

Buenos Aires, December 20, 2024

Dear Friends and Colleagues,

Dear President and Officers of the ILAE Chapters

It is an honor for me to have been invited to nominate myself as a candidate for the election for Member Board ILAE-Latin America Committee for the 2025-2029 by a transparent and natural statutory mechanism of the ILAE statute. I also must thank my colleague's members of the board of directors and many prestigious partners of the Argentine Chapter of ILAE, who did not hesitate to encourage me to nominate myself and fully trusted my candidacy. The latter is the most valuable thing for me, since they are the ones who know me from the daily local work of 28 years of experience in my country.

I am a neurologist trained at a public university and once I graduated I decided to train in neurology at a public reference hospital where I began to see and learn the real problems of ordinary people in my country, such as the difficulties in accessing care of both low and high complexity associated with the serious socioeconomic problems of each family. I learned to see the limitations and problems both in offering patients the basic diagnostic and therapeutic resources necessary to provide adequate care. I saw and learned from my superiors to be imaginative, to fight for patients' rights, to look for sometimes unconventional strategies to solve people's problems due to lack of support and long bureaucratic paths offered by the authorities of the health system. All this from my first years of training encouraged me to look for ways to improve the quality of care for our patients. But to improve the quality of care, we must also be very well prepared and educated as doctors, and the option is permanent training that involves all the actors of the organizations to which we belong. I saw this as necessary from the beginning as a neurologist to be able to contribute my grain of sand to the organizations to which I belong. This is how I decided to begin my training in epilepsy first in my country as a Medical Fellow for Improvement and Research in Argentina, to then improve myself and have an experience on the European continent as a Fellow in Neurophysiology and Epileptology under the direction of Professor Dr. Patrick Chauvel and later attend The Cleveland Clinic Foundation as an International Student in the Epilepsy Section. The experience abroad nourished me a lot personally, but it also made me reflect that for this quality of care to reach my country and Latin America, it was necessary to work starting by tilling the land as a first step.

And for this to happen, I am convinced that the best institution is the ILAE, which brings together all regions and invites all countries of the world to work so that epilepsy comes out of the shadows. This is how I joined the Argentine Epilepsy chapter, becoming president during the COVID-19 pandemic, and as a global crisis it was an opportunity for us. We had many challenges and opportunities for improvement that we began to implement. At that time, we developed the first educational webinars on epilepsy in my country to maintain continuing education and the first virtual congress that was a success that went from having four hundred annual registrants to more than 1,000 registrants both nationally and in the Latin American region. This not only maintained continuing medical education but also improved access to it. In this first virtual congress, in addition, we again encouraged scientific research through poster presentations and scientific papers incentivized with awards for the best papers. On the other hand, since I returned to my

country, I was able to participate and work together with other colleagues to develop a comprehensive local epilepsy program incorporating in a phased manner highly complex types of epilepsy surgery and the development of fellowship programs for both adult and pediatric neurologists and a university postgraduate degree in epilepsy neurophysiology.

But we have, both in my country and in Latin America, multiple pending tasks to resolve, such as the permanent gap in access to care, in access to diagnostic tools and therapeutic options in both primary and tertiary care. I see with my application the intention and possibility of helping and guiding our countries in the region in the following actions for Latin America:

1. Work on the “Intersectoral Global Action Plan on Epilepsy and Other Neurological Disorders 2022–2031” proposed in November 2020 at the World Health Assembly.
2. Have a close relationship with the ILAE Chapters and with the members of the IBE Chapters of each Latin American Country. So that they can raise their specific local and regional problems and agree on specific actions to improve these problems.
3. As a first measure, carry out a quantification through surveys of Doctors, Health Authorities, and patients or patient associations of each country and their regions to make a real diagnosis of the local Latin American situation and specific gaps in the needs of patients.
4. Raise awareness on strategies to improve access to health services: Educating leaders in the region to develop programs to increase access to health services and reduce the care gap for people in rural or underserved areas.
5. Work in a coordinated and continuous manner with ALADE (Latin American Academy of Epilepsy) directing actions based on the needs and requests of the Latin American Chapters, using the situation survey.
6. Promote collaboration and networking to establish strategic alliances in education, scientific and technological exchange, specific training, assigning the role of tutors to the most developed countries and favoring the countries with the greatest needs and the greatest gaps in care. To achieve continuous improvement in the quality of care, seeking the best quality standards.

Finally, I would like to emphasize that none of the above can be achieved by a chair or a commission. None of the objectives set forth can be achieved without the participation of each country, each chapter, and each patient association. For this reason, I appeal to all of us to be actively involved to continue bringing epilepsy out of the shadows.

Finally, I have experience in care, program development and research, knowledge of the region, ability to work and collaborate in teams and a vocation for service that position me to request your support to be elected as Member Board ILAE-Latin America Committee for the 2025-2029.



Walter H Silva M.D.

Head of Epilepsy Service and Video EEG/Neurology Unit – FLENI

Epilepsy Consultant Physician

Child Neurology Service - University Institute (IUHI) - Italian Hospital of Buenos Aires.

Associate Professor University Institute Italian Hospital – IUHIBA

Member of the Executive Board of ILAE-Latin America 2021-2025

Past -President - Argentine League Against Epilepsy 2019-2021