

Jan. 28, 2016

MORE THAN \$16 MILLION IN GRANTS AWARDED TO RESEARCHERS TO CURE CANCER AND TOBACCO-RELATED DISEASES



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Tallahassee, Fla.—Today, the Florida Department of Health announced that over \$16 million in research funding was awarded to 17 different projects through the Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program and the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program. These funds, dispersed among a number of universities and cancer research centers across the state, will support researchers in their efforts to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and develop cures for cancer and tobacco-related diseases.

“Florida is committed to relieving the burden of cancer and tobacco-related disease on Florida’s youth, adults, and families through the Bankhead-Coley and James and Esther King research programs,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “These seventeen newly awarded research projects show outstanding promise to move prevention and cure from hope to reality.”

The department awarded these grants based on rigorous peer review. The application process was competitive with 160 researchers seeking funding for cancer or tobacco-related diseases, including heart and lung diseases.

The funding supports a new series of projects related to cancer and tobacco-related diseases, including prevention and treatment, technology transfer feasibility, treatment-related morbidities, tobacco use and health disparities. The cancer research focuses on the most common cancers such as breast, lung and prostate cancer. Other research includes the facilitation of smoking cessation, gene therapy for stroke, and lung cancer immunotherapy. One project in particular is geared toward bio-behavioral intervention for smokers living with HIV.

Funding supports researchers at the state's cancer centers, universities and research institutes. The following organizations received awards:

- Florida Atlantic University – \$1,231,336 for one project;
- Florida International University – \$1,628,449 for one project;
- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute – \$4,854,431 for four projects;
- Mayo Clinic Florida – \$965,143 for one project;
- Sanford-Burnham Medical Discovery Institute – \$100,000 for one project;
- University of Florida – \$4,542,030 for six projects;

- University of Miami – \$2,836,325 for two projects; and
- University of South Florida – \$100,000 for one project.

Dr. Daniel Armstrong, Chair of the Biomedical Research Advisory Council said, “Cancer and tobacco-related disease are two of the top causes of death in Florida. This new round of state funding for outstanding research proposals helps us move forward with the goals of our state biomedical research plan, and will serve to further extend the quality of life for all individuals.”

Dr. Thomas George, Chair of the Florida Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council said, “This funding for cancer research through Bankhead-Coley and James and Esther King will help advance our goal of finding cures for the diseases that affect so many Americans. By supporting these researchers, we can make meaningful progress through specialized, focused projects, and we are delighted to be making these developments in our state.”

Stephanie Leeds, Vice President for Advocacy for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network in Florida said, "The Bankhead-Coley Cancer Program and the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program prevent pain and suffering from cancer. These programs help us learn new ways to better prevent and treat diseases and benefit everyone in our state.”

About the Florida Department of Health

The department works to protect, promote and improve the health of all people in Florida through integrated state, county and community efforts.

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