



Consortium of Neurology Program Directors (CNPD) Strategic Plan (January 2008)

Historical Overview

The CNPD, sponsored by the Graduate Education Subcommittee (GES), held their initial meeting at the 1998 AAN Annual Meeting in Minneapolis, MN. 43 program directors attended. The group expressed an interest in providing an ongoing venue for program directors to meet and discuss important issues relative to their residency programs. As a result, the GES and Education Committee requested the AAN Board of Directors' approval for the development of an informational symposium program for new Program Directors to be offered at the 1999 AAN Annual Meeting. The purpose of the informational symposium (as outlined in 1998) was to network, share information and educational resources, discuss Residency Review Committee (RRC) requirements, the Match, and the accreditation process. Thereafter, the informational symposium transitioned into the Consortium of Neurology Program Directors.

The formal purpose of the CNPD as outlined in the bylaws was as follows:

- provide a forum for the exchange of views on the administration of neurology residency programs and the teaching of clinical neurology to neurology residents;
- promote the importance of neurology residency training as an academic activity;
- facilitate the sharing of educational resources for residency training;
- foster the development of educational materials for residency training;
- support residency educational research;
- maintain a strong liaison with the Graduate Education Subcommittee (GES) of the AAN Education Committee by the CNPD Chair becoming a member of the GES during the CNPD Chair's term; and
- represent neurology residencies to organizations which interact with residency programs such as the Accreditation Council for Graduate Medical Education (ACGME)/Neurology Residency Review Committee (NRRC), the American Board of Psychiatry and Neurology (ABPN), the Neurology Match Program, and the Council of Medical Specialty Societies (CMSS) Organization of Program Directors Association (OPDA).

Since 1998, the program directors have been meeting annually at the AAN Annual Meeting. In addition, they met several times at the American Neurological Association (ANA) Annual Meeting when the group first originated, and now meet biannually (at both the AAN and ANA Meetings) since 2005.

The CNPD is led by its executive committee – past chair, chair, and chair-elect. An AAN staff person serves as the staff liaison and primary AAN resource to the CNPD. The CNPD reports to the AAN Board of Directors via its parent groups – the GES and Education Committee.

Current Situation

The AAN maintains a database of 244 programs of which 195 are US programs.

- Executive Committee - the primary structure and purposes of the CNPD remain unchanged – its purpose/goals remain the same as outlined in the original bylaws, the group continues to report to

the AAN Board of Directors via its parent groups, GES and the Education Committee, and the group continues to be led primarily by the CNPD chair with assistance from the past-chair and chair-elect. Each officer serves a two-year term. Given the number of issues and involvement needed from various other organizations, the executive committee was expanded to include ex-officio representatives from the Consortium of Neurology Residents and Fellows (CNRFF), the RRC, the Association for University Professors of Neurology (AUPN) and the ABPN.

- Meetings - as a result of the growing and ever-changing needs of neurology program directors, the CNPD has steadily grown in terms of their wants/needs, activities, and meeting attendance. The 2005 CNPD meeting that was held in Miami was extended from a one-hour meeting to a three-and-half-hour meeting addressing a number of significant issues and drew over 110+ neurology program directors. Since October 2005 the CNPD now meets twice per year, at the AAN Annual Meeting and at the ANA Annual Meeting.
- RRC, AUPN, ABPN Interaction – depending on the issues, these organizations are all afforded time on the CNPD meeting agendas to discuss important issues.
- CNPD Webpage – this page houses necessary information for program directors such as meeting minutes, newsletters, announcements, etc.
- Email Communication – the major method of communication with the CNPD is via email. AAN staff communicates via email necessary information to all program directors as needed.
- Listserv – the AAN provides an interactive monitored listserv to be used by all CNPD members. The purpose of the listserv is to provide rapid communication among members.
- Newsletters – sent 2-3 times per year. Each version contains information from the AAN as well as updates from the RRC, AUPN and ABPN.
- Clerkship Director/Program Director Conference - the CNPD was instrumental in developing and implementing this conference that was held for the first time in 2002 and annually thereafter.
- Core Competency Webpage – a webpage that houses samples of core competency tools/resources was launched in early 2006. Program directors can access tools via a password protected page, download/use the tools, and give feedback on each of the tools. There are currently nine tools available.
- AUPN Boot Camp – the AAN endorsed the first ever AUPN boot camp offered at the 2006 ANA meeting. The boot camp was marketed as a practical overview for neurology residency program directors with special emphasis for new program directors to better prepare them for all aspects of their job. Support and budget was provided from the AUPN. The AUPN expects the boot camp to occur yearly at the ANA meeting. The AAN will continue to evaluate and endorse the program.
- Involvement – the CNPD has been attempting to transition from an information distribution group to an interactive group with involvement of all members. As such, previous meetings have involved “sign-up” sheets for various projects including working with the RRC on the Program Information Form (PIF) and volunteering to participate in an educational research project.

