Dear AAN colleague:

We are writing to introduce you to the Ecuador Neurology Project and to ask you to consider volunteering for this very important initiative. In accordance with the AAN mission of promoting the highest quality patient-centered neurologic care, the project has the task of enhancing the neurological knowledge of Ecuadorian care providers, medical students and trainees, and to providing subspecialty neurological consultation to people under extreme poverty in a public hospital setting.

The project will take place in the city of Guayaquil, Ecuador at the Luis Vernaza General Hospital (LVH). The hospital was founded in 1564 and is one of the oldest in Latin America. The LVH is entirely funded by the Junta de Beneficencia de Guayaquil, Ecuador's largest non-government charity organization. The strength of the local hospital is based on its size, history, and its ability to care for people under extreme poverty.

Our program will be held over a five day period, including travel time, and will commence on Sunday evening, May 19th. We are seeking faculty volunteers with special expertise in sleep disorders and stroke. A faculty volunteer is a neurologist who wishes to contribute time, and professional abilities to support the education of physicians, medical students and residents, and treatment of patients with limited access to subspecialty evaluations. The process will be a rewarding experience as faculty volunteers will have the opportunity to teach clinical skills, contribute to the community and have a unique cultural experience.

In the long term, we expect that the project will make a difference in the daily operations of LVH and in the lives of its medical staff and patients. We hope you will take some time to learn more about this project and find a match for your neurology subspecialty talent and time. Attached is a more detailed description of the Ecuador Neurology Project along with a tentative agenda.

Each year we will set up a diverse subspecialty conference. In May, 2012, we completed our first program on the topic of neuromuscular disease. The six volunteers rated their experience very highly and all indicated they would recommend the program to their colleagues.

In subsequent years our project will focus on other neurological topics including migraine headache, dementia, and epilepsy.

The Ecuador Neurology Project is sponsored in part by the AAN. They have agreed to cover lodging, meals and ground transportation costs for all volunteers. Volunteers will be asked to arrange their own air transportation but the cost is tax deductible.

We encourage you to consider participating in this important effort. Since we can only accommodate 6 volunteers, priority will be given to applicants with a record of outstanding teaching skills and expertise in stroke or sleep disorders. Fluency in Spanish is desirable but not a requirement as we will arrange for interpreters whenever necessary.

Sponsored in part by the American Academy of Neurology
Attached to this letter is a more extensive project overview and a volunteer application. When your application has been received and reviewed, you will receive an invitation letter and a 30 minute telephonic faculty volunteer orientation.

Thank you for taking the time to consider bringing your personal and professional excellence to the "Ecuador Neurology Project". If you have questions please call me at 904-953-2000 or email me at castillo.pablo@mayo.edu.

With appreciation,

Pablo R. Castillo M.D.  
Medical Director,  
Ecuador Neurology Project.

Phillip J. Riveness  
Project Director  
Ecuador Neurology Project
Ecuador Neurology Project

Need: While a physician in the USA has the privilege of being outfitted with written and visual scientific information, as well as, continuously updated guidelines available through the resources provided by the American Academy of Neurology (AAN); foreign physicians and students have to first be able to afford traveling and even when financially supported, visa restrictions allow only a few of them to attend conferences in the USA. A tragic example of delay in treatment guidelines in developing countries is the use of thrombolytic therapy (r-tPA) for stroke. Despite the widespread use of r-tPA in the USA for the past 15 years, the number of stroke patients receiving thrombolytic therapy in the third world is extremely low and in Ecuador nonexistent.

We believe that the AAN is strategically positioned worldwide, to become the educational network through which neurological advances are brought to people in underdeveloped countries. While some neurologists with subspecialty training may feel overqualified for doing consequential volunteer work in charity hospitals in developing countries, in our experience, even volunteers with high academic rank tend to return home with a new vision of sharing knowledge through short-term volunteer medical teaching visits. Rather than temporary solutions such as simple donations, education brings long lasting effects in the local medical community.

Mission: the mission of the Ecuador Neurology Project is to enhance the knowledge of Ecuadorian doctors, medical students and trainees, regarding key neurological conditions and to provide expert neurological consultation to people under extreme poverty including underserved patients in public hospitals. Efforts will also be made to identify technological and medication needs and seek resources to meet those needs.

