

UMANA 2017: “Help Ukrainians Help Themselves”

By Drs. George Hrycelak and Andriy Ripecky

The Ukrainian Medical Association of North America (UMANA) held its 44th Scientific Conference and 37th Assembly of Delegates Wednesday through Saturday, June 14-18, 2017, at the Key Bridge Marriott Hotel in Arlington, VA. The theme of the biennial convention was “Rehabilitation and Reintegration – Helping Ukrainians Help Themselves”. The conference was dedicated to familiarizing participants with Ukraine’s health care challenges in the face of ongoing war, economic instability, and political reform.

This year’s conference was unique in many ways. To ensure wide participation, nonprofit foundations responded with generous grant

support.

Donors included the Ukrainian Catholic Education Foundation (UCEF), Kyiv Mohyla Foundation of America (KMFA), the Heritage Foundation 1st

Security Savings Bank, Selfreliance Foundation, UMANA Foundation, and **Yuri Deychakiwsky, MD**. Next, our conference was honored to welcome two distinguished guests from Ukraine, Acting Minister of Health Ulana Suprun, MD and Vadim Sviridenko, Commissioner of the President



Photo by John Leshchuk

UMANA members at the Taras Shevchenko Memorial

of Ukraine for rehabilitation of ATO (Anti-terrorist Operation) Wounded Veterans. Moreover, it was truly international in scope, including speakers from the United States, Canada, and Ukraine. For three days, a distinguished faculty of nearly 20 presenters from a variety of medical specialties experienced in rehabilitation and occupational medicine informed an audience of over 70 conferees on war trauma medicine, physical medicine and rehabilitation, post-traumatic stress disorder, effects of limb loss on young lives, and their reintegration into their new realities. Our listeners also heard from specialists in humanitarian relief work and researchers in population response to trauma and displacement.

Prior to the opening of the conference, Dr. Deychakiwsky and **Dr. Andriy Ripecky** accompanied our visitors from Ukraine to Walter Reed Army Hospital, including the National Intrepid Center of Excellence, where new therapies offer “Hope, Healing, Discovery, and Learning for

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Photo by John Leshchuk

Conference attendees from Ukraine visit Walter Reed Army Hospital Rehabilitation Centers.



Photo by Maria Hrycelak

New UMANA officers (from left) President Dr. Andriy Ripecky, President Elect Dr. Peter Lenchur, Vice President Dr. Leo Wolansky, and Treasurer Dr. Liza Pilch. Not pictured: Secretary Lida Wozny and immediate Past President Dr. Borys Buniak.

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Traumatic Brain Injury and Psychological Health.”

The conference began with a welcome reception atop the Key Bridge Marriott with a direct view of the Embassy of Ukraine at the opposite end of the bridge. The conference was opened formally on Thursday morning, with greetings from the president of UMANA, **Borys Buniak, MD**, and the course director, **Andriy Ripecky, MD**. Befitting the opening of a conference of international scope, the first presenter, **Luke Tomycz, MD**, a Ukrainian neurosurgeon from Texas, spoke to the assembly directly from Ukraine via Skype, where he is helping train young neurosurgeons.

His Excellency **Valeriy Chaly**, Ambassador of Ukraine to the U.S., graciously hosted a reception Thursday evening for conference attendees. After crossing the Francis Scott Key Bridge to reach the sovereign territory of Ukraine at the embassy, conferees were greeted by Ambassador Chaly, the Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament **Andrii Parubii**, and acting Minister of Health of Ukraine **Dr. Ulana Suprun**. Guests

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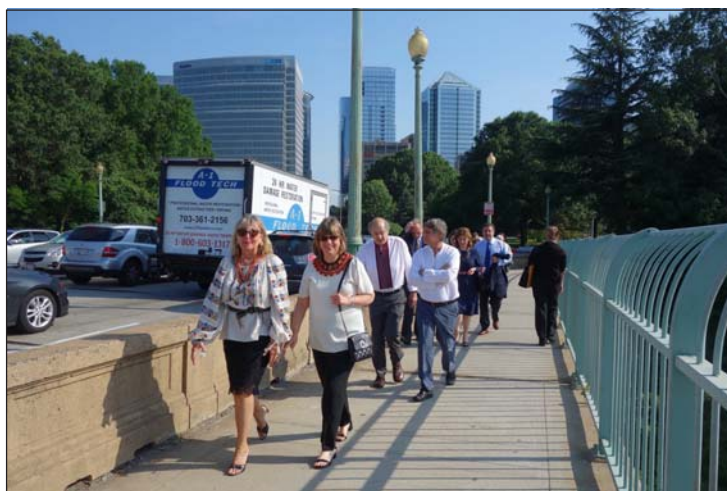


Photo by Maria Hrycelak

UMANA members walk across the bridge from Virginia to the Ukrainian Embassy in Washington, DC.

