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## What \$39M from NIH means for Vibrent Health's business — and the database it's helping to build



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Fairfax's Vibrent Health has banked millions of dollars from the National Institutes of Health, an award that locks in the health technology company's continuing role in a major longitudinal research initiative as it looks to expand its own business amid the pandemic.

The fast-growing health data firm has secured \$39 million from the NIH to provide its digital health platform for another five years to the All of Us research program, a precision medicine effort to build a diverse patient database of more than 1 million sequenced genomes and other health data. The latest funding — which covers the first year of the five-year award — follows a \$75 million federal grant Vibrent landed in 2016 for this work. Since then, the program has been using the Northern Virginia company's tech to capture patients' medical record data — to help researchers identify disease patterns and, ultimately, improve diagnoses and treatment.

"As their health changes, the health research is able to benefit with continuous data collec-

tion, and you can see changes in people's genetics, environment, lifestyle, behavior and clinically," Praduman Jain, founder and CEO of Vibrent, said in an interview. "So you are able to take a comprehensive look at a million people's data over many, many years, and see how their health is changing and how that can then help inform new health discoveries in the future."

The All of Us program comes from NIH and a network of health care partners, academic institutions and other organizations. It started enrolling patients in 2018 and is expected to last 10 years.

"All of Us is designed to reflect the rich diversity of the United States and give historically underrepresented groups the opportunity to contribute to — and benefit from — a wide range of research studies that will further our understanding of health and disease," Dr. Josh Denny, CEO of All of Us, said in a statement. Vibrent's platform, which now has more than 356,000 study participants enrolled, "provides the infrastructure to help people enroll, contribute information securely and stay connected with the program over time."

Just as coronavirus has forced people to adapt to virtual tools, the pandemic has changed health research — which, until now, has relied on individuals visiting a physical location and interacting in-person with research teams. That shift "only increased relevance and need for our tools," Jain said. The public health crisis has also exposed more people — potential health research participants — to technology.

"That only helps us, because now, even the underserved populations that traditionally have not participated in health research are automatically getting trained and are forced to start using technology," Jain said, adding: "We believe in inclusion of underrepresented populations is critical in health research."

Jain started Vibrent — one of the WBJ's 2017

Startups to Watch — in 2009. It was "the proverbial: used my 401K to start the company" story, he said, and it's since evolved into a profitable and expanding business, with tools for study participants, researchers seeking access to data and sponsors looking for accountability as they fund studies. Its customer base comprises a combination of government and commercial clients in the health research market.

Vibrent is preparing to launch a version of its platform for a new market: hospitals and academic medical centers, as they express interest in studying large populations over long periods. Next year, the company will look to expand those customers and grow revenue by at least 15% to 20%, "as well as continue to lead technology innovation for research," Jain said. "That's critical."

That comes after Vibrent developed and launched a survey in June for more than 325,000 All of Us participants, to better understand the impact of Covid-19 on physical and mental health, for researchers to use to analyze patterns to create response strategies, Jain said. Vibrent is also growing its team, now with about 170 employees and 22 positions open across technology, communications, marketing, software, development operations, cloud and product management areas.

The last six years have seen "several hundred percent of growth" in revenue, number of study participants using the platform and number of institutions using the product, Jain said, declining to disclose specifics.

"What we saw was a need for a fast and efficient product offering, there was a need for modern tools that use the latest technologies, there was a need for data interoperability, and there was a need to drive transparency through data-driven approaches in the world of health research," Jain said. "And that's what we started out with to say, we're going to change this, we're going to make this happen."