

## Report from IU-SCCC Comprehensive Cancer Center visit

From April 10 – 21, 2023, the director of the National Oncology Institute, Mária Rečková, M.D., PhD, participated in meetings at the Indiana University Simon Comprehensive Cancer Center (IU-SCCC) in Indianapolis, IN.

This business trip focused on mapping the possibilities of cooperation between the National Cancer Institute, National Oncology Institute and IU-SCCC.

A Memorandum on Academic Cooperation was signed between IU-SCCC and NCI/NOI in July 2022, building on long-term



cooperation which started by Dr. Rečková's first UICC grant fellowship in 2006 as well as subsequent UICC fellowships or personal meetings, as well as fellowships of Assoc. Prof. Chovanec, M.D., who moved the cooperation toward common research projects. Several expert meetings with colleagues from IU-SCCC in NCI and colleagues from NCI in IU-SCCC have taken place since 2006 within the NOI grant. The Memorandum on Cooperation from 2022 has two main initial set goals. The first is to organize a joint symposium at the NCI and the second to share knowledge via exchange stays. The business trip focused on developing these basic objectives. The meetings dealt with the following topics:

1. Meeting with IU-SCCC management – Dr. Kevin Lee, Dr. Nasser Hanna, both working in the Fellows program and proposing a 2-week fellowship at the NCI during the curriculum in IU-SCCC. We were also looking for further opportunities for cooperation – in the area of artificial intelligence, validation studies or preventive and screening programs in order to share experience and joint research projects. It is via exchange stays that we can start building and developing joint research projects.
2. Organizing research and development – meetings with Dr. Kathy Miller, Associate Director for Research, and Dr. Mat Opyrchal, head of the early clinical trials program, including participation in indication rounds for phase I clinical trials. We agreed on a possibility of consultations regarding the establishment of a phase I clinic in NCI.
3. Organizing survivorship care – meeting with Dr. Meagan Miller and visit of her newly-established survivors' clinic (at the moment focusing on cured patients from children to 40 years of age), meeting with Dr. Tarah Ballinger, initiator of the "Move" program, and Dr.

James Cleary, Barbara Hastie – agreed cooperation within palliative medicine which is to start by joint educational activities focused on raising awareness about palliative care.

4. Organizing preventive care including screening programs focused on lung cancer and the End Lung Cancer Now initiative – meeting with thoracic surgeon Dr. Duykhanh Ceppa, head of the lung cancer screening program. We discussed the obstacles which can hinder participation and awareness-raising among the lay public as well as experts. Another very inspiring meeting was with Dr. Nick Pettit, emergency physician working in research which interconnects patient care at the emergency ward with preventive programs, all in close cooperation with Dr. Nasser Hanna and the End Lung Cancer Now initiative. This could be another area for eventual cooperation, such as via validation research in Slovakia.
5. Clinical oncology practice and clinic visits took place with Dr. Lawrence Einhorn and Dr. Theodore Logan, concerning urogenital malignancies.
6. Meeting with Dr. Roberto Machado focused on discussing intensive care as well as survivorship clinics dealing with patients who had been treated at intensive care units and anesthesiology units. We also extended an invitation to the 2<sup>nd</sup> joint symposium based on the cooperation between IU-SCCC and NCI planned for this autumn. Its topic is going to be Intensive Care in Oncology and we started preliminary discussions on how to target this broad topic to ARDS and patients with testicular tumors. Kristýna Kozáková, M.D., from the NCI Department of Intensive Care and Anesthesiology, completed an NOI grant fellowship under the guidance of Dr. Roberto Machado <https://www.noisk.sk/lekar/vyskum-a-vyvoj/noi-granty/udelene-granty>.
7. Dr. Zuzana Orsághová from NCI was on an NOI grant fellowship at IU-SCCC during the business trip and we had a meeting with her and her supervisor Dr. Nabil Adra where we discussed the possibilities of cooperation between IU-SCCC and NCI/NOI as well as the opportunities for Dr. Orsághová during her fellowship.

The business trip has fulfilled its objective to create conditions for the development of cooperation with IU-SCCC. With our colleagues from IU-SCCC, we have defined specific possibilities to move forward in the field of medicine together.

In Bratislava on May 2, 2023