Future of the CNPD

As highlighted above, the CNPD has grown dramatically since inception in 1999.

The immediate two-year goals of the CNPD include:

1. Address the organization of the CNPD within the AAN. As the CNPD has grown, it seems there is too much overlap between the GES and CNPD that duplicates work and adds unnecessary bureaucracy to both organizations. This may be addressed by the CNPD becoming an independent organization, but there remain advantages for the CNPD to remain in the AAN from financial and staffing perspectives. All other organizations of program directors are independent and readily communicate with their respective boards and RRC to address the needs of their constituents. Barriers to effective rapid communication between the executive committee of the CNPD, the ABPN and NRRC should be removed.
2. Obtain more support of the CNPD to set up work groups to address pressing needs of program directors. This support would include staffing support to set up and conduct conference calls. Some specific work groups are described in more detail below, but the organization needs the ability to form work groups on short notice to meet the needs of program directors and advocate for program directors.
3. Conduct surveys of Program Directors every two-three years through the AAN survey committee to:
 - Assess program director support
 - Assess neurology residency program support
 - Assess educational priorities in neurology resident education
 - Provide benchmark data for program directors
4. Investigate the development of an educational portfolio for the use of neurology residents. A work group from the CNPD was formed to investigate the ACGME Portfolio Project. The CNPD formally applied to be involved in beta testing of the ACGME Learning Portfolio, helping to develop neurology specific components, solicit volunteer neurology residency programs to participate in beta testing and to serve as the interface between these programs and the ACGME. The CNPD portfolio work group planned to review the benefits, limitations, resident time commitment, and other feedback from the beta test sites. This application was denied by the ACGME. Based on feedback from the OPDA meeting, the ACGME may not require residency programs to use the ACGME developed portfolio.

At this time, the work group has decided that it would not be wise to spend time and resources developing a neurology specific portfolio if the ACGME is backing away from initial intent to require all programs to use the ACGME portfolio. The work group does not want to add to the burden of administrative work for residents and program directors by having a separate neurology specific portfolio.

Pamela Derstine, PhD, of the ACGME will be addressing program directors at the 2008 Annual CD/PD Conference, and will be able to provide further insight regarding the direction of the ACGME.

5. “One Voice” - the CNPD would like to continue to serve as the voice of all program directors. Associated organizations should continue to communicate their various changes and updates through the CNPD. The CNPD will serve as the conduit for all information sent to program directors.

