



**CASEY DESANTIS CANCER RESEARCH PROGRAM**  
**Florida Cancer Innovation Fund Awardees**  
**Fiscal Year 2025-26, Period 1**

| Institution                                             | Principal Investigator                                           | Budget         | Project Title                                                                                                                                                                   | Grant Category                                   | Cancer Type                                                        | Research Category                          |
|---------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|
| H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Inc. | Chang Jiang, Assistant Member                                    | \$1,211,319.50 | Repurposing Ivermectin for the Treatment of KEAP1/NRF2-Mutant Non–Small Cell Lung Cancer                                                                                        | Generic Drug Repurposing Grant                   | Lung Cancer                                                        | Generic Drug Repurposing Research          |
| H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Inc. | Marcelo Bonini, PhD, Department Chair, Metabolism and Physiology | \$798,580.85   | Repurposing pantothenate kinase modulators for the treatment of aggressive sugar-addicted cancers.                                                                              | Integrated Cancer Care Innovations               | Breast and Bone Cancers                                            | Novel Treatments                           |
| University of South Florida                             | Richard Jacobson, Assistant Professor                            | \$944,989.55   | Deciphering how dietary lipids might reduce CRC metastatic liver colonization by reshaping the gut microbiome, its SCFA metabolites, intra-tumoral lipid signaling, and the TME | Nutrition and Food-Based Cancer Prevention Grant | Colon and Colorectal Cancer                                        | Nutrition-Based Cancer Prevention Research |
| University of Miami                                     | Sylvia Daunert, Professor and Department Chair                   | \$1,769,635.35 | Making Florida Healthy Again: Dietary Intervention to Prevent Colon Cancer at the Molecular Level                                                                               | Nutrition and Food-Based Cancer Prevention Grant | Colon Cancer                                                       | Nutrition-Based Cancer Prevention Research |
| University of South Florida                             | Vaagn Andikyan, Associate Professor                              | \$463,933.00   | A Phase I assessment of utero-ovarian transposition (UOT) for fertility preservation in patients with pelvic malignancies undergoing whole pelvic radiotherapy (WPXRT).         | High Impact Pilot Grant                          | Colon, Colorectal Cancers, and Gynecologic and Pelvic Malignancies | Novel Treatments                           |
| H. Lee Moffitt Cancer Center & Research Institute, Inc. | Amir Alishahi Tabriz, Assistant Member                           | \$706,544.47   | A Noninvasive, AI-Powered, Low-Cost Urine Biomarker Test for Early Detection of Breast Cancer: A Validation Study                                                               | Clinical Trials                                  | Breast Cancer                                                      | Technology Transfer Feasibility (TTF)      |
| OTraces, Inc.                                           | Mark Gonzalgo, MD, PhD                                           | \$1,999,400.00 | High-Accuracy Early Detection of Prostate Cancer Using the OTraces Proteomic Diagnostic Platform.                                                                               | Clinical Trials                                  | Prostate Cancer                                                    | Clinical Trials                            |

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| All Children's Research Institute, Inc                         | Junko Sawada, Assistant Professor                                              | \$571,846.50   | Pioneering pHLP-STING Drug Delivery Strategy to Induce Tertiary Lymphoid Structures and Boost Anti-Tumor Immunity in Pancreatic Cancer             | High Impact Pilot Grant | Pancreatic Cancer                                                                                                                                                                                             | Novel Treatments                      |
| University of South Florida                                    | Christian Brechot, Professor, Internal Medicine                                | \$1,874,640.10 | ALF5755 As a Novel Treatment to Prevent Liver Cancer Due to Nutritional Disorders.                                                                 | High Impact Pilot Grant | Liver Cancer                                                                                                                                                                                                  | Novel Treatments                      |
| Baptist Health South Florida                                   | Guenther Koehne, Deputy Director and Chief of Blood and Marrow Transplantation | \$2,000,000.00 | IND-Enabling Studies for an Autologous Whole Tumor Cell Vaccine to Prevent Multiple Myeloma Relapse                                                | Rapid Translation Grant | Blood Cancers                                                                                                                                                                                                 | Translational Research                |
| Adventist Health System/Sunbelt, Inc. dba AdventHealth Orlando | Justin Brown                                                                   | \$1,567,679.93 | A Decentralized Digital Trial of Exercise for Cancer Patients in All of Florida                                                                    | Clinical Trials         | Colon, Colorectal, Lung, Esophageal, Gastric, and Pancreatic Cancers                                                                                                                                          | Clinical Trials                       |
| Mayo Clinic Jacksonville                                       | Jeremy Jones                                                                   | \$596,529.70   | Optimizing combination therapy for RAS-mutated colorectal cancer                                                                                   | Rapid Translation Grant | Colorectal Cancer                                                                                                                                                                                             | Translational Research                |
| Salutarii LLC                                                  | Rodney Wayne                                                                   | \$498,000.00   | Validation of a Sequential Oxidative Stress Biomarker Algorithm for Early Cancer Detection Using De-Identified Florida Biorepository Blood Samples | High Impact Pilot Grant | Blood, Brain/CNS, Breast, Colon, Colorectal, Lung, Prostate Cancers, and Cancers characterized by elevated oxidative stress and redox imbalance (multi-cancer biomarker analysis using biorepository samples) | Technology Transfer Feasibility (TTF) |

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| Digital Ether Computing LLC             | Thomas Caulfield, PhD, CEO/Program Director              | \$1,720,600.00 | AI-Enabled Cryptic-Pocket Inhibitors for Mesotrypsin in Prostate and Ovarian Cancer                                                                                         | High Impact Pilot Grant        | Prostate Cancer                 | Novel Treatments                      |
| University of Florida                   | Sandra Loesgen, Associate Professor                      | \$283,624.90   | Preclinical development of mensacarcin as lead structure against melanoma and pediatric brain cancers.                                                                      | High Impact Pilot Grant        | Brain/CNS, Skin/Melanoma Cancer | Novel Treatments                      |
| All Children's Research Institute, Inc. | Xiangbo Ruan                                             | \$329,285.00   | Targeting the hepatocyte PTBP1–CD8 T cell axis for prevention and treatment of MASH-HCC                                                                                     | High Impact Pilot Grant        | Hepatocellular Carcinoma        | Novel Treatments                      |
| Florida International University        | Deidra Hodges, ECE Department Chair, Associate Professor | \$206,506.19   | Handheld Skin Imaging System with AI-Assisted Time Dependent Monitoring for Increased Prevention and Early Stage Skin Cancer Detection                                      | High Impact Pilot Grant        | Skin/Melanoma Cancer            | Technology Transfer Feasibility (TTF) |
| Florida Institute of Technology         | Jianhui Li, Assistant Professor                          | \$303,965.00   | Systematic Drug Repurposing Screen for Proteasome Inhibitors in Blood Cancer Treatment                                                                                      | Generic Drug Repurposing Grant | Blood Cancers                   | Generic Drug Repurposing Research     |
| Myosin Therapeutics                     | Karen Smith, Chief Medical Officer                       | \$1,999,911.00 | Phase 1/2 dose escalation and randomized parallel dose expansion trial of a first-in-class small molecule in newly diagnosed, MGMT unmethylated glioblastoma with radiation | Rapid Translation Grant        | Brain/CNS Cancer                | Novel Treatments                      |