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breast health mission to Romania

STAFF REPORTS

This month, breast health experts from Northwest Arkansas will travel to Romania to lead a conference on breast care and early diagnosis for the country's physicians and medical staff. Dr. Kevin Pope, a radiologist specializing in breast imaging, and Sarah Faitak, a breast imaging nurse, both from MANA's Breast Center, hope to share their vision of breast health.

In 2007, Faitak met Romanian representatives at the Susan G. Komen Global Summit in Budapest, Hungary, where she was one of 25 U.S. delegates. Back in Arkansas, Faitak stayed in touch, growing more aware of their needs. After Faitak shared their story with other physicians at MANA's Breast Center, they decided to send a biopsy device and ultrasound training book. "Our new friends were extremely grateful," said Pope.

Although breast cancer is a global disease, reaction and approach to its diagnosis and treatment vary greatly by a country's culture and economic means. Northwest Arkansas residents are fortunate to have a dedicated breast center, medical experts and the best screening tools available. "In Romania, they have very few mammography machines for the whole country, and most women do not get mammograms until they feel a lump and have limited options, often a mastectomy," said Pope. "From what we have heard, breast care in Romania is more like it was here in the U.S. 20 years ago."

Continued correspondence with health care leaders in Romania revealed the need for additional training and education of physicians and nurses. Pope and Faitak offered to visit Romania. Set for Oct. 13, the envisioned informal training session has developed into a medical conference to provide greater access and medical credit for more physicians and medical staff. Pope and Faitak will conduct a series of lectures, a hands-on workshop on needle biopsy, and an ultrasound workshop with live models. Partial funding for this project has been provided from the Susan G. Komen Global Initiative and the MANA Charitable Foundation. ■



Drs. Sarah Faitak and Kevin Pope