

By the Committee on Health Policy

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1 A bill to be entitled
2 An act relating to cancer; amending s. 381.915, F.S.;
3 revising the definitions of the terms "cancer center"
4 and "Florida-based"; defining the term "Cancer Connect
5 Collaborative" or "collaborative"; making clarifying
6 changes; deleting an obsolete date; revising the
7 composition of the collaborative; deleting obsolete
8 provisions; requiring the collaborative to review all
9 submitted Cancer Innovation Fund grant applications
10 using certain parameters; requiring the collaborative
11 to give priority to certain applications; requiring
12 licensed or certified health care providers,
13 facilities, or entities to meet certain criteria to be
14 eligible for specified grant funding; specifying such
15 criteria; requiring the Department of Health to
16 appoint peer review panels for a specified purpose;
17 requiring that priority scores be forwarded to the
18 collaborative and be considered in determining which
19 proposals the collaborative recommends for certain
20 grant funding; requiring the collaborative and peer
21 review panels to establish and follow certain
22 guidelines and adhere to a certain policy; prohibiting
23 a member of the collaborative or a panel from
24 participating in certain discussions or decisions
25 under certain circumstances; requiring, beginning on a
26 specified date and annually thereafter, the
27 collaborative to prepare and submit a specified report
28 to the Governor and the Legislature; requiring that
29 the report include certain information; revising the

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30 requirements for a specified report by the department;
31 requiring, beginning on a specified date, that certain
32 allocation agreements include certain information;
33 providing legislative findings; creating the Cancer
34 Connect Collaborative Research Incubator within the
35 department, and overseen by the collaborative, to
36 provide funding for a specified purpose over a
37 specified timeframe; specifying the incubator's
38 targeted area of cancer research for the first
39 specified timeframe; providing that grants issued
40 through the incubator are contingent upon the
41 appropriation of funds and must be awarded through a
42 specified process; requiring that priority be given to
43 certain applicants; authorizing the prioritization of
44 certain grant proposals; providing that applications
45 for incubator funding may be submitted by specified
46 hospitals; requiring that all qualified applicants
47 have equal access and opportunity to compete for
48 research funding; requiring that incubator grants be
49 recommended by the collaborative and awarded by the
50 department in a certain manner; requiring the
51 department to appoint peer review panels for a
52 specified purpose; requiring that priority scores be
53 forwarded to the collaborative and be considered in
54 determining which proposals the collaborative
55 recommends for funding; requiring the collaborative
56 and peer review panels to establish and follow certain
57 guidelines and adhere to a certain policy; prohibiting
58 a member of the collaborative or a panel from

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59 participating in certain discussions or decisions;
60 requiring recipients of incubator grant funds to enter
61 into an allocation agreement with the department;
62 specifying requirements for such allocation
63 agreements; requiring, beginning on a specified date
64 and annually until a specified date, the collaborative
65 to prepare and submit a specified report to the
66 Governor and the Legislature; requiring the
67 collaborative to make a certain recommendation under
68 certain circumstances; requiring that a specified
69 report include certain information; amending s.
70 381.922, F.S.; establishing the Bascom Palmer Eye
71 Institute VisionGen Initiative within the William G.
72 "Bill" Bankhead, Jr., and David Coley Cancer Research
73 Program; providing the purpose of the initiative;
74 providing that funding for the initiative is subject
75 to annual appropriation; providing an effective date.

