2017 Summit Recap

The 2017 iCAN Research & Advocacy Summit took place in Orlando, Florida from July 10-14, once again with the goal of bringing together youth, families and professionals to learn from one another and provide youth with opportunities to improve pediatric health, medicine, research, and innovation by sharing children’s voices in an impactful way. This successful event saw a forty percent increase in attendance from last year, bringing together 250 youth advisors and their families, team leaders, and scientific partners. 19 of iCAN’s 20 chapters were represented, with members from 8 countries on 3 continents. The 2017 Summit was dedicated to the memory of Félix Junquera Tejeda, a beloved youth advisor of the KIDS Barcelona chapter who lost his courageous battle with Osteosarcoma just weeks before the event. iCAN’s first-ever scholarship will be created in his name, and will cover costs for an outstanding youth advisor to attend the Summit each year.

iCAN youth advisors and leadership were joined by special guest speakers from the US FDA, Health Canada, Pfizer, Premier Research, PhRMA, Eli Lilly, InVentiv Health, the American Academy of Pediatrics Section on Advances in Therapeutics and Technology, BIO, the Florida Department of Health, Boehringer Ingelheim, Live Like Bella, Dairy Council of Florida, various children’s hospitals from around the world, and more. Attendees engaged with scientific leaders to learn about topics in medicine, research, innovation, pharmacogenomics, STEM careers, drug discovery and development, healthy lifestyles, patient advocacy, how to assess basic vital signs, and had multiple opportunities to learn about and provide feedback on pediatric informed consent and assent documents. Summit attendees also visited the Give Kids the World Village, received a tour of the facility to learn about its purpose and history, and participated in a hands-on community service activity to benefit the many visitors of the Village each year. iCAN was honored to welcome Florida State Senator Marco Rubio, who discussed the importance of patient engagement in research and healthcare, as well as the need for increased research of childhood cancers.

iCAN introduced three new chapters to the growing network this year: KIDS Bari (Italy), KIDS Tokyo (Japan), and the first- ever iCAN Special Interest Chapter, KIDS Childhood Cancer. This new chapter model will connect youth and families from across the globe in specific therapeutic areas to allow us to target the specific needs of each disease, while allowing additional room for collaboration with preexisting organizations with similar goals to reduce duplicate efforts and fortify a stronger and more effective approach to change.

Recognition from important figures and the rapid growth of this event and network observed from year to year demonstrate the growing support of iCAN’s initiatives in a dynamic and constantly changing field, where patient and public engagement is quickly becoming a standard.