

Media Release

The Hon Jenny Mikakos MLC
Minister for Health
Minister for Ambulance Services



Tuesday, 4 February 2020

MORE CANCER RESEARCH TO IMPROVE SCREENING RATES

The Andrews Labor Government is helping Victoria's best and brightest researchers discover new breakthroughs in cancer prevention, treatment and care with a focus on improving screening rates.

Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos today announced the 22 recipients from the Victorian Cancer Agency's latest grants round who will share in more than \$10 million in research grants to work on ground-breaking discoveries.

Announced on the 20th Anniversary of World Cancer Day, four of the 22 grants will dedicate their research towards encouraging Victorians at risk of cancer to get themselves screened.

Dr Jennifer McIntosh from the University of Melbourne will investigate using SMS messages sent by the patient's GP to increase participation in bowel cancer screening.

Prof Margaret Kelaher, also from the University of Melbourne, will study self-collection for human papillomavirus (HPV) testing to prevent cervical cancer in women.

The *Victorian Cancer Plan 2016-20* sets an ambitious target of saving 10,000 lives from cancer in the next 10 years.

In Victoria, the five most common cancers are prostate, breast, bowel and lung cancer, and melanoma. Finding cancer early, before any symptoms are noticed gives the best chance of survival.

More than 90 per cent of bowel cancers can be successfully treated if found early. Everyone aged 50-74 should screen every two years for bowel cancer by using a free, at-home screening test.

More Victorian women are surviving breast cancer, with the five-year survival rate now at 91 per cent compared to 73 per cent in 1986. While, cervical cancer is preventable with regular cervical screening and the HPV vaccination.

Victorians can reduce their risk of cancer by eating a healthy diet, being physically active, protecting their skin from ultraviolet radiation, not smoking and limiting alcohol consumption.

The Victorian Cancer Agency also awarded 18 fellowships to support clinicians and researchers at different stages of their career. Since 2006, more than \$225 million has been allocated towards cancer research.

To learn more about cancer prevention, diagnosis and treatment, visit the Better Health Channel website betterhealth.vic.gov.au/conditionsandtreatments/cancer.

To view all grant recipients, visit victoriancanceragency.vic.gov.au.

Quotes attributable to Minister for Health Jenny Mikakos

"When it comes to cancer, we know early diagnosis is the key to survival."

"Victoria has some of the best cancer survival rates in the world – but everyone has the power to reduce the impact of cancer for themselves and their families by getting screened."

"The fight against cancer is far from won, which is why we're supporting the next generation of cancer researchers and fast-tracking new breakthroughs in cancer treatment and care."

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