

INTERNATIONAL LEAGUE AGAINST EPILEPSY

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Minister Ekaterine Tikaradze
Ministry of Internal Displaced Persons from the Occupied
Territories, Labour, Health and Social Affairs
144 Ak. Tsereteli Ave.
0119 Tbilisi
Georgia

Dear Minister Tikaradze:

It is with great pride that we announce that 2019 is the 110th Anniversary of the International League Against Epilepsy (ILAE). The League is one of the oldest neurology subspecialty organizations, and, in the 110 years since its founding in Budapest, the League's members have improved the treatment of epilepsy and the well being of people with the disease around the world, but much remains to be done. The national ILAE chapter in Georgia is working to improve the lives of your fellow citizens who have epilepsy.

Epilepsy is a disease that affects many aspects of a person's life. Uncontrolled seizures prevent people from working and often result in significant social isolation from the great prejudice against people with this disease. With treatment these individuals can be fully integrated and productive citizens. A recent study supported by the Gates Foundation found that epilepsy across the globe was the fifth leading neurological cause of disability (disability adjusted life years) and the sixth leading neurological cause of death. In some countries the burden of epilepsy is far greater. This burden could be greatly improved by providing access to the basic care that is now available.

The international epilepsy community greatly appreciates the recognition and support it has received from the countries of the world through such actions as the World Health Organization's Resolution on Epilepsy (2015) and the Pan American Health Organization's Strategy and Plan of Action on Epilepsy (2011). Recognizing that better access to basic care will make major differences is the starting point for moving forward. We are pleased that epilepsy is once again on this year's agenda for the World Health Assembly which recognizes that epilepsy remains a significant world health problem.

There are an estimated 35,000 of your fellow citizens who have epilepsy, many of whom continue to have seizures and have a greater risk of premature death and significant injury from their seizures. For many of these people, making sure that they have access to medicines or to a health care provider who has a basic knowledge of epilepsy is a simple but very effective solution. As Georgia considers how to improve epilepsy treatment please contact your national epilepsy organization, the Georgian League Against Epilepsy, which has been leading the efforts against epilepsy for over 20 years. The international epilepsy community has been impressed by how the Georgian League members are working to create a care system for epilepsy that meets the highest standards, including in such areas as EEG monitoring and surgery. Dr. Sofia Kasradze at the Caucasus International University is the president of the Georgian League. She and the other members will be happy to work with you and your colleagues to develop a nation plan on comprehensive epilepsy care.

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Thank you for the support that you and Georgia have given to improving the lives of those afflicted by epilepsy. We look to continued progress against epilepsy in Georgia.

With best wishes for a long and productive collaboration against epilepsy,



Samuel Wiebe, M.D.
President, International League Against Epilepsy

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