

# USF lends epilepsy expertise to build programs in Dominican Republic

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(Media-Newswire.com) - Physicians in the Dominican Republic gained expert knowledge on starting and running epilepsy programs when USF's Selim Benbadis, MD, and Fernando Vale, MD, visited them last month.

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Dr. Benbadis, professor of neurology, directs the USF/TGH program and Dr. Vale, associate professor of neurosurgery, is the surgical director for the program.

While in the Dominican Republic, the two USF physicians visited Hospital Padre Billini, the Hospital Robert Reid Cabral for Children, and the General Hospital Plaza de la Salud, and met with administrators to plan future collaboration opportunities. Drs. Benbadis and Vale also gave medical lectures to hospital physicians, residents and students at the Hospital Padre Billini and attended the annual meeting of the Sociedad Dominicana de Neurologia y Neurocirugia (SDNN). Both lectured at the SDNN meeting, with Dr. Benbadis presenting "What Every Neurologist Should Know About Epilepsy" and Dr. Vale presenting "Temporal Lobe Surgery."

"We met many neurologists, child neurologists, and neurosurgeons who were very enthusiastic about our mission to help develop epilepsy centers in their country," Dr. Benbadis said.

"We believe we have formed new relationships and solidified existing ones, and we have no doubts that our collaboration will flourish and develop. From Dr. Vale's and my point of view, we feel that this endeavor adds a new challenge and a new dimension to our successful epilepsy program. We believe that our Dominican colleagues truly have the capability and motivation to successfully develop centers. This could be a bridge to, and a model for, other Latin American countries."

The ILAE is a worldwide association of physicians and health professionals dedicated to improving the lives of people with epilepsy through education, research and improved access to treatments. The USF/TGH Epilepsy Program meets and exceeds the guidelines for a fourth (highest) level medical and surgical epilepsy center, based on guidelines established by the National Association of Epilepsy Centers. It is one of only four centers in Florida, and the only one in West Central Florida, with this level of expertise.