6. Communication – improve communication with all neurology program directors via the means outlined (e.g. listserv, newsletter, webpage, etc.). Also, improve communication at the executive committee level of the CNPD by implementing regular conference calls.
7. Education Research – liaison with the Education Committee’s Education Research Subcommittee. It is the intention of the current CNPD leadership that the CNPD be the main vehicle by which graduate medical education research in neurology is designed and carried out. This will provide for rapid advancement of the field, increase involvement of the CNPD membership, and provide academic productivity support for program directors.
8. Core Competency Webpage –revive the existing webpage. This will require support in the formation of a webpage work group in the CNPD to facilitate the “maintenance” of this resource, and also to enhance involvement of members, it is proposed that 2-3 current program directors be invited from the CNPD to assist in the process. The CNPD will informally survey members on ways to improve the webpage. The CNPD will work with the GES to improve this web site offering to make it more interactive. The members of the executive committee will have final approval.
9. Program Coordinators – the AUPN GES hosted the first meeting of the neurology program Coordinators in October 2007. This meeting was integrated with the boot camp to allow the coordinators to attend the program directors boot camp with their program director. It also is organized to assist program coordinator participation in Training Administrators of Graduate Medical Education (TAGME). The AUPN is working with the leaders of the program coordinators in scheduling and planning the second such meeting next year. The AUPN GES director will continue to keep the CNPD apprised of the plans for this group and will work to try to coordinate scheduling to maximize participation for the coordinators.
10. Expand Educational Offerings for Program Directors and Clerkship Directors - the current CD/PD Conference for educators is very good, but with varied levels of experience, the CNPD should try to meet the educational needs of all participants. The CNPD would like to explore ways of increasing educational offering that will allow a variety of education oriented programs possibly including train-the-trainer Evidence Based Medicine course, train-the-trainer patient safety course, and other offerings such as how to remediate learners, due process in residency, etc. To accomplish this, the CNPD will ultimately need to consider a “stand-alone” meeting, separate from the AAN or ANA Meetings. Format and financing again must be considered. The CNPD will consider all options for timing of additional educational courses for program directors to enable attendance to be maximized. One option because of high attendance of program directors to the AAN Annual Meeting is to have it attached to that meeting.
11. Career Development – it is essential that “educator” be considered a vital and important role within the academic medical center. To this end, the CNPD is well positioned to be the organization which supports the development and success of program directors, with counseling/education on the best paths to promotion and tenure.
12. Child Neurology Involvement – begin discussions with the Child Neurology Society about the role of child neurology program directors in the CNPD. Child neurology program directors are unlikely to attend either the ANA or AAN Annual Meeting, therefore have not had a strong presence within the CNPD. As all child neurology trainees spend 1 year on the adult neurology service and all adult neurology trainees spend three months minimum on the child neurology service, these training programs and program directors must work closely together. Many programs share processes like evaluation systems and conferences. At least some future program director functions should continue to build the relationships inherent in this partnership. Questions to consider: should child neurology

program directors meet at their annual meeting? Should a member of the CNPD meet with child neurology program directors at their annual meeting? Should child neurology program directors be a separate organization? Should a child neurology program director be appointed to the executive committee of the CNPD? A needs survey of child neurology program directors is being developed to help answer some of these questions.

13. Fellowship Program Director Involvement. Fellowship program directors and residency program directors have many common needs including interfacing with the NRRC and ABPN, program director and faculty development, and consideration of participating in the NRMP Match. Thus far, there has been no fellowship program director presence within the CNPD. Should fellowship program directors align with the CNPD or with specialty sections of the AAN? Should fellowship program directors be a separate organization? Should a fellowship program director be appointed to the executive committee of the CNPD? A needs survey of fellowship program directors should be developed to help answer some of these questions.
14. Several of these items include the need for technical support for which the CNPD will rely heavily on the AAN's Marketing, Communication, and Digital (MCD) group. The technical needs will continue to grow given the changes taking place in this electronic era and the fact that the younger generation relies heavily on electronic media for all means of learning and teaching.
15. In terms of support for the CNPD, the CNPD will continue to rely on the AAN for its support both in terms of staff resources and budgetary funds. The CNPD does not believe that it is in a position to start charging dues at this point in time. Specifically, the CNPD does not feel that it can begin charging dues until it has improved/enhanced its current offerings (e.g. improved communication, tools via the webpage, bi-annual meetings, etc.). Also, given the lack of funding at the department level, it is unclear as to how neurology program directors would pay dues. However, given that the AAN only has a finite amount of resources for its various initiatives, this is an area that the CNPD along with the GES will need to revisit in the very near future. In the interim, the CNPD can work to enhance its services and also work with the AUPN to seek support for neurology program directors.
16. A program director survey was conducted in February 2007. The results from the survey are currently being reviewed and analyzed to help identify additional resources, etc required by program directors. The CNPD will try to implement as many changes/improvements as necessary for program directors.