

Repurposing Research for Prostate Cancer

Grant Type: **Dollar support**

Dollar Amount: **\$40,000**

Foundation Name: **Cures Within Reach**



What was your objective with the grant or initiative?

The grant was to fund a small proof-of-concept clinical research trial of a promising treatment for prostate cancer; the hope was that data from this trial would be leveraged quickly into larger funding and, thus, change the standard of care. The trial repurposed a heat ablation laser—originally developed for liver cysts—to cure prostate cancer in an outpatient setting in a single, short visit while eliminating the potential side effects of incontinence and impotence. The nine-patient trial took place at the University of Chicago with the support of the radiology and urology departments.

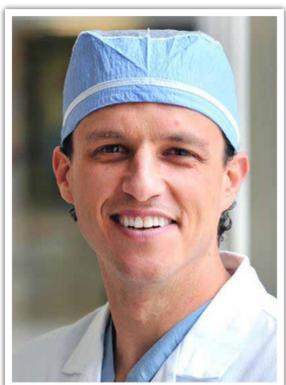
What were the results of this grant or initiative?

Eight of nine patients enrolled in this “first in human” clinical trial had no evidence of cancer and no side effects after their outpatient treatment. They were back to a normal life the next day and remained cancer free years after treatment. The data from this trial led to a \$500,000 grant from the National Institutes of Health to fund a larger clinical trial, which reconfirmed the cure rate, lack of side effects, and minimal life interruption. This significant advance therapy now is considered part of the standard of care for prostate cancer and is available at clinical centers around the country.

Why would you say this grant or initiative had outsized impact?

This small grant had an outsized impact on patient outcomes and health care cost reductions for a major disease. For this research trial, government funding required human clinical data, and no company had profit incentive to fund it, so philanthropy had to get the ball rolling. The required equipment already was available at hospitals, so the trial was affordable and fairly straightforward. The leverage from this \$40,000 grant will improve thousands of lives per year, eliminate debilitating side effects, save \$40 million per year in treatment costs, and go from idea to patient use in less than 5 years.

Cures Within Reach learned that medical research does not have to be a black hole of funding or take generations to impact patient lives. Numerous opportunities are available to improve patient outcomes and reduce health care costs in the near term by repurposing science and medicine that already exists for human use—but for which no profit motive exists. Philanthropic funding can step in to quickly and safely improve patient outcomes in such situations, often with the bonus of creating a treatment that reduces cost of care.



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