

Media release, Monday, May 20, 2019

Bern Center for Precision Medicine inaugurated

The Bern Center for Precision Medicine (BCPM) of the University of Bern and Inselspital, University hospital of Bern, were officially opened today in the presence of Director of Education Christine Häslér. Häslér described the BCPM as a prime example of the development of new research centers, and strengthening Bern as a center of medicine.

The University of Bern and the Insel Gruppe founded the Bern Center for Precision Medicine (BCPM) with the support of the Canton. This commenced operations in January. Now, it has been officially opened in the presence of Director of Education Christine Häslér.

Strong signal for Bern as a center of medicine

“I am delighted that today, in the BCPM, we have been able to open a beacon in the field of precision medicine, which is the medicine of the future”, said Häslér in her address. The Cantonal Government was enthusiastic about the new center from the start, and anchored the development to the University of Bern as an express objective in the performance mandate. The BCPM was also supported financially, with start-up funding of 3 million francs from the Canton. “It fits in exactly with the guidelines of government policy, with the keyword ‘Engagement 2030’, in which the canton supports strengthening Bern as a center of medicine, and wants to promote the development of new research centers”, said Häslér. “For me, the BCPM is a prime example of such a center.” By opening the BCPM, Bern is sending a strong signal as a center of medicine.

A new strategic center of the university

Christian Leumann, rector of the University of Bern, noted that the strategic research centers were a success story of the University of Bern, and that the BCPM now can be added to the group. “The structure of the BCPM addresses the University’s strategy to collect all the existing knowledge in all relevant fields of our comprehensive university, and to develop them further”, said Leumann. According to this interdisciplinary approach, five faculties will be involved in the BCPM. “In this way, in addition to classical biomedical research, health research and computer science, also ethical questions as well as legal or economical questions will be addressed”. By combining scientific resources of both University of Bern and Inselspital, the diagnosis and therapy for patients will be significantly improved.

Precision medicine as teamwork

Precision medicine should increase the quality of the treatments, and relieve the healthcare system with more efficient therapies. According to Uwe E. Jocham, President and CEO of the Insel Gruppe, these are “ambitious and challenging goals”, which you can best fulfill if you work as a team. “And that is exactly what we are doing here in Bern”, said Jocham, and named the Young Boys and SC Bern as role models, who both became Swiss champions this year. As in sport, in precision medicine, the composition of the team, good strategy and tactics, and collaboration with partners are also crucial. “Precision medicine is teamwork par excellence – doctors and researchers combine their expertise with that of data analysts, and therefore allow the best treatment for patients in clinics”, said Jocham. “I am proud of the Bern Center for Precision Medicine, Bern as a center of medicine and our partnership. The canton, the university and the Insel Gruppe are a strong team. We think the same way, and are also close to each other geographically.”

“We hope that in the coming years, we can play an important role in the improvement of quality of life and medical care in Bern, in Switzerland and worldwide”, said Mark Rubin, Head of the BCPM. That is why the BCPM builds on its strengths: “We focus on excellence in a few limited areas, and that is where we want to be the best in the world - this has previously proved to be a good model for Switzerland”, Rubin is convinced. Therefore, the results of a first call for projects to the researchers were very promising. “Our top goal is to promote a healthy life in Bern, and have a positive influence on patient treatment. In doing so, we will make discoveries that will be relevant throughout Switzerland and internationally”, says Rubin.

Bern Center for Precision Medicine (BCPM)

At the Inselspital, Bern University Hospital, precision medicine is already a reality: For example, through removal and analysis of tumor tissue in the case of lung cancer, it can be predicted which medications the patient will respond to best. The BCPM aims to develop new medications and methods, increase the quality of treatment for patients and relieve the healthcare system with more efficient therapies. In addition, it should strengthen the national and international position of the University of Bern and the Inselspital in the area of precision medicine. The set-up of the center will be supported by the canton of Bern, in the framework of the performance mandate of the Cantonal Government to the university, with a one-off addition of 3 million francs to the state contribution 2019. It is funded by resources of the university, the Insel Gruppe, equity capital of the research groups involved in the center, and funds received from third parties. The center management under Mark A. Rubin includes members of the university and the Inselspital Bern. The content focus of the BCPM arises from ongoing projects, for example cancer research.

<http://www.bcpm.unibe.ch/>

You can find details of the contact persons and further information on the next page.

Download images of this event from Tuesday, 21 May 2019, 09.30h:

<https://tinyurl.com/PicturesBCPM>

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