



**Empire State
Development**



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**ESD's Howard Zemsky, Roswell Park CEO Dr. Candace Johnson Detail
Agreement Reached with Cuban Center for Molecular Immunology During
Governor Cuomo's Trade Mission to Cuba**

Roswell Park Cancer Institute signs agreement with Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology (CIM) to develop a lung cancer vaccine with a clinical trial in the United States

Empire State Development President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky and Roswell Park Cancer Institute Chief Executive Officer and President Dr. Candace Johnson today announced that following the NYS Trade Mission to Cuba, Roswell Park Cancer Institute in Buffalo has signed an agreement with Cuba's Center for Molecular Immunology (CIM) to develop a unique lung cancer vaccine with a clinical trial in the United States. The trade mission facilitated face-to-face connections and enabled the two parties to hammer out the final details.

“By laying a foundation for potential relationships between New York State and Cuba industries, I had great hope that the NYS Trade Mission to Cuba would be a success by ensuring that Empire State companies were at the front of the line as doors begin to open between the U.S. and Cuba,” said ESD President, CEO & Commissioner Howard Zemsky. “Roswell Park’s pioneering studies have led to tremendous advances in cancer diagnostics and treatment and now, with a relationship with Cuba’s Center for Molecular Immunology, the comprehensive cancer center will further be able to advance its mission.”

“The agreement we reached during Governor Cuomo’s trade mission holds tremendous promise, and simply could not have been realized as effectively and efficiently without the governor’s leadership,” said Roswell Park Cancer Institute President & Chief Executive Officer Dr. Candace Johnson. “The lung cancer vaccine developed by the Center for Molecular Immunology team represents a creative, unique approach to treating and perhaps preventing cancer, and we are enormously proud that Roswell Park expects to be the first U.S. institution to be able to offer it to select patients.”

Leaders from business and higher education joined New York's trade mission to Cuba on April 20 and 21 – the first Governor-led state trade mission to Cuba since President Obama began the process to normalize diplomatic relations between the United States and Cuba. Roswell Park was represented on the trade mission by President & CEO Dr. Candace Johnson and Department of Immunology Chair Dr. Kelvin Lee.

The agreement between Dr. Candace Johnson of Roswell Park Cancer Institute and Einard Blanco Garcia, the General Manager of the Havana-based CIM, a cancer research group, was signed on Tuesday after meetings on Monday. Roswell Park has had conversation with Cuba since 2011 and has been aware of the lung cancer vaccine for about six months, but the trade mission with Governor Cuomo to Cuba helped finalized a deal.

Roswell Park has partnered with the Center for Molecular Immunology through academic and preclinical research exchanges since 2011. The agreement reached this week will support testing of a CIM-developed vaccine for lung cancer, which is already in use in Cuba, in an early-phase clinical trial at Roswell Park. The vaccine has already shown promise in controlling lung cancer, and the teams hope it may have value in both preventing and treating lung cancer and possibly other cancers. The agreement with the CIM paves the way for Roswell Park to move forward on its application to the U.S. Food and Drug Administration to offer the vaccine in a clinical trial in the U.S.

This trade mission is part of Global NY, an initiative launched by Governor Cuomo in 2014. The Global NY trade mission to Cuba will be the first of several trade mission destinations, including Canada, China, Israel and Mexico. With offices in New York, Canada, China, Israel, Mexico, South Africa, and the United Kingdom, Global NY has on-the-ground experts around the world creating new business opportunities for New York State. In addition, the Governor recently unveiled www.global.ny.gov, a one-stop shop for trade and investment and a \$35 million Global NY Development Fund which will soon provide loans and grants to help small- and medium-sized New York businesses export abroad.

About Roswell Park Cancer Institute

The mission of Roswell Park Cancer Institute (RPCI) is to understand, prevent and cure cancer. Founded in 1898, RPCI is one of the first cancer centers in the country to be named a National Cancer Institute-designated comprehensive cancer center and remains the only facility with this designation in Upstate New York. The Institute is a member of the prestigious National Comprehensive Cancer Network, an alliance of the nation's leading cancer centers; maintains affiliate sites; and is a partner in national and international collaborative programs. For more information, visit www.roswellpark.org, call 1-877-ASK-RPCI (1-877-275-7724) or email askrpci@roswellpark.org. Follow Roswell Park on Facebook and Twitter.

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