

APRIL 2001

The respite provided by the Lenten Season allows us to sit back and reflect on the things that we have done in the past and to thank the Almighty for all He has given us.

- Last November's Scientific Meeting was held as a pre-convention course for the PNA, and in cooperation with the Child Neurology Society. Half of the day's courses were devoted to epilepsy. Among the topics tackled were: "Establishing the Diagnosis of Epilepsy" by Dr. Danny de la Paz, "Non-epileptic Seizures: Video-EEG" by Dr. Conrad Nievera, "Pharmacologic Treatment of Epilepsy" by Dr. Felicidad Soto, "Status Epilepticus" by Dr. Fe Bascal, "Epilepsy in the Elderly" by Dr. Martesio Perez, "Epilepsy in Pregnancy" by Dr. L. Cabral-Lim, "Cognitive and Behavioral Issues in Epilepsy" by Dr. Lourdes Ledesma and "Clinical Delimnas in the Diagnosis and Treatment of Epilepsy" (Panel Discussion)
- The Annual Business Meeting was short consisting mainly of the officers' reports and short discussion on the proposal for corporate membership.

Outside of Jose Velarde and People Power II, the year 2000 opened with a lot of exciting events and opportunities.

- Firstly, in line with our mission to disseminate epilepsy information and training among health workers around the country, we received a proposal from Pfizer to hold 150 round table discussions among non-neurology practitioners all over the country, in partnership with them. (And this is for free on our side!)
- A very practical teaching module was designed by the Committee on Continuing Medical Education (Chair: Dr. Malen Ortiz) and a 16 minute video on "Myths and Misconceptions about Epilepsy" was produced in the first week of February 2001. These materials will be used for the small group discussions sponsored nationwide by Pfizer.
- Last February, we received a directive from the International League Against Epilepsy to contact our local ministry of health so we can participate in hte WHO project of holding a National Mental Health Day scheduled April 7,2001, with the theme, "**Stop exclusion. Dare to Care**". Working with the DOH provided the PLAE an opportunity to project the purposes of the organization and to liaison with key persons who can facilitate the implementation of important strategies pertaining to health care delivery, epilepsy awareness and advocacy which we have drawn up last year. This means being able to access working networks in the DOH from directorship down to the grassroots level, access to various forms of media and direct participation in the Department of Health's renewed efforts to implement the National Mental Health Policy. This is a synergy at its best!
- Along this vein, we stepped up our lay symposium schedules in time for the April 7 celebration. Two Lay Fora were held last March at the PGH and at the Makati Medical Center. In Makati Medical Center, a video on epilepsy was shown, "Guidelines for Daily Living" lecture by Dr. Cabral-Lim and "Epilepsy, what We can Do about it" lecture by Dr. J. Gutierrez were given. A mother of a boy with epilepsy talked about how she dealt with epilepsy in her child. In PGH, we decided to adopt a new format, focused group discussions, which allowed patients to talk at length about their illness in small groups, with the encouragement of psychologist-facilitators from the De La Salle University. As we listened by the sidelines to the patients and caregivers during these fora, we were touched by their stories and amazed at their resolve and ingenuity in dealing with epilepsy. It is one thing to READ about stigma, it is another thing to hear it in the patients' own words....
- During the week leading to April 7, the officers volunteered(?) to guest in various radio programs everyday to talk about epilepsy. We also had press releases in practically all the major dailies. These were arranged by the PR department of the DOH, again for free. On April 7, the DOH formally announced the National Mental Health Policy, which includes dementia and epilepsy and other psychiatric illness. The announcement was followed by an art exhibit displaying works of patients at Museo Pambata.

CALENDAR OF ACTIVITIES FOR YEAR 2001

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| APRIL | Lay Forum, Iloilo City Host: Dr. Elma Maranon |
| MAY 15 | Deadline for the Application of New Members |
| MAY 16 | Lay Forum. Lucena, Quezon Host: Dr. Ces Alincastre |
| MAY 16- MAY 21 | International Epilepsy Congress Buenos Aires, Argentina |
| MAY 25 | Deadline for Logo Contest |
| MAY 31 | Execom Meeting for Approval of New Members Application |
| JULY | Lay Forum, school setting In Charge: Dr. Jovy Panlilio |
| AUGUST | Epilepsy Awareness Campaign- Multimedia approach |
| SEPT 6 | Natl. Convention for Patients with Epilepsy |
| SEPT 7- SEPT 8 | National Epilepsy Congress "Epilepsy for All" Westin Philippine Plaza PLAE ANNUAL BUSINESS MEETING AND ELECTIONS Launching of the National "Out of the Shadows" Campaign |
| OCTOBER | Lay Forum, Cagayan de Oro Host: Dr. Art Surdilla |

- The first National Epilepsy Congress is set. Interesting and practical topics regarding epilepsy for medical practitioners are lined up for discussion. This congress is open to neurologist as well as general practitioners, pediatricians, internists, residents and health care workers. Please contact Dr. Darwin Dasig for particulars (Tel. 8159911, secretary: Jenny San Jose). Invite your friends.
- Novartis is sponsoring a National Convention for Patients with Epilepsy. This is going to be a half-day affair with about 4-5 short lectures. Tentative venue is the Manila Galleria Suites. This is free and will be open to the first 400 registrants. Details will be provided later.
- We are trying our best to bring the Lay Fora outside of Metro Manila and involve members in the provinces. If you are interested in holding a lay forum in your hospital or community, and need some help, please notify us. We can help you with speakers, materials and sponsors.
- We are due to have our elections this year. We are encouraging you to check your membership status with the Secretariat so you can exercise your right to vote. Our constitution provides that a "member is considered inactive if he has not attended three consecutive annual business meetings, or has not paid annual dues for three consecutive years". As per the approval of the Board of Trustees, the Execom has moved the elections to September 7, 2001 after the Congress Session, due to time considerations. The new

officers' terms will still start January 2002. If you know anyone who is interested to join the League, ask him/her to email us or write us at the Secretariat for an application form. Deadline for application of new members is May 15.