

Rick Kittles, Ph.D.
Associate Professor,
Department of Medicine
University of Chicago



Rick Kittles received a B.S. in Biology from the Rochester Institute of Technology in 1989 and a Ph.D. in Biological Sciences from George Washington University in 1998. He then went to Howard University where he helped establish the National Human Genome Center at Howard University. As co-director of Molecular Genetics he directed large-scale DNA sequencing projects. Kittles coordinated a national cooperative network to study the genetics of hereditary prostate cancer in the African American community. In 2003 he also co-founded African Ancestry, Inc., a private company that provides DNA testing services for tracing African genetic lineages to genealogists and the general public around the world. Dr. Kittles research interests explore DNA, family history, and disease. Dr. Kittles is a national leader on Race, genetics and health disparities, and cancer risk. His work on tracing the genetic ancestry of African Americans has brought to focus many issues, new and old, which relate to race, ancestry, identity, and group membership. Dr. Kittles' high profile research and his strong ability to communicate genetic concepts and issues to the lay public has been featured over the past decade in five BBC and PBS network documentaries, CNN, and an interview with Leslie Stahl on CBS *60 Minutes*. He has published numerous articles and book chapters on genetic variation in the African diaspora, "Race", prostate cancer, and Health Disparities. Currently he is Associate Professor of Genetic Medicine in the Department of Medicine at the University of Chicago and Associate Director for Diversity and Community Relations at the University of Chicago Cancer Research Center (UCCRC).

Dr. Kittles has developed a comprehensive outreach program at the UCCRC called CECOS (Community Engagement Centering on Solutions). The mission of CECOS is to systematically provide programming addressing the University of Chicago Cancer Research Center's research in Chicago's medically underserved communities. By pursuing this mission, CECOS is striving to set up a meaningful exchange of ideas and perspectives between the community and the UCCRC. We expect that this exchange will promote partnerships that will lead to participation in UCCRC clinical trials, promote healthier neighborhoods, and most importantly, will result in sound, culturally appropriate, and relevant research. CECOS holds quarterly community forums that provide experts and presentations to the community on specific topics related to cancer.