

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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JAMES AND ESTHER KING BIOMEDICAL RESEARCH PROGRAM WINS NATIONAL AWARD

TALLAHASSEE—The James and Esther King Biomedical Research Program, administered by the Florida Department of Health's (DOH) Office of Public Health Research, garnered national recognition from the State Science and Technology Institute (SSTI) as the winner of the 2009 Excellence in Tech-based Economic Development (TBED) Award for expanding Florida's research infrastructure. DOH Officials accepted the award at SSTI's 13th Annual Conference in Overland Park, Kansas on October 22, 2009.

"We are serious about operating the King Program with the highest level of excellence and integrity and this award is testimony to our efforts," said Dr. Susan Phillips, Director of the Office of Public Health Research. "I'm very proud of our staff, our consulting partners, and our advisory council members for their commitment to running a quality program and achieving results."

"The King Program stands out because of the breadth of initiatives funded with state tobacco settlement funds," said Dan Berglund, SSTI President and CEO. "The program's focused efforts to elevate Florida's biomedical research community have enabled new research faculty to jumpstart their careers and established researchers to continue their worthy efforts in investigating tobacco-related illnesses."

Since its creation in 1999 by the Florida Legislature, the King program has awarded 168 grants to Florida researchers totaling \$68.7 million through merit-based competitions for research to improve prevention, diagnosis, treatment and eventually cures for diseases related to the use of tobacco. This investment has generated more than \$100 million in follow-on funding from external sources to expand or continue these important research projects.

"For the last decade, dozens and dozens of people have worked hard to build a peer-reviewed competitive grants program of top quality to enhance biomedical research in Florida. This award from SSTI is a wonderful recognition of the achievement of an incredible partnership of state government, voluntary health organizations, and Florida's growing research infrastructure," said Dr. Richard Bookman, chairman of the Biomedical Research Advisory Council and Vice Provost for Research at the University of Miami, Miller School of Medicine.

While seeking new insight into treating tobacco-related diseases, the program has deployed strategies to increase Florida's research capacity by encouraging new investigators to pursue careers in research, to position Florida researchers to be more competitive for limited federal grant resources, and to encourage the translation of findings into practice.

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