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FSU think tank aims to eradicate disease

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Florida State University's College of Medicine is now home to the Florida Center for Universal Research to Eradicate Disease (FL CURED).

FL CURED is a think tank that facilitates collaboration among different research entities in Florida for the purpose of curing disease.

Before the center's tenure at the FSU College of Medicine commenced, FL CURED was housed at the Florida Department of Health. The College of Medicine agreed to operate FL CURED for the next three years.

During this time, it will dedicate resources to coordinating biomedical research around the state.

"We're very interested in improving the health of Florida's citizens, specifically elders and people in underserved communities, but really all of Florida's citizens," said Myra Hurt, senior associate dean for Research and Graduate Programs at the FSU College of Medicine. "We have six campuses distributed over the state — clinical campuses where training of our students happens. We have relationships with our 1,500 clinical faculty (members) that are in those six locations. So, we're ideally poised to meet both their mission and ours."

The College of Medicine has already started directing resources toward FL CURED projects. Michael Smith, director of the college's Clinical Research Network, and a team assembled by the College of Medicine, will compile an online database for researchers around Florida.

According to Hurt, the database is expected to be up and running in the near future.

"We're putting together a team to put together an informatics database," said Hurt. "We have resources we can leverage because we are an academic institution, so it's easier and more cost effective for us. We're already in the stages of putting together the team who are going to put together online resources for people around the state doing disease-related and health-related research."

The Florida Legislature founded FL CURED in 2004 under the leadership of then-Senate President Jim King.

According to a press release, he and the Legislature hoped that the center would enable the state of Florida to find cures for widespread diseases, become a leading state biomedical research, and coordinate efforts among state universities and other research institutions, both public and private, for the discovery of cures.

King could not be reached for comment, as he is currently recovering from treatment of pancreatic cancer.

On June 18, he wrote a letter to his supporters stating he was cancer free.

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