



**THEY LEARN.
KIDS LIVE.**

Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program

5th Anniversary Impact Report

2013-2018

SickKids

VS

Boundaries

CELEBRATING OUR HISTORY

In Kharkiv in 2017, at the Congress of the Ukrainian Association of Neurosurgeons, doctors from across the country listened as Dr. Myroslava Romach spoke about preventing neural tube defects, an often-fatal birth defect far too common in Ukraine.

In Lviv City Children’s Clinical Hospital that same year, 12 Ukrainian neurosurgeons watched, via a video monitor on a newly acquired operating microscope, as Dr. James Rutka, working with Dr. Taras Mykytyn and his team, performed highly complex brain surgery.

In Toronto’s SickKids hospital in 2018, Kyiv’s Dr. Leonid Maruschenko followed esteemed surgeons from their morning rounds to the operating room, where they saved a child from a lifetime of incessant seizures.

For five years, the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program has made moments like this possible, and that’s all thanks to you: our champions of child health in the Ukrainian-Canadian community. Founded in 2013 through a partnership between Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund, Ukrainian Canadian Congress, and SickKids, the Program trains health-care specialists and improves paediatric care so Ukrainian children can lead long, healthy lives. It does so through observerships at SickKids, where Ukrainian fellows can shadow world-renowned Canadian doctors, and advisory visits to Ukraine,



Dr. Yuriy Kolivoskha, Dr. James Rutka, and Dr. Taras Mykytyn reviewing a patient case.



In 2013, Dr. Taras Mykytyn and Dr. James Rutka performed lifesaving brain surgery on little Anastasija. In 2017, she joined them for a celebration of the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program.

where SickKids specialists offer clinical consultations, surgical guidance and educational sessions. What began as a neurosurgery initiative in 2013 has since grown to become a comprehensive brain health program, including neurology, neonatology, and psychiatry.

Thus far, the results have been extraordinary. With our partners, we’ve introduced new surgical procedures, patient care practices, and team-based approaches. We’ve consulted on hundreds of cases and lectured to hundreds of doctors. We’ve bought critical equipment for children’s hospitals and advised on procedures and protocols. We’ve helped save kids’ lives.

But our work isn’t just about today—it’s about the future, a Ukraine where all children can access world-class paediatric care.

And to build that future, we need your help.



We have visited seven cities in Ukraine.

PROFILES IN PROGRESS:

Drs. Taras Mykytyn & Ihor Humeniuk



Dr. Taras Mykytyn, Dr. James Rutka, Dr. Ihor Humeniuk and team performing the first vagal nerve stimulator implantation in Western Ukraine.

Drs. Taras Mykytyn and Ihor Humeniuk, driven young surgeons, have been busy building the paediatric neurosurgical unit in Lviv. They have both completed observerships at SickKids and trained in new surgical procedures under the mentorship of Dr. James Rutka.

Now, they perform procedures on kids in Lviv—from epilepsy surgery to brain tumour removal—for which patients used to have to travel to Kyiv. On the June 2018 advisory trip, Dr. James Rutka trained them in implanting Vagal Nerve Stimulators in patients with medication-resistant epilepsy, another first in Western Ukraine.

Thanks to a generous gift from the Temerty Foundation, the paediatric neurosurgical unit in Lviv now has modern equipment, enabling advanced treatment. Since this investment, there have been countless epilepsy and brain tumour operations, and the unit has grown into a centre of excellence for paediatric neurosurgery.

Dr. Yuriy Kolivoshka

Two years after completing his observership, Dr. Yuriy Kolivoshka returned to SickKids in 2016 for an 18-month surgical fellowship in the neonatal intensive care unit. There, he learned “the intricate details of complex surgeries,” many of which aren’t taught in Ukraine.

Today, he’s back home, using the skills he learned at SickKids to save—and transform—patients’ lives. One of those patients is Mariya,* a teenage girl born with spina bifida, a neural tube birth defect that left her incontinent. But thanks to Dr. Kolivoshka and fellow team members, who performed Ukraine’s first-ever continence procedure on her, Mariya is now a regular teenage girl. She sings in a choir and spends her summers at a camp in the mountains.

