

**Mission:**

To protect, promote & improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county & community efforts.



**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**John H. Armstrong, MD, FACS**  
State Surgeon General & Secretary

**Vision:** To be the **Healthiest State** in the Nation

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**THE DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH AWARDS 15 GRANTS TO RESEARCHERS WORKING TO CURE CANCER AND TOBACCO-RELATED DISEASES**

**TALLAHASSEE** – The Florida Department of Health has awarded funding for 15 research projects to find cures for cancer and tobacco-related diseases. This funding supports research to find cures for cancers that affect Florida’s families. Cancer is the leading cause of death in Florida, claiming 41,696 Florida lives in 2012.

“Our agency supported nearly \$8 million in grants for 26 cancer research projects in June of 2012 and we are constantly canvassing the state for new and innovative research ideas,” said Secretary of Health and State Surgeon General Dr. John Armstrong. “We are pleased to award these additional 15 grants which will move Florida forward through state-of-the-art research, collaboration, and care.”

The awards are intended to advance the cure of all cancers and funding was allocated to researchers with diverse projects. Ninety-one original applications from twelve universities and research institutions were submitted. Of the 15 recipients, one award will fund research on a promising treatment for patients with kidney cancer. Researchers targeting the most common cancer in Florida, lung cancer, received two awards. Five awards support projects researching a wider scope of cancers, including skin, liver, and colon cancer. Two awards were allocated to address cancers of the blood. Additional awards for research on tobacco-related diseases included six studies on heart disease and one study on chronic obstructive pulmonary disease.

Funding for the awards comes from programs established by the Florida Legislature. The James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program supports initiatives addressing tobacco-related diseases including cancer, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and pulmonary disease. The Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program provides grants to further the search for a cure to all types of cancer.

State Representative Marti Coley said, “I am extremely pleased that Surgeon General Armstrong and the Department of Health are judiciously targeting the resources provided by the Legislature, to strategically fund research that ultimately will save lives and find the best treatments for cancer. We all know someone who has suffered through this terrible disease, and by focusing our efforts and working collaboratively, I am optimistic we will find a cure for cancer in our lifetime.”

State Senator Eleanor Sobel said, “I want to extend my congratulations to the research project teams receiving these critical grants. As a member of the Florida Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council, I am encouraged to see the cancer research community collaborating across the state and moving together toward improved treatment for those Floridians dealing with cancer.”

Alan F. List, M.D., President and CEO of Moffitt Cancer Center, said, “The state’s continued commitment to cancer research is critical to finding cures for this disease. With declining federal dollars, we are fortunate that the state is willing to prioritize and support this research effort, and it sends an important message to Floridians that we are serious about ending cancer. We appreciate the commitment of the surgeon general to make Florida a destination for outstanding cancer treatment and research.”

**Florida Department of Health**

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Dr. David S. Guzick, Senior Vice President for Health Affairs and President of University of Florida Health said, "The benefit of dedicated cancer research is that it enables people to detect cancer earlier, manage it every day and lead longer, healthier lives in the process. At UF Health, we have some of the nation's leading cancer doctors committed to providing the highest quality of patient care. In addition to their own research, they work hand in hand with scientists who are developing new tools and technologies, with a focus on clinical and translational research. It is collaborations like these that are instrumental in the fight against cancer."

Dr. Johannes Vieweg, M.D., Professor and Founding Chairman of the Department of Urology at the University of Florida said, "We are fortunate to live in a state committed to finding new cures for cancer and tobacco-related illnesses. The grant dollars provided by the Florida Department of Health and dedicated to cancer research are critical for developing new knowledge and discovering new cures for the most debilitating diseases that afflict the Floridians that we serve."

Dr. Richard J. Bookman, Ph.D., American Heart Association Representative and Chair of Florida's Biomedical Research Advisory Council (BRAC) said, "With these awards, Florida and the Department of Health show their continued commitment to quality science that can lead to better treatments and cures for Floridians with cancer and tobacco-related diseases. Today, with the federal budget under such tremendous pressure, the Bridge grants send a strong message to the very best biomedical researchers in Florida: 'We've got your back!' They will provide critical resources to keep research moving forward and keep research jobs in Florida. Our 'Technology Transfer Feasibility' awards represent a great collaboration between the Biomedical Research Advisory Council, the DOH and the university-based technology transfer managers. Florida has developed this innovative approach to provide critical early stage support to bring breakthrough ideas out of the lab and move them closer to reality for our patients through commercialization."

Megan Wessel, Vice President for Cancer Control at the American Cancer Society, Florida Division, said, "We applaud the state's ongoing commitment to funding cutting-edge research through a competitive, peer-review process. This elicits the best science from the brightest investigators - which translates into hope for Floridians battling cancer and tobacco-related illness."

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