76
77 Be It Enacted by the Legislature of the State of Florida:

78
79 Section 1. Present paragraphs (c), (d), and (e) of
80 subsection (3) and present subsections (12) and (13) of section
81 381.915, Florida Statutes, are redesignated as paragraphs (d),
82 (e), and (f) of subsection (3) and subsections (13) and (14),
83 respectively, a new paragraph (c) is added to subsection (3),
84 paragraph (d) is added to subsection (10), a new subsection (12)
85 is added to that section, and paragraph (b) and present
86 paragraph (c) of subsection (3), paragraphs (a), (b), (e), (f),
87 and (h) of subsection (8), and subsections (9) and (11) of that

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88 section are amended, to read:

89 381.915 Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program.—

90 (3) On or before September 15 of each year, the department
91 shall calculate an allocation fraction to be used for
92 distributing funds to participating cancer centers. On or before
93 the final business day of each quarter of the state fiscal year,
94 the department shall distribute to each participating cancer
95 center one-fourth of that cancer center's annual allocation
96 calculated under subsection (6). The allocation fraction for
97 each participating cancer center is based on the cancer center's
98 tier-designated weight under subsection (4) multiplied by each
99 of the following allocation factors based on activities in this
100 state: number of reportable cases, peer-review costs, and
101 biomedical education and training. As used in this section, the
102 term:

103 (b) "Cancer center" means a comprehensive center with at
104 least one geographic site in the state, a freestanding center
105 located in the state, a center situated within an academic
106 institution, or a Florida-based formal research-based consortium
107 under centralized leadership that has achieved NCI designation
108 ~~or is prepared to achieve NCI designation by June 30, 2024.~~

109 (c) "Cancer Connect Collaborative" or "collaborative" means
110 the council created under subsection (8).

111 (d)-(e) "Florida-based" means that a cancer center's actual
112 or sought designated status is or would be recognized by the NCI
113 as primarily located in Florida and not in another state, or
114 that a health care provider or facility is physically located in
115 Florida and provides services in Florida.

116 (8) The Cancer Connect Collaborative, a council as defined

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117 in s. 20.03, is created within the department to advise the
118 department and the Legislature on developing a holistic approach
119 to the state's efforts to fund cancer research, cancer
120 facilities, and treatments for cancer patients. The
121 collaborative may make recommendations on proposed legislation,
122 proposed rules, best practices, data collection and reporting,
123 issuance of grant funds, and other proposals for state policy
124 relating to cancer research or treatment.

125 (a) The Surgeon General shall serve as an ex officio,
126 nonvoting member of the collaborative and shall serve as the
127 chair.

128 (b) The collaborative shall be composed of the following
129 voting members, ~~to be appointed by September 1, 2024:~~

130 1. Two members appointed by the Governor, three members ~~one~~
131 ~~member~~ appointed by the President of the Senate, and three
132 members ~~one member~~ appointed by the Speaker of the House of
133 Representatives, based on the criteria of this subparagraph. The
134 appointing officers shall make their appointments prioritizing
135 members who have the following experience or expertise:

136 a. The practice of a health care profession specializing in
137 oncology clinical care or research;

138 b. The development of preventive and therapeutic treatments
139 to control cancer;

140 c. The development of innovative research into the causes
141 of cancer, the development of effective treatments for persons
142 with cancer, or cures for cancer; or

143 d. Management-level experience with a cancer center
144 licensed under chapter 395.

145 2. One member who is a resident of this state who can

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146 represent the interests of cancer patients in this state,
147 appointed by the Governor.

148 (e) Members of the collaborative whose terms have expired
149 may continue to serve until replaced or reappointed, but for no
150 more than 6 months after the expiration of their terms.

151 (f) Members of the collaborative shall serve without
152 compensation but are entitled to reimbursement for per diem and
153 travel expenses pursuant to s. 112.061.

