

Sylvester Researcher Receives Grant to Help Female Cancer Survivors

Sara Mijares St. George, Ph.D., of Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center, has received a \$200,000 grant from the V Foundation for Cancer Research, founded by ESPN and Jim Valvano, through a collaboration with the Dolphins Cancer Challenge.



From left, Jennifer Jehn, Dr. Stephen Nimer, Dr. Sara St. George, Lesley Visser, Twan Russell and Keith Goralski at the grant announcement.

This Early Career Investigator Grant will fund a study led by Dr. St. George that will use smart phones and tablets to connect Hispanic and black female cancer survivors and provide them with information to improve weight, physical activity and nutrition for participating survivors and their family members.

“Obesity is the second leading preventable cause of cancer behind smoking. Not only does it increase one’s risk of getting cancer, it also increases the risk of mortality in those already diagnosed with cancer,” said Dr. St. George, who is an associate professor of public health sciences at the University of Miami Miller School of Medicine. “This makes the prevention and treatment of obesity an important priority. I’m excited to explore innovative ways to empower female cancer survivors to help their families lead healthy lifestyles.”

Recruitment for this research, which is a digital health intervention, is just getting started. It will focus on survivors of breast, endometrial and ovarian cancer. Dr. St. George is working with three Sylvester oncologists who specialize in these cancers to find survivors who have completed active treatment and are grandmothers, in order to study the multi-generational impact.

“Identifying and addressing health disparities that contribute to increasing cancer risk is a top priority at Sylvester,” said Stephen D. Nimer, M.D., director of Sylvester Comprehensive Cancer Center. “Dr. St. George’s work focusing on Hispanic and black female cancer survivors will provide important information so we can best serve our patients and their families.”

The Dolphins Cancer Challenge (DCC) contributed \$100,000 to the V Foundation, and those funds were matched. The partnership brings V Foundation resources to the South Florida area to fund emerging research in the Dolphins’ community.

Legendary sportscaster Lesley Visser, former Dolphins player and UM alumnus Twan Russell, DCC Executive Director Jennifer

Jehn, and Keith Goralski from the V Foundation came to the July 9 grant announcement at the Wellness Center in the Don Soffer Clinical Research Center at the Miller School of Medicine.