# The Dish | What are the benefits of joining the *All of Us* Research Program?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xsTFrfIUIyo>

## Scene

Eric Dishman on screen.

## Eric Dishman

As I go out and talk about the *All of Us* Research Program in different communities in the country, people will sometimes ask me like, “What’s in it for me?”

And the first thing I tell everybody is “It’s in the eye of the beholder.” This is really different strokes for different folks.

But one of the first motives that comes up with the vast majority of people who come to tell me that they’ve been part of our program is the altruistic motive. I mean there are so many people that realize that, okay, your science may not happen fast enough to sort of help with my conditions, though, you know, if you’re in the study for a long time, there are chances that that will be the case. But this is really about for my children and my children’s children and sort of giving back to the country.

And that motive of altruism is one of the ones that just sort of blows me away, and it sort of reminds me of why we’re doing this in the first place. And really, quite frankly, advances in science depend on that motive.

At the same time, we’re doing some bold things that a lot of other studies definitely don’t do. You know, giving people their data and their information back, if that’s what they choose.

I’ve participated in a lot of health studies as a cancer patient in clinical trials, and everything I ever gave just went into a black hole. I have no idea what happened, and I didn’t even necessarily know did the trial work, was it successful or not. But with this program, we’re really committed to giving information back to people.

So some people talk about, “Look, I joined because I wanted my electronic health record information. I just don’t even know how to access it today.” And there are other people that have a lot of their electronic health record information, but they know that over time we’re making investments as a program to try to get a richer, more complete health record than you can often pull together very easily by yourself. And I’ve certainly experienced that myself.

Other people will be invited to give, you know, blood samples and urine specimens, and for those folks, we will run genetic information, and that’s really attractive to some people. They’re like, I want to know my genotyping information. I want my own, whole genome sequencing data, and I want to be able to go do with it what I want.

Now, I admit, when I had my whole genome sequence, I didn’t even understand that I could do other things with that data.

So even that range, there are people that it’s, like, you can do the genetic information, but I don’t want any of it back, and I think that’s a really personal decision.

A lot of people are really interested in environmental aspects of the program. So if we run a blood or urine sample, or even just look at where you live based on your ZIP code and other factors, what are your risks for diseases based on different environmental exposures?

There are many people who are very excited, because they have a chronic condition or they’re at family risk of knowing that one of the things that will happen as a result of being part of *All of Us* is if you choose, you may be invited to join other studies. Those could be studies specific to the disease that you have, or, you know, specific to the region of the country that you live in, or specific to the job type that you have. But they also could be clinical trials for new interventions or new therapies that are very promising for conditions that you or your family members have. And that’s a value proposition to a lot of people.

I certainly think that the longer you’re in it, the more chances we have to deliver value back to you. The science will become more valuable as the data grows over time, and that’s one of our commitments, too. Make sure you know what the researchers are doing with the data, but also what do they learn over time. And we’ll have smarter and smarter tools over time that can give that information right back to you based on the conditions you either care about and/or are experiencing in you and your family.

I don’t think it’s one size fits all, as with most things in this program, but those are some of the themes that we’re hearing from at least existing participants, and those are themes that we heard in our surveys even before we had participant number one, and I can’t wait to discover the reasons why you find this compelling, and what we can add to the program over time, to continue to deliver value so that you continue coming back and donate for the, hopefully, decades that are going to be required to really drive the medical breakthroughs for *All of Us.*

## Closing slide

All of Us Research Program

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