154 ~~(h) The collaborative shall develop a long-range~~
155 ~~comprehensive plan for the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research~~
156 ~~Program. In the development of the plan, the collaborative must~~
157 ~~solicit input from cancer centers, research institutions,~~
158 ~~biomedical education institutions, hospitals, and medical~~
159 ~~providers. The collaborative shall submit the plan to the~~
160 ~~Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the~~
161 ~~House of Representatives no later than December 1, 2024. The~~
162 ~~plan must include, but need not be limited to, all of the~~
163 ~~following components:~~

164 ~~1. Expansion of grant fund opportunities to include a~~
165 ~~broader pool of Florida-based cancer centers, research~~
166 ~~institutions, biomedical education institutions, hospitals, and~~
167 ~~medical providers to receive funding through the Cancer~~
168 ~~Innovation Fund.~~

169 ~~2. An evaluation to determine metrics that focus on patient~~
170 ~~outcomes, quality of care, and efficacy of treatment.~~

171 ~~3. A compilation of best practices relating to cancer~~
172 ~~research or treatment.~~

173 (9) (a) The collaborative shall advise the department on the
174 awarding of grants issued through the Cancer Innovation Fund.

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175 During any fiscal year for which funds are appropriated to the
176 fund, the collaborative shall review all submitted grant
177 applications using the parameters provided in paragraph (c) and
178 make recommendations to the department for awarding grants to
179 support innovative cancer research and treatment models,
180 including emerging research and treatment trends and promising
181 treatments that may serve as catalysts for further research and
182 treatments. The department shall make the final grant allocation
183 awards. The collaborative shall give priority to applications
184 seeking to expand the reach of cancer screening efforts and
185 innovative cancer treatment models into underserved areas of
186 this state.

187 (b) To be eligible for grant funding under this subsection,
188 a licensed or certified health care provider, facility, or
189 entity must meet at least one of the following criteria:

190 1. Operates as a licensed hospital that has a minimum of 30
191 percent of its current cancer patients residing in rural or
192 underserved areas.

193 2. Operates as a licensed health care clinic or facility
194 that employs or contracts with at least one physician licensed
195 under chapter 458 or chapter 459 who is board certified in
196 oncology and that administers chemotherapy treatments for
197 cancer.

198 3. Operates as a licensed facility that employs or
199 contracts with at least one physician licensed under chapter 458
200 or chapter 459 who is board certified in oncology and that
201 administers radiation therapy treatments for cancer.

202 4. Operates as a licensed health care clinic or facility
203 that provides cancer screening services at no cost or a minimal

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204 cost to patients.

205 5. Operates as a rural hospital as defined in s.
206 395.602(2)(b).

207 6. Operates as a critical access hospital as defined in s.
208 408.07(14).

209 7. Operates as a specialty hospital as defined in s.
210 395.002(28)(a) which provides cancer treatment for patients from
211 birth to 18 years of age.

212 8. Engages in biomedical research intended to develop
213 therapies, medical pharmaceuticals, treatment protocols, or
214 medical procedures intended to cure cancer or improve the
215 quality of life of cancer patients.

216 9. Educates or trains students, postdoctoral fellows, or
217 licensed or certified health care practitioners in the
218 screening, diagnosis, or treatment of cancer.

219 (c) To ensure that all proposals for grant funding issued
220 through the Cancer Innovation Fund are appropriate and are
221 evaluated fairly on the basis of scientific merit, the
222 department shall appoint peer review panels of independent,
223 scientifically qualified individuals to review the scientific
224 merit of each proposal and establish its priority score. The
225 priority scores must be forwarded to the collaborative and must
226 be considered in determining which proposals the collaborative
227 recommends for grant funding through the Cancer Innovation Fund.

228 (d) The collaborative and the peer review panels shall
229 establish and follow rigorous guidelines for ethical conduct and
230 adhere to a strict policy with regard to conflicts of interest
231 regarding the assessment of Cancer Innovation Fund grant
232 applications. A member of the collaborative or a panel may not

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233 participate in any discussion or decision of the collaborative
234 or a panel with respect to a research proposal by any firm,
235 entity, or agency with which the member is associated as a
236 member of the governing body or as an employee or with which the
237 member has entered into a contractual arrangement.

