This month Dr. Steven Reis, associate clinical professor for chronic illness, with SoShi Sciences at the University of Pittsburgh and the principal investigator of the All of Us Pennsylvania Research Program and Einstein Healthcare Network, and Dr. Leonard Kirschner, CEO of the Urban League of Greater Pittsburgh, discussed how this research program could have on the future of health and medicine.

EB: Good morning Steve. It is a pleasure to be here to talk with you this month. I have been learning about precision medicine for a year or so now. I know that you and your team have been working on precision awareness about precision medicine and the All of Us Pennsylvania research program. Why is it important for you?

SR: Aside from being a researcher, I am also a cardiologist. Part of my job is to prescribe medications. Imagine this: if everyone who is reading this article went to their healthcare providers today with high blood pressure that required treatment, it is likely that most of us would leave with a prescription for the same medication. Why? That is all, we are all different. Why aren't we receiving personalized and precise care?

EB: Yes, I can believe that. So how does All of Us Pennsylvania fit into changing that type of “one-size-fits-all” care?

SR: I am very excited to announce that the National Institutes of Health All of Us research study, known formally as titi at All of Us Pennsylvania, officially opened national enrollment this past Sunday. My. All of Us will be the largest study in the United States. It will enroll one million people nationally. We aim to enroll 120,000 participants here in Pennsylvania. The goal is to create a large database that includes information about people’s lifestyles, environment, occupational history, medical history and biological makeup. It is about big data that will lead to scientific discoveries to make disease prevention and treatment more precise and individualized.

The University of Pittsburgh is playing a key role in this landmark study. As of last week we have enrolled more than 1,000 people. Nationally, there are over 27,000 individuals who are currently participating in the All of Us research program.

EB: That is a great question. How does it have an impact on your community?

SR: What is a great question, Esther, and one that comes up every time I talk about this study. Diversity means so many things. It can be ethnic, race, health, sex or even the neighborhood, sexual orientation, age— the list could go on. Nationally, the NIH has a goal that 5% of the million people who will be enrolled fall into a category that has traditionally been underrepresented in biomedical research. In research, we want people and work with organizations across the region to spread awareness about this program. It’s very important to include diverse individuals from our region so that the results of this study will be relevant to all of us here in Pennsylvania. I like that. I know that the All of Us Pennsylvania engagement team has come to the Urban League to talk to our staff and clientele about this opportunity, and that they will be out and about in the community throughout the summer. I am proud to be part of this effort.

EB: Thank you Esther. I can’t overstate the importance of Pitt being part of this study so that we can improve the health of our communities. And that includes all of our community and academic partners. We want everyone in our region to hear about this study, and determine if it is right for you. There is more information on this page and anyone can visit our website at www.allofus.gov. Thank you for your time and your continued partnership. I firmly believe that this study is critically important to the health of both Pennsylvania and our nation.