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Fitbit trackers selected for one of NIH's largest research programs

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Fitbit Inc. has been selected to provide wristband activity trackers for National Institutes of Health's largest ever research programs "All of Us". This programme is an ambitious effort to recruit and collect health data from 1 million people in the United States.

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The program will collect genetic information from participants and use wearable devices to track health-related metrics including heart rate and sleep patterns.

Fitbit is the first device maker to be selected for the program, which is the NIH's first pilot project with wearables, and will initially provide 10,000 wristbands.

Dr. Steven Steinhubl of the Scripps Translational Science Institute, one of several research institutions helping to lead the program said, "Enrollment began in May and about 8,000 people have volunteered to participate so far, said. Researchers hope to track participants for at least a decade. We know the wearable sensors are going to be a large part of the information we're going to be collecting. Everything we can learn about things as simple as resting heart rate and sleep patterns (is) going to be a start of learning more and more about people."

"We'll have to learn how to best provide information in a way that doesn't just create distress. Some may want every bit of data. Others may want a small amount of actionable information. It might mean sharing the information with their doctor. We'll fail if all we do is say, 'Here's all your information, if you have questions, see your doctor.' That's not going to work", he added.