# The Dish: Standing on the Shoulders of Giants

# Learning from Other Large Research Programs

[www.youtube.com/watch?v=92SB2oXggKw](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=92SB2oXggKw)

## Scene

Eric Dishman speaking.

## Eric Dishman:

Our *All of Us* Research Program is often called a cohort program. That’s the sort of scientific term. It means this is the group of people, a cohort of people, brought together to really help facilitate science and for people to be able to use that resource.

And there are many cohort programs that have come before us. We are standing on the shoulders of some huge giants, and we collaborate with many of them and have learned from many of them. You know, the UK Biobank—the leader of that cohort program is on our own advisory panel and has just taught us an enormous amount. The VA Million Veteran Program is a cohort well ahead of us. It started about eight years ago. It’s already got more than 500,000 veterans, who have amazingly donated to it. And they’re a partner of ours. And in fact, they will be part of the *All of Us* research family. We’re already, you know, trying to reach out to people who joined their cohort to also join the *All of Us* Research Program. There’s private ones. We’ve had great advice from Kaiser and Geisinger. Geisinger and Regeneron, a company that does sequencing, have been really helpful in helping us early on say, “Don’t make the mistakes that we did. Try it this way. You might want to try—do this.” And they have the advantage of an enormous group of people all in one health system who have the same electronic health record. So we’ve got some other challenges as we reach out to systems all over the country that may have very different electronic health records. But man, they are ahead of us, and we can learn from them as they go, not to mention all of the NIH previous cohorts.

The classic—the giant—the standard was the Framingham Heart Study, funded by NIH starting in the 1950s, and it’s still going today. I sure hope that I’m doing one of these video blogs 50 years from now—I’m not sure I’ll be alive, but maybe precision medicine will be that good—and looking back and saying, “Wow, our cohort of people were so committed, like they are in the Framingham Study, that they’re still doing it all of these decades later.”

What’s really important is that these cohorts come together—start to share not just best practices or “this is an easy way to do it” but the data itself. None of us have enough data on those with very rare diseases by ourselves. It is only through collaboration that we can start to accelerate the science and thus the cures for those people as well. We also need to come together to try to figure out how do we scale up some of these new technologies, like whole genome sequencing. How do you use mobile phones and wearable devices that may change from manufacturing run to manufacturing run? Is that data reliable enough to use for scientific study?

So I’m appreciative of all the help that people have given us. I’m excited to work with you to invent the future together, and I’m even more excited to start sharing data for much larger breakthroughs than what 1 million people alone can do.

## Closing slide

*All of Us* Research Program

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