



# **Cancer Center of Excellence Award**

## **Annual Report**

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**December 15, 2017**

**Rick Scott**  
Governor

**Celeste Philip, MD, MPH**  
Surgeon General and Secretary of Health

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## **Cancer Center of Excellence Award Program Overview**

The designation of a hospital, treatment center, or other organization as a Cancer Center of Excellence is intended to recognize organizations that demonstrate excellence in patient-centered coordinated care for persons undergoing cancer treatment and therapy in Florida. The goals of the Cancer Center of Excellence Award program (section 381.925, Florida Statutes) are to encourage excellence in cancer care in Florida, attract and retain the best cancer care professionals to the state, and help Florida organizations be recognized nationally as a preferred destination for quality cancer care. Cancer institutions that meet the criteria as a Cancer Center of Excellence, receive the award for a three year period. After the three-year period, recipients have the opportunity to seek re-designation.

By December 15 of each year, the Department reports the following information to the President of the Senate and the Speaker of the House of Representatives, as required by Florida Statute:

- The number of applications received
- The number of award recipients by application cycle
- A list of award recipients
- Recommendations to strengthen the program

The Joint Committee (committee) comprises members from the Florida Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council and the Florida Biomedical Research Advisory Council. The committee developed and reviews the rigorous performance measures, a rating system, and a rating standard that must be achieved to document and distinguish a cancer center that excels in providing quality, comprehensive, and patient-centered coordinated care. As required, the committee meets every three years and did so in the fall of 2016. The committee unanimously approved the recommended changes. These changes were incorporated into the original designation and re-designation manual and performance measures.

## **Application Cycles**

### **2017**

The Department conducted two application cycles in 2017 for new applicants. The first application cycle was conducted from March 15 to May 10, 2017 and the second cycle was

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conducted from September 13 to November 13, 2017. There were no applications submitted for either of these cycles.

In 2017, the first re-designation application cycle was conducted for the Cancer Center of Excellence Award. The re-designation application cycle was conducted in the summer of 2017. All four Cancer Centers of Excellence Award recipients applied for the continued designation. The four current recipients are:

- H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center and Research Institute
- Mayo Clinic Florida
- University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center
- University of Florida Health Cancer Center, which includes Shands Hospital and Proton Therapy Institute, and Orlando Health's Orlando Regional Medical Center

Through the application process and subsequent peer review, it was determined that all four centers should be re-designated as Cancer Centers of Excellence in Florida. This award is recognized through 2020.

### **2016**

The Department conducted two application cycles in 2016, the first cycle from February 1, 2016 to March 25, 2016 and the second cycle from July 1, 2016 to August 26, 2016. There were no applications submitted for either of these cycles.

### **2015**

The Department conducted two application cycles in 2015, the first cycle from February 9, 2015 to March 27, 2015 and the second cycle from July 1, 2015 to August 21, 2015. There were no applications submitted for either of these cycles, and therefore no award recipients.

### **2014**

The Department conducted two application cycles in 2014, the first cycle from February 3, 2014 to March 21, 2014 and the second cycle from July 1, 2014 to August 22, 2014. The program received nine applications resulting in four organizations receiving the award. The four recipients are the same recipients listed above.

## **Application and Review Process**

Organizations seeking designation as a Cancer Center of Excellence submit an application and then undergo a review process approved by the committee. The application and review process involves the following steps:

- Organizations submit applications during one of the two application cycles offered each year.
- Staff review applications to confirm information is sufficient for evaluators. These evaluators determine whether the organization meets performance measures.
- Organizations may be asked to submit revised applications with additional information.
- A team of five independent evaluators review written materials. Evaluators are vetted and determined to be free from conflicts of interest.
- Two evaluation team members may, as necessary, conduct an onsite evaluation to verify submitted application documentation.
- Applicants are provided a draft evaluation report, including observations made during the site visit if applicable, and are allowed to respond with corrections and improvement plans, if needed.
- Each member of the evaluation team reviews the draft evaluation report, the organization's response if applicable, and reports to the State Surgeon General those applicants that achieved or exceeded performance measures and met all requirements of the rating system approved by the committee.
- The State Surgeon General notifies the Governor regarding providers that are eligible to receive designation as a Cancer Center of Excellence.

## **Re-designation Application and Review Process**

For the re-designation award, the performance measures and manual updated by the committee in 2016 were utilized. The measures required for initial application are the same measures that were used in the re-designation application. During the peer review, the re-designation application was compared to the original application to ensure the current

designees are continually enhancing their programs to reflect best practices and advances in cancer treatment and care from the perspective of quality, comprehensive, and patient-centered coordinated care.

The application and review process involves the following steps:

- All Cancer Centers of Excellence Award recipients submitted an application for re-designation. The application was based on the revised performance measures as recommended by the committee.
- Applications received an administrative review and peer review.
- Peer reviewers determined if the performance measures were met. If needed, additional information was requested of the applicants to make a final award determination.
- Recommendations on the re-designation awards were forwarded to the State Surgeon General.
- The State Surgeon General notified the Governor regarding the providers that are eligible to receive the re-designation as a Cancer Center of Excellence.

## **Recommendations to Strengthen the Program**

In 2016, the committee reviewed and revised the performance measures and standards. No new applications have been submitted since 2014 even with the following revised performance measures and standards.

- A rationale statement was added to the Introduction that emphasizes that one purpose of the Cancer Centers of Excellence Program is to support efforts to obtain and sustain National Cancer Institute designation of Florida programs as Comprehensive Cancer Centers.
- A substantive change was recommended related to the requirement for research participation. Centers will now be required to “(a) have evidence of active involvement in clinical research, (b) evidence of national impact in one of six designated research areas, and (c) evidence of research in at least one other designated research area.” This change

was proposed to address concerns of non-academic community hospitals/centers related to the type and scope of research involvement required.

- Additionally, revisions included documenting the level of researcher experience. Wording was revised to state that the organization should demonstrate biomedical researcher training to support the transition of new investigators to independent investigators.
- Also revised was “documentation of institutional or extramural support that has been targeted toward career growth for early career investigators during the last three years.” Once again, the focus is to demonstrate intentional effort to develop researcher capabilities.

The committee identified the need to increase awareness of the award which is critical to the success of the program. In response, the Florida Cancer Control and Research Advisory Council Florida Cancer Plan includes strategies to promote the award. Cancer plan is found at: <http://ccrab.org/publications>