



For Immediate Release: January 27, 2022

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First Lady Casey DeSantis Visits Nemours Children's Health, Recognizes Incredible Cancer Patient Specialist, and Highlights Proposal for Record Investment in Cancer Research



JACKSONVILLE, Fla. – Today, First Lady Casey DeSantis visited Nemours Specialty Care Clinic to highlight Florida's investments in cancer research and care. During the visit, First Lady DeSantis presented the First Lady's Medal for Courage, Commitment, and Service to Child Life Specialist Joli Craver. Ms. Craver supports pediatric patients and their parents as they undergo cancer treatment by encouraging play, learning, and self-

expression. Nemours Children's Health is one of the many hospital systems in Florida that takes an innovative approach to cancer research and care. To support cancer centers across the state, Governor DeSantis has recommended \$100 million for cancer research and care in Florida's 2022-2023 budget, an increase of \$37 million, or nearly 60%, over prior year funding.

"I'm proud of Governor DeSantis' proposed historic \$100 million investment to fight cancer in Florida — this funding will enhance the quality and competitiveness of cancer treatment across the state," said **First Lady Casey DeSantis**. "Florida's top-rated cancer institutions, such as Nemours Specialty Care Clinic, take a patient-centered, quality care approach, as demonstrated by Ms. Craver. She is well-deserving of today's recognition for her more than twenty-five years of bringing joy to kids undergoing treatment."

"Like so many Floridians, Governor and First Lady DeSantis have been personally impacted by cancer and have shown resilience in battling the disease," said **Agency for Health Care Administration Secretary Simone Marsteller**. "The Governor's proposed budget bolsters the state's commitment to cancer research which will lead to new cures and better outcomes for Florida families. With the Governor's goal as our polestar and building on his efforts, the Agency is working with the Florida Legislature to give Floridians enrolled in Medicaid greater access to comprehensive cancer treatment."

Since 2014, cancer has been the second leading cause of death in the state of Florida, behind heart disease. In 2021, the [American Cancer Society](#) estimates there have been over 47,000 deaths attributed to cancer in Florida. Florida also has the second highest cancer burden in the United States.

The proposed \$100 million will be used to forward cancer care and research at three cancer institutes in Florida — Moffitt Cancer Center, University of Miami Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, and University of Florida Health Cancer Center through the Florida Consortium of National Cancer Institute (NCI) Centers Program, which benefits cancer patients throughout all of Florida.

Over the last three years, the Consortium has provided treatment to more than 67,000 newly diagnosed cancer patients, educated nearly 32,000 current and future clinicians and scientists on the latest advancements for cancer diagnosis and treatments, and shared research findings through 75

distinct collaborative publications. Florida also provides funding for additional initiatives that support pediatric cancer research, and grants that support cancer research at other institutes that are not NCI designated.

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