UMANA CHAPTER NEWS

Michigan Branch

UMANA Michigan Branch UPRAVA met on June 26, 2017. It was time for changing of the guard to give “Lesia” a respite from her long years of service to our branch. We reviewed some of the common questions that have to be addressed when an organization exists.

1. We agreed that we want to continue existing and to increase the membership.
2. We all agreed that the reason for our existence is mainly social and somewhat educational.
3. We agreed that we are not in any position to expand our objectives mainly because of membership apathy.
4. We agreed that we are comfortable with holding one main meeting on Christmas and possibly another meeting during the year if an interesting event can be organized.

The new UPRAVA is composed of: **Zenon Kossak, DDS**, president; **Lesia Baltarovich, MD**, immediate past-president; **Marichka Baltarovich, DDS**, secretary; **Andrew Dzul, MD**, treasurer; Member-at-Large **Anna Butrij, MD**; Member-at-Large **Christina Zachar, MD**; and, on the Committee for the Christmas Function are Chairperson **Marichka Baltarovich, DDS**, **Christina Zachar, MD**, **Christine Dzul**, and **Jeanne Kossak**.

-Report by Dr. Zenon Kossak



UMANA News

The Newsletter of the Ukrainian Medical Association of North America is published quarterly by UMANA with the objective to promote good fellowship and to uphold and enhance the best interests of UMANA. The newsletter serves as an impartial forum for information for its members. UMANA cannot guarantee the accuracy of all information contained herein. Some information has been obtained from third party published and oral sources and may not have been independently verified. The treatment of articles, views, and opinions expressed in UMANA News is not necessarily endorsed by UMANA.

Distributed to members and friends of UMANA

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The Ukrainian Medical Association of North America



OBITUARIES



SOBOL MD, Theophil, age 91, *Karl-Franzens-Universität Graz, Austria, 1944*, member NY Metro Branch, died April 5, 2009.



STAWNYCHY DDS, Yaroslaw, age 75, *New York University School of Dentistry, 1968*, member NY Metro Branch, died December 24, 2016.



President's Message

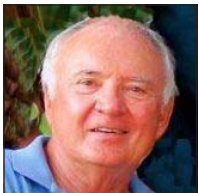
Since this is my first message as the new UMANA president, allow me to thank all of you, our members, for this honor. It is an exciting time to serve in this role at this historic moment in medical practice in the countries we feel most connected with - the United States, Canada, and Ukraine. Our recently concluded Scientific Conference focused on many of the clinical challenges facing our colleagues in Ukraine. Our keynote speaker, Dr. Ulana Suprun, Acting Health Minister of Ukraine and former UMANA member, highlighted the extremely complicated task of reforming and modernizing Ukraine's health care system.

This discussion took place against the backdrop of the ongoing, often bitter debate in the U.S. over the efforts to reform our own system. The parallel processes we are witnessing can provide us with valuable insights that might prove helpful in finding a way forward. Dr. Suprun's frustration with the entrenched medical bureaucracy in Ukraine sounds eerily similar to the battles in the U.S. among competing interests such as insurance companies, health care institutions, pharmaceutical companies, and government agencies.

What to do? I think Dr. Suprun's call for activism is very much on target. She encourages us to express our views to Ukraine's political leadership directly but also to support the efforts of the many U.S. government officials sympathetic to Ukraine. Beyond this, I was tremendously impressed by the dedicated idealism of the health care professionals from Ukraine who participated in our June conference. We also had the honor of hosting North America-based colleagues, all of them actively laboring to elevate the practice of health care in Ukraine to Western standards. They're all devoted, and they clearly appreciate the interest and support of our medical community. So, get in touch, let them know you're paying attention. Depending on your own availability and resources, you can then participate in whatever way makes sense - offering your time, expertise, equipment, and most critically your friendship and support. The names and contact information of a sample of colleagues already active in this work along with their interests and projects can be found under the Resources tab on the UMANA website.

Sincerely,
Andriy Ripecky, MD

UMANA MEMBER NEWS



George BARANOWSKYJ, DDS, MS (Florida Branch) is enjoying retirement in Osprey, FL and urges members to consider Florida as a

desirable destination for new and retired physicians since there is great demand with many positions available.



Mariana IVANYLO, PharmD (Illinois Branch) represented clinical pharmacists of the CVS/Caremark Illinois Pain Management group at the 2017 National

RxDrug Abuse & Heroin Summit in Atlanta, GA. In the context of the current opioid epidemic, her team is involved in mail pharmacy opioid analgesics utilization management and monitoring to ensure their safe use and to prevent their misuse, abuse, and diversion.



Andrew MIKHALYUK, MD (New England Branch) is starting his residency in Emergency Medicine at the University of Connecticut.



