

## **Cures Within Reach seeks clinical trials in health disparities or led by underserved researchers**

### **Ten clinical trials starting soon in Diversity, Equity & Inclusion, including health disparities trials that engage community-based organizations**

Chicago – April 21, 2022 – [Cures Within Reach](#), a global nonprofit leading the use of medical repurposing research that tests approved therapies in new indications to improve patients' lives, announced the opening of four funding opportunity Requests for Proposals (RFPs) for clinical trials that impact Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI). These RFPs seek clinical repurposing trials to improve health disparities, underrepresentation of racial minority researchers in the U.S., and underserved researchers in low and lower-middle income countries (LMICs). From these RFPs, Cures Within Reach expects to select at least six clinical trials for funding in late 2022.

After similar RFPs in 2021, Cures Within Reach selected 10 DEI-related clinical trials to test approved treatments in new indications across many disease areas. These trials are starting as early as Spring 2022 after regulatory and related approvals.

Five of the 10 are health disparities trials that include the engagement of health and/or social services-related community-based organizations that are trusted and already engaged with communities of color to support the trials. These trials also seek to engage and educate prospective participants, help to reduce fear and mistrust of participation, and share the opportunity to improve the health and healthcare of communities of color. This community engagement, funded by CWR, is an integral part of these clinical trials.

In the U.S., respected research institutions from New York to California will start the following clinical trials soon, all led by underrepresented researchers and five within health disparities:

- Testing a combination of repurposed cancer drugs to treat **oral cancer** in Pacific Islander patients at Stanford University
- Repurposing pelvic floor electrical stimulation for the treatment of **chronic pelvic pain** at University of California, Los Angeles
- Addressing **chronic pain in HIV** patients with an approved addiction treatment at Emory University School of Medicine
- Repurposing a diagnostic device to address health disparities in **esophageal cancer** screening and outcomes in Black and Hispanic patients at University of Illinois, Chicago
- Topical probiotic sinus irrigations for the treatment of **chronic rhinosinusitis**: a randomized controlled trial at University of Illinois, Chicago
- Cannabidiol for the treatment of chronic pain in patients with **sickle cell disease**: a randomized controlled trial at Albert Einstein College of Medicine
- Repurposing a rare disease treatment for the immune disorder **eosinophilic esophagitis** at Cincinnati Children's Hospital Medical Center

In addition, three more clinical trials will start soon in LMICs:

- For **pancreatitis/chronic pancreatitis** patients in India
- For **triple negative breast cancer** in Nigeria
- In **pediatric chronic ear infections** in Nigeria



Cures Within Reach's [DEI](#) goals include reducing health disparities, improving health equity and increasing diversity in medical research. These proof-of-concept clinical trials that test already approved therapies may help overcome skepticism among patients of color regarding clinical trial participation. In the U.S., this initiative also helps to support racial and ethnic minority researchers who receive less funding from the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and other sources, and, therefore, are underserved in scientific research, according to a 2020 NIH report.

Cures Within Reach's DEI trials are supported by donors and sponsors that include the **Searle Funds at The Chicago Community Trust, Takeda Pharmaceuticals' R&D Center for Health Equity and Patient Affairs, Burroughs Wellcome Fund** and others.

"Burroughs Wellcome Fund (BWF) is excited to partner with Cures Within Reach for this innovative RFP to address health disparities. By engaging community-based organizations who are actively working with the communities affected by health inequities, innovative new therapies are more accessible to a wider swath of patients," said BWF Program Officer Dr. Kelly Rose. "Involving a diverse patient population in clinical trials can lead to a data set that more accurately represents how the intervention will work in the general public and lead to more robust therapies."

"Our funding partners represent a variety of interests, but with aligned goals to address health disparities," said Barbara Goodman, president and CEO of Cures Within Reach. "These include foundations with geographic interests, industry who prioritizes health equity beyond their own portfolio, and private foundations who value catalytic impact in unsolved diseases through low-risk, high-reward efforts that we support."

Cures Within Reach's focuses on first-in-human or proof-of-concept clinical repurposing trials that catalyze the follow-on funding needed to continue the research – building evidence for publication and follow-on trials allowing clinicians to make their own decisions with their patients (called off-label use), or for regulatory approval by the FDA or other agencies. In addition to this DEI initiative, other 2022 initiatives at Cures Within Reach include impacting Veterans' Issues and Pediatrics, as well as several disease-specific efforts.

"There is a very real and pressing need to diversify the clinical trial ecosystem to include traditionally under-represented patients and researchers, particularly those from communities of color, says Dr. Chris Reddick, Vice President and Head of R&D Health Equity at Takeda. "We are working with partners like Cures Within Reach to empower clinical researchers to address the health inequities that matter most to their communities and ultimately to provide better care for their patients long-term."