



LATIN AMERICAN DECLARATION ON EPILEPSY  
9 September 2000

Under the aegis of the **Global Campaign Against Epilepsy**, the Commissions on Latin American Affairs of the International League against Epilepsy (ILAE) and the International Bureau for Epilepsy (IBE), the Pan American Health Organization/ World Health Organization (PAHO/WHO), UNICEF for Latin America and the Caribbean, the Regional Office on Education for Latin America and the Caribbean of UNESCO, the Ministry of Health of Chile, organizations of people with epilepsy and parents of children with epilepsy, and the delegates of the national Leagues against Epilepsy of the Latin American and other countries of the world, on September 9th of 2000, at Santiago de Chile, unanimously declare:

- Epilepsy is a neurological disorder that, if inadequately treated, produces severe physical, psychological, social and economic problems which are aggravated by poverty in all Latin American countries.
- At least five million people in Latin America, probably more, have epilepsy, and more than three million do not receive treatment.
- Epilepsy may occur at any age, mainly in childhood and adolescence, but is also frequent in the elderly.
- Lack of adequate detection and treatment worsens the prognosis including the social and economic impact.
- Mortality in people with epilepsy is higher than in the general population.
- With appropriate treatment, most people with epilepsy may be relieved of their seizures and enjoy a significantly improved quality of life.
- Direct and indirect costs of epilepsy in Latin America are high and can be reduced by effective treatment.

We call on the Latin American Governments, national and regional, public and private organizations, all health care providers and the general public to join us in taking strong and decisive action to meet the objectives of the Global Campaign Against Epilepsy of the PAHO/WHO-ILAE-IBE "Epilepsy: Out of the Shadows".

**Specifically we urge action to:**

- Improve public understanding of epilepsy and thereby reduce its stigma.
- Fight discrimination against people with epilepsy in all social environments, especially in the school and at the workplace.
- Educate people with epilepsy and their families to improve their understanding of their condition and to empower them to seek appropriate treatment and lead fulfilled lives.
- Strengthen primary health care, emphasizing prevention, diagnosis and treatment by training the professionals working on this level.
- Ensure availability of modern equipment, trained health personnel, access to the full range of antiepileptic drugs, epilepsy surgery and other forms of treatment.
- Promote research and education in epilepsy.
- Promote close liaison of governments, health and social authorities with ILAE, IBE and PAHO/WHO to develop strategic projects and mobilize resources for the control of epilepsy.
- Develop national plans for epilepsy in all Latin American countries.
- Support publication of a detailed public health assessment on epilepsy in Latin America.
- Promote national and international legislation which facilitates the implementation of health policies in accord with the initiatives which are proposed in this declaration.



International Bureau for Epilepsy



OPS/OMS



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International League Against Epilepsy