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Dr. Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia



Dr. Akinlolu Ojo



Dr. Elizabeth Calhoun

UA Health Sciences and Banner Health Receive Historic Funding as part of Landmark Precision Medicine Initiative® Cohort Program

Newly formed network of health-care provider organizations tasked with enrolling U.S. volunteers in a nationwide precision medicine program.

The [University of Arizona Health Sciences](#) and [Banner Health](#) have been awarded a \$4 million grant from the National Institutes of Health to participate in the [Precision Medicine Initiative® Cohort Program](#), which aims to enroll 1 million or more U.S. participants to improve prevention and treatment of disease based on individual differences in lifestyle, environment and genetics. The award, which totals **\$43.3 million over five years** and is the largest NIH peer-reviewed grant in Arizona history, was [announced by the NIH today](#).

The UA Health Sciences and Banner Health will make significant contributions to the diversity of enrolled participants in the NIH Precision Medicine Initiative® Cohort Program (PMI CP). The inclusion of American Indian/Alaska Native and Hispanic/Latino participants will provide greater insights to disease prevention and treatment, making these advances available to traditionally underserved populations, regardless of race, ethnicity or geography.

"Our state and the diversity of the population we serve are unique and we are committed to participating in this initiative to make it a huge success," said **Joe G.N. "Skip" Garcia, MD**, UA senior vice president for health sciences, the Dr. Merlin K. DuVal Professor of Medicine and an elected member of the National Academy of Medicine. "With the leadership team we have assembled, we have the expertise in all relevant areas to fill the needs of the Precision Medicine Initiative Cohort Program – from large clinical studies to drug discovery to genetic and genomic science to informatics and data analytics. Through our partnership with Banner Health in this initiative, we will be extending that expertise statewide and throughout the region, advancing precision health research and clinical care toward improving the health of Arizona and beyond," added Dr. Garcia.

The UA-Banner PMI CP is part of a network of regional Healthcare Provider Organizations (HPOs) participating in this landmark longitudinal effort to understand the factors contributing to individual health and disease. HPOs will engage their patients in the PMI Cohort Program, build research protocols and plans, enroll interested individuals and collect essential health data and biological specimens, with privacy and security safeguards. The data will serve as a rich scientific resource for precision medicine research.



Dr. Robert Groves

The UA-Banner Health partnership, which facilitated the establishment of a statewide regional enrollment center, further demonstrates the impact of the strategic alignment. Through this historic, 30-year UA-Banner Health academic affiliation agreement, the strength and agility of the leadership team is transforming health and establishing a new paradigm for precision medicine. Funding of the UA-Banner PMI CP also will spur the creation of new health-care jobs in Arizona, including clinical trials recruitment specialists, health-care information technology data analysts and programmers.

“The Precision Medicine Initiative Cohort Program award serves as a wonderful example of how the strengths of Banner Health and the University of Arizona Health Sciences can work together for the benefit of patients,” said **Kathy Bollinger**, executive vice president, Banner – University Medicine. “Participating in this initiative is exactly the type of collaboration we envisioned when we entered into our agreement with the University,” Bollinger added.

The PMI Cohort Program is one of the most ambitious research projects in history and will set the foundation for new ways to engage people in research. PMI volunteers will contribute a wide range of health, environment and lifestyle information.

The UA-Banner PMI CP will recruit 150,000 participants in the Southwest region, Alaska and Wyoming over five years. Using the data from the PMI Cohort Program, researchers across the country will study a wide range of questions about health and disease, including ways to significantly reduce health disparities and improve health.

The partnership between UA and Banner provides a unique opportunity to rapidly advance the goals of the PMI Cohort Program to engage participants to contribute their health data toward improving health outcomes, fuel the development of new treatments for disease and catalyze a new era of data-based and more precise preventive care and medical treatment options.

Program leaders for the UA-Banner PMI CP are:

- **Akinlolu Ojo, MD, MPH, PhD, MBA**, UAHS associate vice president for clinical research and global health initiatives and UA professor of medicine and public health.
- **Elizabeth Calhoun, PhD, MEd**, UAHS associate vice president for population health sciences, executive director of the UAHS [Center for Population Science and Discovery](#), and UA professor of public health and surgery.
- **Robert Groves, MD**, vice president, health management, and chief medical officer, Banner – University Medicine Division.

The UA-Banner PMI CP is supported by the Office of the Director, National Institutes of Health, under award number UG3OD023171.

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 almost 5,000 people, has nearly 1,000 faculty members and garners more than \$126 million in research grants and contracts annually. For more information: <http://uahs.arizona.edu>

About Banner Health

Headquartered in Arizona, Banner Health is one of the largest nonprofit health care systems in the country. The system owns and operates 29 acute-care hospitals, Banner Health Network, Banner – University Medicine, Banner Medical Group, long-term care centers, outpatient surgery centers and an array of other services, including family clinics, home care and hospice services, pharmacies and a nursing registry. Banner Health is in seven states: Alaska, Arizona, California, Colorado, Nebraska, Nevada and Wyoming. For more information, visit www.BannerHealth.com

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