

Editorial

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Inaugural Speech of the Colombian Psychiatric Association's New President

Good afternoon to all of you. A very cordial greeting to Dr. Carlos Miranda and all the other members of the Board of Directors and especially to Dr. Ramón Lopera who, further to his guidance in the matters of the Board's dynamics, has given me his unconditional support and friendship in the necessary steps needed to be here today. I also wish to express my fraternal greetings to all those who have made this celebration possible: relatives, friends and colleagues.

I want to share with you the concerns, challenges and dreams motivated by the role that I have decided to assume today. To start, we must thank our parents with whom we learnt to enjoy the world. I thank the fathers of the psychiatry in Colombia and all those who made our Association possible, now in its 48th year. I also wish to thank my father who, in spite of not being a psychiatrist, taught me that a just world is of no use if you don't make everyday life a practice of justice. To you, professors, colleagues and friends who, interpreting the view of the assembly, encouraged me to run as your representative, thank you all for strengthening this Association and turning it into an inexhaustible fountain of knowledge, friendship and comradeship.

I also wish to state my intention of working to keep and improve the academic level that has characterized our CPA. However, the central core of my action will be to achieve just and fair work conditions, to optimize the quality of life for all of us who practice such an important profession. Undoubtedly, one strategy will be oriented towards the strengthening of the professional committee's function and action, ensuring that the formulated policies be carried out in an appropriate and assertive way.

I share with you the concern about the feeling that the CPA is wearing itself out by the automatic execution of yearly plans with a high percentage of dependence on the pharmaceutical industry, generating slow answers as regards the work conditions and to the very development of psychiatry in a country in crisis.

As such, I have put the matter of the possibility to decentralize the CPA's operational capacity for consideration to the Board of Director and propose the same to the present meeting. This with the aim of making timely

accompaniments in multiple and sometimes simultaneous professional circumstances. I consider that the CPA can, and must, be present in any place where a specialist in psychiatry is defending his or her rights.

However, although duly acknowledging the pharmaceutical industry's invaluable support in the growth of the Association, it is necessary to recognize that the rules of marketing have permeated health care in Colombia, and I consider that in the face of this it is important to act without haste, but without rest. My invitation is that together we shall strengthen other sources of income allowing CPA to act autonomously in the different areas of professional practice. The reactivation and consolidation of the sale of services, based on portfolios enriched by the academic and research experience and the high level of our members and associates on the approach to mental health problems, either individually or collectively, would be just one of the strategies to be developed.

In this same sense there is the possibility to work together with other specialists who also find themselves in similar situations and who have shown their interest in this matter, such as the Colombian Associations of Neurology, Neuropediatrics, Neurosurgery, as well as the Colombian League against Epilepsy.

However, the priority to strengthen CPA within itself must be stressed. This means that each and everyone of the Association's members should reassert their sense of belonging, thus getting to feel that their contribution as a person and a professional is fundamental for the continuous development of the profession and that the membership fees, rather than just giving the right to attend the annual event, are a contribution to consolidate the autonomy. I must say that during this year, the Board of Directors has had the opportunity to listen to, discuss and complement these proposals.

Finally, I wish to thank and dedicate this achievement to my mother Mérida, who encouraged me to always go on in the face of any adversity, and to Ana, my wife and companion, who decided to walk together with me through this life, and to my sons for whom I live and who are my reasons to continue dreaming that a fairer world is possible. I know that with your support we will attain it. Thank you very much.

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