Using the Bionimbus Protected Data Cloud (PDC):

Obtaining Access Credentials FAQ

It's very important that a PDC user is the only one who logs in with an account.   If you have members of your lab that would like to participate in this research, we ask that they each get separate accounts on the PDC.   Having an account used by a single prescribed user is an important step in keeping the PDC secure and protected.

Before your account is created on the Bionimbus Protected Data Cloud (PDC), you'll need the following credentials:
   1) an eRA Commons account
   2) dbGaP access
   3) TCGA access for your research project
   4) dbGaP / TCGA access assigned to all researchers in your Lab requiring access to the PDC

What follows are detailed instructions for gaining each of those credentials.

Getting an eRA Commons Account

You can learn more generally about eRA Commons and how to register your organization or institution at: http://era.nih.gov/commons/faq_commons.cfm#IV1

A list of other helpful links to learn more about the eRA Commons process include:
Main eRA Commons access:
https://public.era.nih.gov/commons/public/
Helpful Steps for Navigating eRA Commons:
http://era.nih.gov/commons/steps_commons.cfm
NIH / eRA Helpdesk/Ticketing System:
http://era.nih.gov/help/index.cfm#era

NOTE: If you're working with an academic institution, they can often help navigate this process.

<h1 style="text-align:center">Getting dbGaP Access</h1>

1) To get authorized access start at this site:
   https://dbgap.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/aa/wga.cgi?page=login
2) Login to the webpage above and follow the instructions.
3) You will probably complete form SF 424, which will have the section listed in 4. below.
4) Under the Research Plan Attachment there are 2 sections. Below is some sample text you can use to fill out this application for access to TCGA data.

Research use statement:

[**ENTER SHORT DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT/ANALYSIS INTENDED**]

The [**ENTER PROJECT NAME**] will be utilizing the technical capabilities of the Bionimbus Protected Data Cloud (PDC) to analyze multiple TCGA datasets.
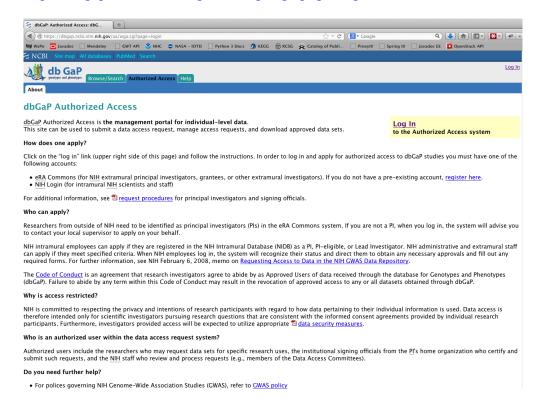
The PDC is a secure FISMA compliant biomedical cloud with an NIH trusted partner status that includes approved access to dbGAP TCGA data for distribution to approved authorized users. It is a project that is building a cloud computing resource for the research community so that authorized researchers can manage, analyze and share large quantities of protected human genomic data in a secure and compliant fashion. The Bionimbus PDC is designed to hold both controlled access data (e.g. Level 1 BAM files from CGHub) and open access data (e.g. de-identified clinical data from the TCGA Data Coordination Center). The cloud computing model allows researchers immediate access to data and computational resources without the burden of maintaining numerous servers and large repositories of sensitive data in a local facility. This is especially important for projects such as The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA), which currently has about 500 terabytes of Level 1 data and is projected to grow to multiple petabytes. The PDC will provide the capability to complete the proposed analysis on an expedited, compressed schedule.

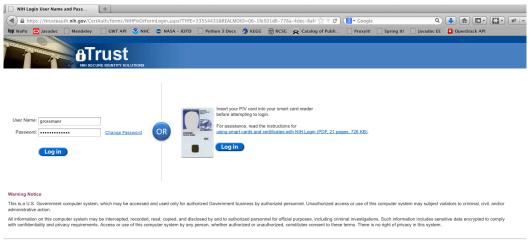**Non-technical summary of Research use statement**:

The proposed analysis of [ENTER PROJECT NAME AND POTENTIAL RESULTS SOUGHT] will be expedited using the Bionimbus Protected Data Cloud (PDC).
The Bionimbus PDC is a project that is building a cloud computing resource for the research community so that authorized researchers can manage, analyze and share large quantities of protected human genomic data in a secure and compliant fashion. With the Bionimbus PDC, users can login and have immediate access to data from The Cancer Genome Atlas (TCGA) that they are authorized to view as well as computational resources so that they can easily analyze the data without first downloading it.

