

5th June 2025

Candidate Statement

ILAE North America Committee 2025-29

Dear Colleagues,

It is a privilege to be nominated to serve on the ILAE North America Committee 2025-2029.

As a 'youth' in my career journey, I have been fortunate to be guided by many of our more professed epilepsy champions within the North American region. As such, I am always eager to advance my professional understanding to improve our patients' standard of care and enlighten our medical community.

The Caribbean archipelago is considered a part of the North America region. However, our resource limitations are starkly evident, with our leaders in epilepsy management in the substantial Northern country, and our scattered start-ups in the vulnerable Southern islands.

The Intersectoral Global Action Plan (IGAP) on Epilepsy and other neurological disorders has become foundational since its launch. Focusing on its main tenets, can we adopt the practices of our North American leader's connected service model?

I envision that this can be achieved under the umbrella of the CARICOM (Caribbean Community) and the campuses of the University of the West Indies, so that we become unified in strategically sharing our resources, knowledge and experiences, as small island developing states. Only then can an established hub-and-spoke model benefit the 'Western, Eastern and Southern Caribbean states.'

The advantages of being an integrated network include strengthening governance, implementing strategies and fostering innovative research to promote a standardized model of care for our patients, guided by the Epilepsy Society of the Caribbean chapter.

Even though advocating for our epilepsy warriors has been a challenging journey, as an early career professional and proud daughter of the West Indies, I acknowledge that 'in union, there is strength.' Therefore, my aim is quite simple: to enhance our collaborations, with a shared aim to tactically pool our resources and successfully bridge the gap in our fight against epilepsy.

Thank you again for this esteemed honor.

Vanita Shukla