*The patient’s named has been changed to protect her identity.

PROJECT MILESTONES

2013

The Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program is founded. During the first advisory visit, SickKids staff meet with physicians and administrators from many children’s hospitals. The first Ukrainian physicians arrive at SickKids for their observerships.

2014

On their September advisory trip, SickKids donates a neurosurgical endoscope to Lviv City Children’s Clinical Hospital to perform minimally invasive procedures.

2015

The Program expands to include neonatal care and maternal & child mental health.

2016

SickKids President Dr. Mike Apkon hosts Dr. Dymtro Kvit, Lviv City Children’s Clinical Hospital’s Physician-in-Chief, for a week-long visit to learn hospital administration and emergency medicine best practices.

2017

Western Ukraine Centre of Excellence for Neurosurgery opens in Lviv thanks to the generous support of the Temerty Foundation.

SEPTEMBER, 2018

After years of lobbying led by former SickKids observer Dr. Olha Tychkivska and colleagues, Ukrainian parliament approves a law mandating flour fortification with folate, saving countless future children from the scourge of neural tube defects.

OCTOBER, 2018

Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund donates \$800,000 to the Program, which will help establish a new training program at the National Specialized Children’s Hospital in Kyiv.

LIFESAVING LOBBYING

How a simple policy change will transform Ukrainian child health

Children born with neural tube defects often face a lifetime of suffering or die before taking their first steps. Those born with spina bifida, one of the most common neural tube defects, suffer from difficulty walking and controlling their bowel and bladder. Those born with anencephaly are missing a large chunk of the brain and rarely live longer than a few days. And in Ukraine, the prevalence of neural tube defects is believed to be almost 2.2 per 1,000 live births—twice as high as the European Union average.

But this severe problem has a simple solution: mandating flour fortification with folate. Fortifying flour with folate has already proven to significantly reduce the incidence of neural tube defects, which is why mandatory fortification is the law in over 80 countries. However, Ukraine, a major grain producer, only fortifies flour made for export, not domestic consumption.

But in September 2018, after years of lobbying led by former SickKids observer and soon-to-be fellow Dr. Olha Tychkivska and her colleagues, the Ukrainian parliament finally passed a law mandating flour fortification. Once it takes effect in 2020, this new law will ease the burden on Ukraine's strained healthcare system—and save countless children from death and needless suffering.



Drs. Myroslava Romach and Olha Tychkivska in 2017

OUR DONORS:

Morris and Anna Adamowich
 Altreos Research Partners
 Oleh and Anna Antonyshyn
 Ihor Bardyn
 Delores Buka-Huculak
 Walter and Marta Burych
 Andrew Burych and Anna Sellers
 Usoa Busto
 Kalyna and Doug Butler
 Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund
 Vera Chmilenko
 Bohdanna and Ihor Chuma
 Clara Sellers
 Jurij and Daria Darewych
 Daria Derbish
 Myroslawa and Michael Diakun
 Bohdan Dolban
 William Dutka
 Tetiana and Orest Dzulynsky
 Myron Dzulynsky and
 Larissa Derzko-Dzulynsky
 Taras Fecycz
 Colin Fenwick
 Roman and Lesia Forys
 Fydenchuk Family
 Pat Glover
 Paul and Adrianna Grod
 Orest Hnatykiw
 Leanne and Nancy Horvath
 Roman and Maria Hrycyna
 The Huculak Foundation
 Anne-Marie Humniski, Sophie, Julian
 and Andre Sochaniwsky
 Ihnatowycz Family Foundation
 George Iwanchyshyn and Wilma De Groot
 Martha and George Jaciw
 Alex and Alexandra Jemetz
 Raya and Alex Juchymenko
 Ulana Kawun and Michael Karst
 Nick and Jeannie Klinduch
 David and Karan Knight
 Knights of Columbus Sheptytsky Council
 Chrystyna and Bohdan Kolos
 Mychailo and Halyna Kondracki
 John and Odarka Koshyk
 Walter and Christina Kudryk

