

Evelin Ilves has visited the San Francisco Benioff Children's Hospital and the Stanford University and University of California San Francisco Osher medical centres, which have adopted an integrated approach to medicine – combining ordinary and complementary medicine in treating patients.

At Benioff Children's Hospital Mrs Ilves was given a tour of the Intensive Care ward for newborns and the unit of the local school operating at the hospital. She shared her experience of the intensive care treatment of Estonian-American children with specialists from the hospital, outlining to them the methods practised at Tallinn Children's Hospital, where mothers are able to stay in the Intensive Care ward with their children and base themselves temporarily in the hospital's family suite.

Mrs Ilves said that she was also interested in finding out about the cold treatment given at the hospital to children born with blood circulation problems in the brain. This method, which sees the body temperature of newborns reduced for a period of 72 hours, is designed to limit brain damage or the extent of any damage caused.

Mrs Ilves also visited the Stanford University and University of California San Francisco Osher medical centres, which practise integrated medicine – in addition to regular approaches, complex conditions are treated with meditation, acupuncture, yoga and more.

"Integrating different trends in medicine is an approach that should be more widely encouraged in Europe, including Estonia," Mrs Ilves said. "Whereas sick people in our country have to look for help themselves from alternative medicine, the patients coming to these centres are being referred here by their doctors. It's a perfect example of how specialists practising different forms of medicine can work together to ensure that people receive relief from their symptoms and recover from illnesses that ordinary western medicine has proven incapable of treating."

Mrs Ilves also stopped in at the Bistro Boudin bakery, which makes traditional San Francisco bread fermented using a starter.

While in Washington Mrs Ilves will visit the medical centre operating at George Washington

University, which also focusses on integrated medicine.

President and Mrs Ilves will also be attending a concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington at which the music of world-renowned Estonian composer Arvo Pärt will be performed by the Tallinn Chamber Orchestra and the Estonian Philharmonic Chamber Choir led by conductor Tõnu Kaljuste. The composer himself will also be in attendance.

President and Mrs Ilves are due to return to Estonia on 29 May.

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