Polina PILYUYKO, MD (Illinois Branch) will be completing her Internal Medicine residency at Weiss Hospital in Chicago in 2018. She would like to pursue her career in the Chicagoland area and continue to be an active member of UMANA.



Leo WOLANSKY, MD (New England Branch) is the newly appointed chair of the Department of Diagnostic Imaging and Therapeutics at UConn Health. He joined UConn Health from Case Western Reserve University School of Medicine. Wolansky will oversee

all patient imaging services provided by faculty and staff, while serving as its clinical neuroradiology subspecialist.



Andrei ZINCHUK, MD (NY Metro Branch) is completing his Pulmonary Critical Care and Sleep fellowship this year and will be staying on at Yale University as a faculty

member.

EMPLOYMENT

POSITION AVAILABLE: Birmingham, AL
Pulmonologist seeks BC/BE pulmonary specialist to join busy subspecialty practice. Call (205) 903-9747 or (205) 903-9748 for additional information.

SEEKING POSITION: Chicago, IL
PGY 3 will be completing Internal Medicine residency in June 2018 seeking position in Chicagoland area. Call (786) 302-3701 for further information.

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sampled delicious Ukrainian culinary creations prepared on-site.

After Friday lectures, conferees spent a quiet evening at the traditional UMANA reunion dinner. Vadim Sviridenko spoke movingly of his personal struggle to recover from grievous injuries suffered in battle at Debaltsevo in winter and to now lead Ukraine’s efforts to develop a system of care for injured veterans of the ATO. While enjoying a wonderful dinner, the group revived old friendships while breaking out in renditions of favorite Ukrainian songs and staying long enough to be coaxed out of the room by the cleaning crew. Saturday afternoon was dedicated to a bus tour of “Ukrainian” Washington, DC, with stops at the Taras Shevchenko statue and the recently installed Holodomor Memorial.

The conference concluded with the Keynote Address and Awards Banquet. Minister of Health Dr. Suprun spoke with great passion of her commitment to fundamentally transform Ukraine’s health care system, focusing on all aspects, including training, clinical care, research, and financing. Dr. Suprun received a recognition award for her exemplary work in helping Ukraine’s evolving health system, and Dr. Buniak was awarded recognition for his service to UMANA as the now past-president.

During the cocktail hour preceding the Awards Banquet, numerous humanitarian organizations based in the U.S. targeting health care in Ukraine were able to showcase their projects for all attendees. We encourage members to connect with which ever group most closely reflects one’s interests and become involved. Please visit our website at www.umana.org/resources.php in the “humanitarian” tab to see a list of organizations concerned with healthcare in Ukraine.”



Photo by Maria Hrycelak

(From left) His Excellency Ambassador Valeriy Chaly, Chairperson of the Ukrainian Parliament Andrii Parubii, and acting Minister of Health Dr. Ulana Suprun greeted members and guests at the Ukrainian Embassy.



Photo by Maria Hrycelak

(From left) UMANA Past President Dr. Borys Buniak, Acting Minister of Health and Keynote speaker Dr. Ulana Suprun, Commissioner of the President of Ukraine for Rehabilitation of ATO veterans Vadim Sviridenko



Photo by John Leshchuk

UMANA members and guests, many in Ukrainian vyshyvanky at the Ukrainian embassy.

The 37th Assembly of Delegates was held concurrently on Saturday afternoon, conducting the biennial business meeting of UMANA. The association’s financial affairs and budget were reviewed and confirmed, and reports of all committees were presented. Elections of new officers for the upcoming two years were held with the following results: President Dr. Andriy Ripecky, Vice President **Dr. Oleh Wolansky**, President Elect **Dr. Peter Lenchur**, immediate Past President Dr. Borys Buniak, Secretary **Lida Wozny**, Treasurer **Dr. Liza Pilch**, and Chapter Representative **Dr. Andrew Dzul**.

Several points and themes emerged across our speakers’ presentations.

◆ While facing numerous problems, all conveyed a notable sense of optimism for the future.

◆ Assistance is valued and appreciated when offered as a collegial, collaborative effort.

◆ Training across many disciplines is needed and welcomed. Collaboration among disciplines was repeatedly emphasized as key by our presenters, whether speaking of neurosurgery or psychotherapy.

◆ Technology is good, but the systematic application of effective, less costly, and more available treatments or devices, such as simple, well-designed and locally produced prostheses is vital.

◆ For psychological trauma affecting large numbers of people, treatment by trained, low-level providers such as counselors or bachelor’s level staff has shown great promise.

◆ In dealing with disability, resetting

expectations across society is vital.

◆ Whether referring to physical or psychological disability, an emphasis on recovery and restoration of function needs to be introduced to elevate Ukraine’s healthcare practice to world standards.