Getting TCGA Access for Your Research Project

1) Once you have access to dbGaP, go to the dbGaP login page and login in the upper right with your eRA Commons username and password:
https://dbgap.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/aa/wga.cgi?page=login

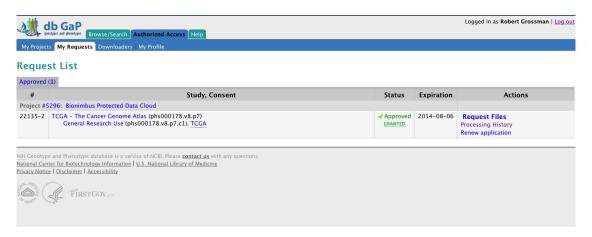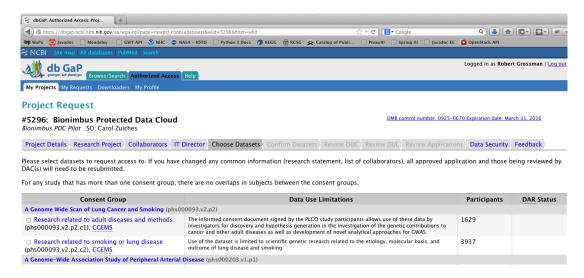2) This will take you to the NIH Secure Identity Solutions Login Page:

3) From here, you'll see the "My Projects" page.   Here you can create a new research project (follow the required steps after hitting "Create New Research Project") or revise your project to request TCGA access ("Revise Project" link on the right):

4) You can check and see if your Research Project has TCGA access by going to the "My Requests" tab.   You should see "Approved" under the status.
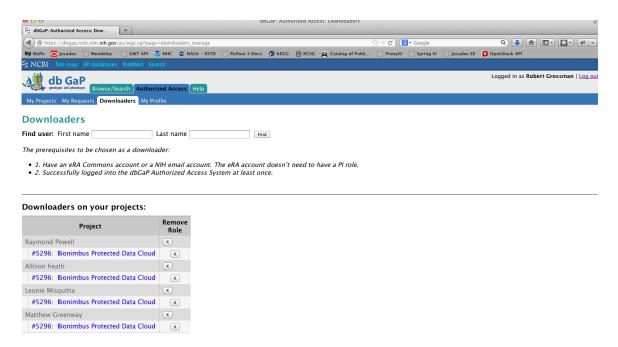

5) If you do not see TCGA as approved under your research project, choose the "Datasets" Tab, select "TCGA", click "Add Selected and Continue" at the bottom of the page, and walk through the required steps.
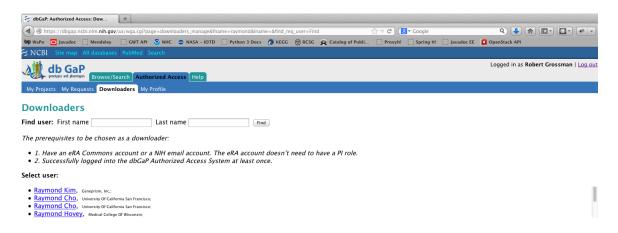
Granting access to Individuals in your Lab

1) Once you have an accepted research project and TCGA access, you can give access to other members of your lab who will require PDC accounts.   To do so, go to the "Downloaders" tab:

2) The person you are giving access to must a) have an eRA Commons account and b) have successfully logged into the dbGaP Authorization System at least once using their eRA (https://dbgap.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/aa/wga.cgi?page=login)

Use the "Find User" fields for First Name and Last Name. The Lab member should come up in the list.   NOTE: There's a small scroll bar on the right that you can easily miss.

3) Select their name, and add them to the project, hit "Set Downloader"