

# CURES WITHIN REACH RESEARCH SPOTLIGHT: A VOICE FOR VOICES: COMBINING MUSIC AND MEDICINE

In 2022, Cures Within Reach funded the **University of Illinois Chicago (UIC)** to support an exploratory trial led by **Dr. H. Steven Sims** repurposing a diagnostic device, transnasal esophagoscopy (TNE), for esophageal cancer screening. While TNE is commonly used to screen for the cancer subtype most common in Caucasian patients, Dr. Sims hopes to apply the same technology towards screening in communities of color, who often have a different subtype of esophageal cancer and face worse health outcomes. Through this community-based study, Dr. Sims hopes to identify patients with the appropriate risk factors and screen for cancer using this device.

Dr. Sims's career as a laryngologist combines his love for medicine with his passion for singing and voice. Currently, he serves as the Francis L. Lederer Professor of Otolaryngology at UIC as well as the Director of the Chicago Institute for Voice Care, working with opera soloists and Broadway show performing artists to care for voice and airway disorders – spreading awareness around unique vocal issues faced by performers. Dr. Sims has also researched the mechanics of beatboxing, discovering that it may actually help relieve stress of the vocal cords, and has led community workshops and presentations for gospel singers and other vocal professionals.

In addition, Dr. Sims has been a force for change: he is a member of several UIC committees in the areas of advancing health equity, anti-racism, and underrepresented minorities in medicine. He was recognized as a Chicago Defender Man of Excellence for his personal and professional leadership among African-American men.

Dr. Sims is a voice for voices – providing expert care for patients with vocal and esophageal conditions and transforming lives through his love for music.



## PROFILE

- Dr. H. Steven Sims is a laryngologist providing his patients, including professional vocalists, with expert care on voice disorders.
- As well as being a clinician and a singer, Dr. Sims also plays trombone, piano, and bassoon.

## CWR FUNDING

- This \$72,000 **Phase I clinical trial** is repurposing a diagnostic tool for esophageal cancer screening in men of color, plus \$10,000 to fund engagement of community-based organizations.
- Dr. Sims and this trial represent 4 of Cures Within Reach's communities:
  - **Diversity, Equity & Inclusion**
  - **Chicago**
  - **Oncology**
  - **Rare Diseases**

Cures Within Reach leverages the speed, safety and cost-effectiveness by testing approved therapies for new indications, driving more treatments to more patients more quickly.

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