

Monday, November 11, 2024

## Open Letter: Medical Neutrality

ILAE embraces as one of its core overarching principles the concept of medical neutrality. Our support of this principle has recently been reiterated in announcements related to

- the ILAE elections ([www.ilae.org/elections](http://www.ilae.org/elections))
- in correspondence with the Lancet Neurology ([www.thelancet.com/journals/laneur/article/PIIS1474-4422\(24\)00268-0/fulltext](http://www.thelancet.com/journals/laneur/article/PIIS1474-4422(24)00268-0/fulltext))
- and in statements regarding attacks on health facilities ([www.ilae.org/files/dmfile/aohf.pdf](http://www.ilae.org/files/dmfile/aohf.pdf)).

A number of ILAE member chapters have asked that the concept ‘medical neutrality’ be further defined and expressed as a commitment by the current and future leadership of the ILAE. Members have also requested ongoing, open discussions on the complexities of translating this concept into action in our ever-changing world.

The notion of medical neutrality embraced by the ILAE is enshrined in medical ethics, international humanitarian law and international human rights. As a non-government organization in official relations with the World Health Organization, the ILAE is aligned with its objective to attain “by all peoples the highest possible level of health”.

Core to the ILAE’s understanding of medical neutrality is our abiding vision that any person with epilepsy – no matter their place in the world, ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or religious beliefs – is entitled to the most appropriate health care, free from the fear of discrimination, abuse or attack.

In practice for ILAE this means:

- Welcoming within ILAE membership, with equal rights and opportunities, any health professional who supports ILAE’s values and mission no matter where they live and with no regard to their ethnicity, gender, sexuality, political or religious beliefs
- Affirming that the role of our democratically elected ILAE leaders is to represent the needs of all individuals who suffer from epilepsy, in all chapters or States, equally and fairly, and be committed to medical neutrality.
- Ensuring that ILAE’s educational materials, research priorities and clinical guidance are evidence based and free from political bias or any external or governmental interference.

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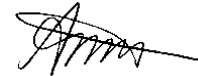
- Deploing all attacks on health facilities or health personnel and calling on all parties to uphold their obligations under the Geneva Conventions to protect health infrastructure and facilitate safe and unimpeded passage for medical and humanitarian personnel.
- In line with the ILAE Constitution, respecting there shall be only one Chapter in each country, defined as any State recognized as a member of the United Nations and/or World Health Assembly



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