

Different activities related to the Strategic Plan on Epilepsy for the Americas were performed during the 7th Regional Latin American Epilepsy Congress in Quito, Ecuador.

1. Representatives of IBE and ILAE of Latin American, Central America and the Caribbean countries carried out a workshop, where the Plan's successes and failures of the first year of development were analyzed. Also, the participation of North American, whose representative is Sheryl Haut, President of ILAE Committee, was important. She talked about North America's realities and its meeting points; and Dale Hesdorffer's participation was important too. He referred to aspects from the Institute of Medicine's report and showed how they could be useful for Latin America.
2. The present and future of the Strategic Plan was analyzed during the Opening Ceremony and Dr. Jorge Rodríguez informed about technical aspects and preliminary results of the survey, which was answered by 24 Ministries of Health of the Region. The Letter of Agreement was signed by IBE and ILAE Presidents at the end of Presidential Symposium, which gives a legal and official seal to the Strategic Plan.
3. Also, a Task Force meeting was held, where we can emphasize the following:
 1. There are two levels of the Strategic Plan implementation:
 - a) National level: Citizens within each country can make suggestions and thereby motivate the public sector. Also, local PAHO representatives of each country need to be contacted.
 - b) Continental level: It is the global level of the Strategic Plan implementation. We should pick 3 or 4 viable, concrete and functioning items that improve technical plans and do not involve expenses. The participation of representatives from the local PAHO is also very important. Regarding this, Dr. Rodríguez requests the names of the Presidents of IBE and ILAE Chapters to send a note to every PAHO representative and to the Ministries of Health, so that the network can be consolidated, which is essential so that it can be working in every country before the end of 2012.

2. We need to understand that initially we do not have a central budget and the smartest thing to do is to optimize the current one, at least in the initial phase until it is reasonable to have one.
3. We have to identify quickly the countries where a work team has not been established yet, to help to fix this problem. The secretaries of the regional commissions will be in charge of this issue.
4. Fluent and total communication between IBE and ILAE is needed. If there is no Chapter, it is important to identify key people.
5. We should not be impatient. The Strategic Plan is a short, medium and long term process. We have to identify each country's characteristics and situation.
6. We should print the survey results, carried out between June and December 2012, that update the Atlas of epilepsy resources of 2005. This is required in order to have a basis to start making changes that are needed to implement specific measures.
7. To perform a Regional Workshop the second week of August in Santiago, Chile, it is required to establish the support of the Ministry. Eight innovative, successful regional initiatives will be analyzed, which include two epilepsy program models. The workshop's goal is to plan priority initiatives addressed to countries with great deficits and with a well defined program.
8. It is essential to implement a website briefly, which could be linked to the PAHO website, where patients and interested professionals can visit. Li Li Min is working on this issue.
9. Dr. Rodríguez is requested as a mediator so that WHO/PAHO can purchase good quality generic drugs for countries that are interested in acquiring them. For this reason Dr. Marco Tulio Medina has been developing this initiative. Therefore, all Governments that are interested should request these drugs so that PAHO can support this.
10. The AES Annual Congress scheduled meetings between Latin American and North American representatives in order to improve joint initiatives.
11. A conference call will be held in January.

This is a summary of the most relevant topics discussed during the meeting. Our goal is to periodically send you information about the Strategic Plan progress. The more we spread this; the better will be for our cause.

Kind regards,

Dr. Carlos Acevedo

IBE Secretary General