health and health care? That is what the Healthy USA Project is looking to do in the years to come.”

“The Healthy Nevada Project is committed to providing study participants clinically actionable data that will help improve their health,” said Joseph Grzymiski, Ph.D., associate research professor at DRI, principal investigator of the Healthy Nevada Project and chief scientific officer for Renown Health. “We are providing this information at the individual level so study volunteers can make lifesaving changes to reduce their risk. We’re also doing it on the community level to develop leading-edge research on health determinants for entire neighborhoods, states and eventually, the country.”

### **Expanding to Become the Healthy USA Project**

The accelerated speed of the Project is made possible thanks to the ever-decreasing cost of sequencing. Today, Helix is able to sequence an entire exome – which allows reporting on most actionable genomic knowledge – for a fraction of what it would have cost just 10 years ago. Additionally, advances in digital health mean Helix and Project researchers can capture unprecedented amounts of health data digitally, making significant contributions to advancing precision health. The partnership has managed to remove the traditional barriers of population health studies, including the difficulty in recruiting participants, establishing quality high-throughput lab systems, and scaling interpretation and return of results. This development will be key as other health systems around the country join the Project.

“We are thrilled to see the constant, fast-paced evolution of this Project with Renown IHI,” said Justin Kao, Co-Founder of Helix. “In less than a year, we have sequenced the DNA of thousands of study participants and are now preparing to offer this incredible study in other states. Combining environmental, clinical, social and genetic data allows us to discover risk factors within communities and help people take action to live longer, healthier lives. That’s what makes the next step of the Healthy USA Project so exciting for all of us.”

*Full details on study’s evolution and southern Nevada enrollment will be revealed at a press event in Las Vegas on Tuesday, May 7 at 3 p.m.*

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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 <https://healthynv.org/>.

**Helix** is a genomics company with a simple but powerful mission: to empower every person to improve their life through DNA. Our affordable, turnkey population health solution enables institutions to quickly scale projects that engage communities and accelerate research and discovery, ultimately allowing every person to benefit from the power of genomics. We've also created the first marketplace for DNA-powered products where people can explore diverse and uniquely personalized products developed by high-quality partners, providing powerful tools to increase engagement and speed the pace of population-scale genomics. Helix is headquartered in the San Francisco Bay Area, has an office in Denver, Colorado and operates a CLIA-certified and CAP-accredited next-generation sequencing lab in San Diego powered by Illumina (NASDAQ: ILMN) NGS technology. Helix was created in 2015. Learn more at [www.helix.com](http://www.helix.com).

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