

Nemours Children's Health Announces \$7 Million Donation from Pass It On To Kids Foundation to Advance Oncology Research, Music Therapy

Largest donation to a single research project at Nemours Children's

ORLANDO, Fla. (Aug. 20, 2024) - Nemours Children's Health announced a \$7 million donation from the Pass It On To Kids Foundation that will advance groundbreaking research harnessing the Zika virus to target and eradicate neuroblastoma and ovarian cancers. This gift will also support the Child Life department's music therapy program.

The donation will fund research by Kenneth Alexander, MD, PhD, Division Chief, Infectious Diseases and Tamarah Westmoreland, MD, PhD, Associate Professor of Surgery and their teams at Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida. Both physician-researchers are on faculty at the University of Central Florida College of Medicine.

Dr. Alexander along with investigators at the National Cancer Institute and the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, will design and implement a first-in-human trial of Zika virus for women with advanced ovarian cancer who do not respond to other types of treatment. Dr.

Westmoreland published a study in January in [Cancer Research Communications](#), a journal of the American Association for Cancer Research, showing that injecting neuroblastoma tumors with Zika virus shrank or eliminated those tumors in studies with mice, suggesting that the virus could someday serve as an effective cancer therapy.

"This significant donation will enable us to advance critical, promising research that could provide novel treatment options for hard-to-treat cancers in the future," said Matthew M. Davis, MD, MAPP, Executive Vice-President, Enterprise Physician-in-Chief, and Chief Scientific Officer of Nemours Children's Health. "Breakthroughs that begin in Nemours Children's Health laboratories require support like this so that our scientists can continue innovating to achieve lifesaving cancer treatments."

"There is a critical need for significant investment in pediatric cancer care in the state of Florida," said Martha McGill, BSN, MBA, MHA Central Florida Region President at Nemours Children's Health. "Groundbreaking research like the work of Drs. Alexander and Westmoreland will not only help us advance breakthroughs in cancer research but continue to attract top cancer physicians and scientists to expand research activities, ultimately increasing access and leading-edge treatment options for Florida's 4.2 million children right here at home."

Pass It On To Kids Foundation has quickly become one of the most significant regional contributors to children's health with more than \$13.4 million committed to Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida in the past five years. The foundation has supported a wide range of family-centered programs and innovative research studies for eosinophilic esophagitis (EoE), an allergic inflammatory condition of the esophagus. The foundation's support has led to significant public education and successful national policy advocacy efforts for children living with this disease.

"The DNA of Nemours Children's Health is different," said the foundation's spokesperson. "Pass It On To Kids Foundation is excited to support the legacy of generosity of Alfred and Jessie Ball duPont, creators of the Alfred I. duPont Charitable Trust that provides dedicated support to Nemours Children's. We hope our funding encourages other interested foundations and families, regionally and nationally, to take notice of how the Nemours Children's Health model is uniquely advancing kids health."

The foundation has allocated \$1 million for the music therapy program at Nemours Children's Hospital, Florida, to help meet the growing demand. Music therapy is used within a therapeutic relationship to support children's mental and physical well-being. It gives children and their families a safe, nonverbal way to communicate emotions, concerns, anxiety and stressors and offers a space to validate children's emotional states by reflecting their experiences through music.

About Nemours Children's Health

Nemours Children's Health is one of the nation's largest multistate pediatric health systems, which includes two free-standing children's hospitals and a network of more than 70 primary and specialty care practices. Nemours Children's seeks to transform the health of children by adopting a holistic health model that utilizes innovative, safe and high-quality care, while also caring for the health of the whole child beyond medicine. Nemours Children's also powers the world's most-visited

website for information on the health of children and teens, [Nemours KidsHealth.org](https://kidshealth.org).

The Nemours Foundation, established through the legacy and philanthropy of Alfred I. duPont, provides pediatric clinical care, research, education, advocacy, and prevention programs to the children, families and communities it serves. For more information, visit [Nemours.org](https://nemours.org).

Media Contact: Leah Goodwyne, leah.goodwyne@nemours.org, (904) 676-2229.

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