

March 8, 2018

FLORIDA HEALTH AWARDS \$2 MILLION FOR CHILDHOOD CANCER RESEARCH



Contact:

Communications Office

NewsMedia@flhealth.gov

850-245-4111

Tallahassee, Fla. — The Florida Department of Health is pleased to announce \$2 million in research funding as part of the Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative. Awarded to five universities and cancer research centers across the state, these funds will support researchers in their efforts to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and to develop cures for childhood cancer.

“The Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative will go a long way in supporting Florida’s world-class cancer researchers in making vital advancements in pediatric cancer treatment and prevention,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary Dr. Celeste Philip. “I look forward to seeing the progress made through these research grants in further protecting children fighting this deadly disease.”

The following organizations received awards:

- University of Florida - \$200,000 for one project;
- University of Central Florida - \$200,000 for one project;
- University of Miami - \$200,000 for one project;
- Miami Cancer Institute/Baptist Health South Florida - \$700,000 for one project; and
- Florida International University - \$700,000 for one project.

The department awarded these grants based on rigorous peer review. The funding supports a series of projects related to pediatric cancers including prevention and treatment of acute lymphocytic leukemia, nervous system cancer, pediatric medulloblastoma, and brain and skull base tumors.

“Our children’s well-being is of utter importance to me. As a legislator, I led the charge to allocate \$4.4 million dollars to fund research exclusively to childhood cancer in Florida and I will continue fighting for this cause until there is a cure. Live Like Bella works tirelessly for this mission daily to raise awareness and support families affected by this epidemic. I applaud their hard work and efforts to ensure that childhood cancer becomes a treatable and curable disease,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Anitere Flores (R-Miami, Monroe).

“We would like to congratulate the grant recipients of the Live Like Bella Initiative. It is thanks to their vision and innovation that we are working towards ensuring that childhood cancer become a treatable and curable disease,” said Nicole de Lara Puente, CEO of the Live Like Bella Childhood Cancer Foundation. “Florida proudly leads by example as the very first state to allocate funding for pediatric cancer. We thank Senator Anitere Flores for creating this initiative

honoring Bella Rodriguez-Torres – a young girl who may have lost her battle to cancer but wins today as we commit to doing research in her honor,” she added.

Dr. Richard S. Nowakowski, Vice Chair of the Biomedical Research Advisory Council (BRAC) said, “The first year of the Live Like Bella Pediatric Cancer Research Initiative marks an important investment by the State of Florida in the health of children who have cancer. The awards funded this year cover research towards treatment and cures for the most common kinds of cancer that affect children and includes basic, translational and clinical research. The BRAC is proud to be able to take a role in this grant program.”

About the Florida Department of Health

The department, nationally accredited by the [Public Health Accreditation Board](#), works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and Twitter at [@HealthyFla](#). For more information about the Florida Department of Health, please visit www.FloridaHealth.gov.