Ihor and Valentina Kuryliw
 Elizabeth and Paul Langill
 Lila and Steve Lapczak
 Stefania Lehkyj
 Victor and Olha Lishchyna
 Walter and Nadia Luciw
 Andrew Maleckyj and Motria Kuzycz
 Angie Mammoliti
 Marc Marzotto
 Wolodymyr and Svitlana Medwidsky
 Marika Melnychuk
 Jean Menichan
 Wayne Murphy
 Myhal Family Foundation
 Natalie Obal
 George and Jean Ochrym
 The Olzhych Foundation
 George Onyschuk
 Nadia Ostapchuk
 Myron and Cathie Parzei
 Irene Petluch
 Ulana and Taras Pidzamecky
 Lida Pluwak
 Natalia and Robert Popadiuk
 Ihor and Rosemary Popadynech
 Peter and Tamara Potichnyj
 Michael Prociw and Carolyn Crum

Myroslava Romach and Edward Sellers
 Ronald and Diane Rudan
 Janet and Alex Rutka
 James and Mari Rutka
 Alexander Sellers
 Fred and Irene Shlapak
 Natalie Shykula-Clarke
 Skira & Associates Limited
 Paul Slavchenko and Lori Moore
 Alex and Roksolana Slywinskyj
 Yaroslav and Oksana Sokolyk
 St. Volodymyr's Ukrainian
 Catholic Women's League
 Tareelka Fundraising Dinner
 Temerty Foundation
 Ukrainian Canadian Congress - Toronto
 Ukrainian Credit Union
 Ukrainians on Bay Street
 Cathy Van Der Giessen
 Christian and Linda Visser
 Jean Waclawski
 Mykhailo Wawryshyn
 Windermere United Church
 Borys Wrzesnewskyi and Lina Fedko
 Keri Wynn
 Michael and Bohdanna Wytiuk
 Taras Zalusky

CHARTING OUR FUTURE

What's next for the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program

For far too long, Ukrainian paediatric care languished under a post-Soviet system stymied by endemic corruption and severe inefficiency. Children's hospitals suffered the most. Doctors were embroiled in bribes and kickback schemes, and the government lacked the will—and leadership—to act.

But things are starting to change. Dr. Ulana Suprun, Ukraine's Acting Minister of Health, is on a crusade to revolutionize the health system, and although she faces serious opposition, her policies are widely supported. For SickKids and the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program, that means more opportunities to help reform paediatric care.

In fact, Minister Suprun was so impressed by our work that she invited SickKids to conduct a formal needs assessment at the National Specialized Children's Hospital in Kyiv, known to locals as Okhmatdyt. Led by Dr. Myroslava Romach, the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program's Medical Director, the SickKids team suggested ways to improve administration, safety, and patient care and "position the hospital as a future model of excellence

for the broader healthcare system."

With this needs assessment and five years of great work behind it, including partnerships with dozens of doctors and hospitals, the Program is perfectly positioned to grow its influence. Building on our commended advisory visits and observerships, our plan is to expand into cancer care and performance measuring, which will help monitor and improve patient outcomes.

The centrepiece of the next phase, enabled by an \$800,000 catalyst gift from the Children of Chernobyl Canadian Fund, is a new partnership with Okhmatdyt. In providing a robust, specialized training program at Okhmatdyt, SickKids staff will bring their expertise where it's needed most, helping transform paediatric care for generations.

With continued investments from the Ukrainian-Canadian community, we will continue to build on this partnership, identifying new opportunities and ways to improve child health in Ukraine.

THANK YOU

Every day, SickKids is working towards improving the lives of children, and our success depends on the generosity of donors like you. Your commitment to the Ukraine Paediatric Fellowship Program at SickKids ensures that we can continue to offer the best possible health outcomes for children around the world so they can live longer and healthier lives. Thank you for your remarkable generosity.



SickKids **VS** Limits

SickKids Foundation

525 University Avenue, Suite 835
Toronto, Ontario M5G 2L3

PHONE 416.813.6166 FAX 416.813.5024

sickkidsfoundation.com

FUNDTHEFIGHT.CA

**FOR MORE INFORMATION,
PLEASE CONTACT:**

NANCY HORVATH
Director, Major Gifts

PHONE: 416-813-8602

EMAIL: Nancy.Horvath@sickkidsfoundation.com