History: Dr. Pablo Castillo, a Mayo Clinic neurologist and internist, has been organizing training programs on select neurology topics in Ecuador for the past 7 years. He is also an honorary member of the Ecuadorian Society of Neurology. More that 800 local health professionals have attended the lectures and the program was featured in the June, 2010 edition of World Neurology. Dr. Castillo has received some funding from the World Federation of Neurology to support this work. Past topics have included movement disorders a workshop on dystonia management and our last program on neuromuscular disease.
Dr. Castillo has been joined by Phil Riveness who was an administrator with the Noran Neurological Clinic for more than 28 years. He is also a former Minnesota State Senator. Mr. Riveness is the Project Director. His expertise is in project management, budgeting, public relations and fundraising.

**Sponsor:** The Ecuador Neurology Project is sponsored in part by the American Academy of Neurology (AAN). Contributions can be made to the American Academy of Neurology, Ecuador Neurology Project, and are tax deductible.

**Advisory Council:** The Ecuador Neurology Project has benefited greatly from the sage advice of its Advisory Council which includes Carlayne Jackson, MD, Devon Rubin, MD, Anthony Amato, MD and Anne Connolly, MD

**Future Programs:** The next program is scheduled for May, 19 2013 in Guayaquil, Ecuador and the program focus will be on Stroke and Sleep disorders. A program on Dementia and Epilepsy is contemplated for 2014.

**Faculty:** The Ecuador Neurology Project is seeking six volunteer neurologists to staff our next program. Priority will be given to neurologists with teaching skills and expertise in stroke or sleep disorders. It would also be very helpful if one or more volunteer neurologists are Spanish speakers who could assist in translating for non-Spanish speaking presenters.

**Program:** The program will run from Monday through Thursday. The conferences itself will be held on Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday mornings, with simultaneous patient care encounters and rounds in the afternoons. The program will also include an introduction to Ecuadorian culture and cuisine, with side trips to historic Guayaquil, a boat trip in the harbor. As a personal option, a 90 minute flight from continental Ecuador will take you to the Galápagos Islands (one of the World Heritage Sites). Galapagos have two airport terminals: San Cristobal and Baltra. If you choose San Cristobal, you will have the option to surf and dive. If you choose Baltra, you will be basically in Santa Cruz Island and you may visit the giant turtle breeding centers, Galapagos National Park, and the Charles Darwin Station; you definitely have to visit Tortuga Bay which is the biggest and most famous white coral sandy beach in Galapagos.

**Cost:** Because this initiative relies on contributions, volunteer neurologists are asked to pay for their own air transportation. This cost is tax deductible. The American Academy of Neurology has made a contribution to the project to cover the cost of four nights of lodging, meals, ground transportation, and airport transfers for each volunteer neurologist.

**Outcome Measures**
It is important for this project to track outcome measures to document the effect the program is having. Examples of such measures will include reviewing registries of new neurological diagnosis, tracking decreases in stroke mortality and monitoring reductions in hemoglobin (HbAlc) in patients with diabetic neuropathy.
Volunteer Application

Last Name   First Name   Middle Name
________________________________________________________________________

Mailing Address
City:______________________State:_____________________ZipCode:___________

Office Telephone:____________Cellphone__________________Fax______________

Email Address:__________________________________________

Emergency Contact Name:_________________________________

Emergency Contact Telephone:_____________________________

Medical Training and Experience

Board certified/eligible in Neurology: Yes__NO__
Fellowship training:______________________________________
Subspecialty interest(s)____________________________________
Current practice setting:___________________________________
Academic rank (if applicable:_____________________ Years in practice:______
Previous volunteer experience abroad:________________________
Do you speak Spanish? Yes__No__

Statement of Interest

I hereby volunteer to participate with the Ecuador Neurology Project as a lecturer and by seeing local patients. I understand I am responsible for my own airfare from my home to Guayaquil, Ecuador and for personal, incidental expenses. If I find that I cannot fulfill the requirements of the program, I will give the ENP as much notice as possible, so that a replacement can be found.

______________________________________    ____________
Applicant Signature                                                         Date

Email to: castillo.pablo@mayo.edu