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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

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Contact: Communications Office
(850) 245-4111

14 GRANTS AWARDED TO RESEARCHERS WORKING TO CURE CANCER AND TOBACCO-RELATED DISEASES

TALLAHASSEE—Today, the Florida Department of Health announces more than \$18 million in research grant dollars being awarded to fund 14 research projects. Researchers at cancer centers, universities and research institutes across the state will receive these grants to advance research of tobacco-related diseases, including many types of cancers.

“Florida is committed to finding innovative treatments for cancer and tobacco-related disease through competitive research grants,” said State Surgeon General and Secretary of Health Dr. John Armstrong. “Out of 175 proposals, the 14 selected for funding hold great promise for restoring health to Florida’s families dealing with cancer, heart disease and lung disease.”

The awards will improve research aimed at the cure of cancers and tobacco-related diseases, and researchers with diverse projects have received funding. The Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program and the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program provide funding for the awards.

The application process was competitive with 59 applicants seeking funding for tobacco-related diseases, including heart and lung diseases. In addition, 116 applicants sought funding for cancer research. The department awarded these grants based on rigorous peer review. The competition resulted in only 8 percent of applicants receiving funding, which is consistent with the standards used by federal funding agencies and demonstrates this grant program has rigorous standards for scientific peer review.

The funding supports a wide range of novel projects related to cancer and tobacco-related diseases, including research on prevention and treatment, screening, treatment-related morbidities, tobacco use and health disparities. The research covers the most common types of cancers such as breast, lung and prostate cancers and includes research on melanoma and leukemia. One project expands smoking cessation interventions in a Spanish language clinical trial while another addresses racial/ethnic tobacco health disparities through group intervention.

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

- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center—five researchers
- Mayo Clinic Jacksonville—one researcher
- Sanford-Burnham Medical Research Institute—one researcher
- University of Florida—four researchers
- University of Miami—three researchers

“Finding better treatments for tobacco-related diseases like lung cancer will benefit all Floridians,” said House Health Quality Chair Cary Pigman, M.D. “These grants from the Bankhead-Coley Cancer Research Program and the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program will further boost an already robust research community in the state of Florida.”

“Cancer is a modern-day plague and these awards will help researchers in Florida fight lung cancer and other tobacco-related diseases,” said Senate President Pro Tempore Garrett Richter. “I congratulate the research teams awarded with these grants and commend the Department of Health and the Biomedical Research Advisory Council for their commitment to fighting disease in Florida.”

Dr. Daniel Armstrong, Chair of the Biomedical Research Advisory Council said, "Florida has made a significant and strategic plan to reduce the cancer burden and mortality. Florida has made a commitment to fund research to improve screening for high risk cancer, address health disparities, development new and novel treatments, and bring best practices from research institutions to communities. These grants are a great step forward in achieving these strategic goals in cancer and tobacco-related diseases."

“Among the risk factors for mortality, tobacco use is the single most preventable cause of death and disease, including lung cancer and lung disease,” said Brenda Olsen, Chief Mission Officer of the American Lung Association of the Southeast. “The American Lung Association is excited to see that the James and Esther King Research Program will continue to award funds that will be used to research better prevention, diagnosis, and cures for cancers.”

“More than 114,000 Floridians will be diagnosed with cancer this year,” said Stephanie Leeds, vice president for advocacy for the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network in Florida. “The Bankhead-Coley Cancer Program and the James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program plays an important role in making funds available to ensure we can greatly advance the fight against cancer by funding promising research that can prevent suffering and death that comes from cancer.”

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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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