238 (e) Beginning December 1, 2025, and annually thereafter,
239 the collaborative shall prepare and submit a report to the
240 Governor, the President of the Senate, and the Speaker of the
241 House of Representatives which identifies and evaluates the
242 performance and the impact of grants issued through the Cancer
243 Innovation Fund on cancer treatment, research, screening,
244 diagnosis, prevention, practitioner training, workforce
245 education, and cancer patient survivorship. The report must
246 include all of the following:

- 247 1. Amounts of grant funds awarded to each recipient.
248 2. Descriptions of each recipient's research or project
249 which include, but need not be limited to, the following:
250 a. Goals or projected outcomes.
251 b. Population to be served.
252 c. Research methods or project implementation plan.
253 3. An assessment of grant recipients which evaluates their
254 progress toward achieving objectives specified in each
255 recipient's grant application.
256 4. Recommendations for best practices that may be
257 implemented by health care providers in this state who diagnose,
258 treat, and screen for cancer, based on the outcomes of projects
259 funded through the Cancer Innovation Fund.

260 (10) Beginning July 1, 2025, and each year thereafter, the
261 department, in conjunction with participating cancer centers,

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262 shall submit a report to the Cancer Control and Research
263 Advisory Council and the collaborative on specific metrics
264 relating to cancer mortality and external funding for cancer-
265 related research in this state. If a cancer center does not
266 endorse this report or produce an equivalent independent report,
267 the cancer center is ineligible to receive program funding for 1
268 year. The department must submit this annual report, and any
269 equivalent independent reports, to the Governor, the President
270 of the Senate, and the Speaker of the House of Representatives
271 no later than September 15 of each year the report or reports
272 are submitted by the department. The report must include:

273 (d) A description of the numbers and types of cancer cases
274 treated annually at each participating cancer center, including
275 reportable and nonreportable cases.

276 (11) Beginning July 1, 2025 ~~2024~~, each allocation agreement
277 issued by the department relating to cancer center payments
278 under paragraph (2) (a) ~~subsection (2)~~ must include all of the
279 following:

280 (a) A line-item budget narrative documenting the annual
281 allocation of funds to a cancer center.

282 (b) A cap on the annual award of 15 percent for
283 administrative expenses.

284 (c) A requirement for the cancer center to submit quarterly
285 reports of all expenditures made by the cancer center with funds
286 received through the Casey DeSantis Cancer Research Program.

287 (d) A provision to allow the department and other state
288 auditing bodies to audit all financial records, supporting
289 documents, statistical records, and any other documents
290 pertinent to the allocation agreement.

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291 (e) A provision requiring the annual reporting of outcome
292 data and protocols used in achieving those outcomes.

293 (12) (a) The Legislature finds that targeted areas of cancer
294 research require increased resources and that Florida should
295 become a leader in promoting research opportunities for these
296 targeted areas. Floridians should not have to leave the state to
297 receive the most advanced cancer care and treatment. To meet
298 this need, the Cancer Connect Collaborative Research Incubator,
299 or "incubator" as used in this subsection, is created within the
300 department, to be overseen by the collaborative, to provide
301 funding for a targeted area of cancer research over a 5-year
302 period. For the 5-year period beginning July 1, 2025, the
303 incubator's targeted area of cancer research is pediatric
304 cancer.

305 (b) Contingent upon the appropriation of funds by the
306 Legislature, grants issued through the incubator must be awarded
307 through a peer-reviewed, competitive process. Priority must be
308 given to applicants that focus on enhancing both research and
309 treatment by increasing participation in clinical trials related
310 to the targeted area of cancer research, including all of the
311 following:

312 1. Identifying strategies to increase enrollment in cancer
313 clinical trials.

314 2. Supporting public and private professional education
315 programs to raise awareness and knowledge about cancer clinical
316 trials.

317 3. Providing tools for cancer patients and community-based
318 oncologists to help identify available cancer clinical trials in
319 this state.

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320 4. Creating opportunities for the state's academic cancer
321 centers to collaborate with community-based oncologists in
322 cancer clinical trial networks.

