



IN SUPPORT OF UKRAINE

One of the byproducts of the war in Ukraine is that its ENT community is at risk for becoming increasingly isolated in the academic world. Travel to conferences, networking, and financial support for Continuing Medical Education (CME) have become more challenging.

But an exciting collaboration between the Department of Otolaryngology-Head & Neck Surgery and the ENT community in Ukraine is providing them much needed educational support.

It all started years ago when Eugene N. Myers, MD, FACS, FRCS, Edin (Hon), Emeritus Distinguished Professor and Chairman, Department of Otolaryngology-Head and Neck Surgery and Director, International Visiting Scholars Program, visited Ukraine with his late wife so she could see where her mother emigrated from. During their time in Kiev, they visited the Department of Otolaryngology in the Academy of Medical Sciences of Ukraine. Faculty member Professor Svetlana Yaremchuk was assigned to give them a tour since she spoke perfect English.

In the ensuing years, as Drs. Myers and Yaremchuk got to know one another, Dr. Myers invited her to visit the Department to be exposed to some of the latest developments in their specialty. About seven years ago, she was an international visiting scholar in the Sleep Division for one month, working with Dr. Ryan Soose, Associate Professor and Chief, Sleep Division.

Dr. Yaremchuk returned to the Department several times for refresher courses with Dr. Soose. Meanwhile, Dr. Myers kept in touch with her by phone. During one of their conversations, Dr. Myers realized that the ENT doctors in Ukraine were preoccupied with taking care of war injuries, leaving them no time to learn anything new. Going out of

the country to meetings was also forbidden. "I suggested that if they were interested, our Department could organize a teaching course via Zoom," Dr. Myers recalled. "She was very receptive, so the collaboration was born."

Since Dr. Soose had a close working relationship with Dr. Yaremchuk, Dr. Myers asked him to take on leadership of the project. A June 2024 letter from the Department addressed to their "Ukrainian otolaryngology colleagues" expressed support and offered resources, including three virtual lectures from subspecialty experts. Faculty were available live on July 3 and via email anytime for questions, clinical advice, and ongoing discussion.

Following that, a CME event organized by Drs. Soose and Yaremchuk originally scheduled for July 3 had to be postponed due to increased bombings and power outages. Rescheduled for September 4, the three-hour event consisted of three lectures delivered by Pitt faculty and produced by the Eye & Ear Foundation. Lectures were translated into Ukrainian language and shown live. More than 50 doctors attended in person and over 400 participated online. Dr. Yaremchuk said the presentations were "met with great enthusiasm, generating many questions and fostering a lively discussion."

"We hope this serves as a springboard for future collaborations and support – both in-person and virtual," Dr. Soose said.

"This collaboration is very important to us," Dr. Yaremchuk said. Direct communication with American colleagues helps fill the gap in being unable to gain new knowledge and improve qualifications, she added.

"I'm so happy that we could provide support for them during these trying times," Dr. Myers said. 🇺🇸