323 (c) Priority may be given to grant proposals that foster
324 collaborations among institutions, researchers, and community
325 practitioners to support the advancement of cures through basic
326 or applied research, including clinical trials involving cancer
327 patients and related networks.

328 (d) Applications for incubator funding may be submitted by
329 any Florida-based specialty hospital as defined in s.
330 395.002(28)(a) which provides cancer treatment for patients from
331 birth to 18 years of age. All qualified applicants must have
332 equal access and opportunity to compete for research funding.
333 Incubator grants must be recommended by the collaborative and
334 awarded by the department on the basis of scientific merit, as
335 determined by a competitively open and peer-reviewed process to
336 ensure objectivity, consistency, and high quality.

337 (e) To ensure that all proposals for research funding are
338 appropriate and are evaluated fairly on the basis of scientific
339 merit, the department shall appoint peer review panels of
340 independent, scientifically qualified individuals to review the
341 scientific merit of each proposal and establish its priority
342 score. The priority scores must be forwarded to the
343 collaborative and must be considered in determining which
344 proposals the collaborative recommends for funding.

345 (f) The collaborative and the peer review panels shall
346 establish and follow rigorous guidelines for ethical conduct and
347 adhere to a strict policy with regard to conflicts of interest
348 regarding the assessment of incubator grant applications. A

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349 member of the collaborative or a panel may not participate in
350 any discussion or decision of the collaborative or a panel
351 regarding a research proposal from any firm, entity, or agency
352 with which the member is associated as a governing body member,
353 as an employee, or through a contractual arrangement.

354 (g) Each recipient of incubator grant funds must enter into
355 an allocation agreement with the department. Each such
356 allocation agreement must include all of the following:

357 1. A line-item budget narrative documenting the annual
358 allocation of funds to a recipient.

359 2. A cap on the annual award of 15 percent for
360 administrative expenses.

361 3. A requirement for the recipient to submit quarterly
362 reports of all expenditures made by the recipient with funds
363 received through the incubator.

364 4. A provision to allow the department and other state
365 auditing bodies to audit all financial records, supporting
366 documents, statistical records, and any other documents
367 pertinent to the allocation agreement.

368 5. A provision requiring the annual reporting of outcome
369 data and protocols used in achieving those outcomes.

370 (h) Beginning December 1, 2026, and annually through
371 December 1, 2030, the collaborative shall prepare and submit a
372 report to the Governor, the President of the Senate, and the
373 Speaker of the House of Representatives which evaluates research
374 conducted through the incubator and provides details on outcomes
375 and findings available through the end of the fiscal year
376 immediately preceding each report. If the collaborative
377 recommends that the incubator be extended beyond its 5-year

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378 lifespan, the collaborative shall make such recommendation in
379 the report due December 1, 2029, and shall include a
380 recommendation for the next targeted area of cancer research.
381 The report due on December 1, 2030, must include all of the
382 following:

383 1. Details of all results of the research conducted with
384 incubator funding which has been completed or the status of
385 research in progress.

386 2. An evaluation of all research conducted with incubator
387 funding during the 5 fiscal years preceding the report.

388 Section 2. Paragraph (d) is added to subsection (2) of
389 section 381.922, Florida Statutes, to read:

390 381.922 William G. "Bill" Bankhead, Jr., and David Coley
391 Cancer Research Program.—

392 (2) The program shall provide grants for cancer research to
393 further the search for cures for cancer.

394 (d) There is established within the program the Bascom
395 Palmer Eye Institute VisionGen Initiative. The purpose of the
396 initiative is to advance genetic and epigenetic research on
397 inherited eye diseases and ocular oncology by awarding grants
398 through the peer-reviewed, competitive process established under
399 subsection (3). Funding for the initiative is subject to the
400 annual appropriation of funds by the Legislature.

401 Section 3. This act shall take effect July 1, 2025.