

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

Spring Edition March, 2017

Spring has sprung!

## Humor, Conversation, Good Food & Education: Report on the Case-Study Evening Event

by Jacqueline M. Mahon, MA

In a bright, spacious, and comfortable venue at the University of the Sciences in Center City Philadelphia, Delaware Valley Chapter writers and editors met on January 31 to compare experiences and learn about case studies. The interactive lecture, formally titled "Making a Case for Case Studies" and delivered by Scott Kober, MBA, President of MedCaseWriter, Inc., was eye-opening in terms of the complexity possible in a case study. Kober described elaborate "branching scenarios" and provided a related diagram while sharing tips for planning and tracking a case's course. He also discussed the value of the case study approach in adult education: it allows problem solving, implementation of concepts (rather than fact regurgitation), and understanding the impact of poor decisions. Perhaps most importantly, the case study approach engages audiences.

The evening began with relaxed conversation about marketing, websites, and career challenges as attendees filled their plates at an array of buffet platters. Business cards were exchanged, and the room rang with laughter. After everyone moved into the high-tech, stadium-like classroom, Kober presented a series of case studies with questions and obtained our answers via an Audience Response System (ARS). The system immediately engages attendees, so that the traditional lecture format is replaced by "andragogy"—a roundtable-type discussion in which everyone contributes.

The discussion covered new platforms that allow multimedia features in the education of healthcare professionals, and . . . we watched an extremely exciting horse race! You never know what you will see and hear at an AMWA-DVC event.

Jacqueline M. Mahon, MA is principal and medical and health writer at Acorn Freelance, based in Philadelphia, PA.

## Princeton Conference's All Open Session Format

AMWA-DVC is pleased to announce the **21st Annual Princeton Conference** on Saturday, April 22, 2017, at the **Princeton Marriott at Forrestal**. This year's conference offers novel programming in an all open session format that includes AMWA-DVC's first **Regulatory Writing Primer** and sessions in **Process and Practice** in medical communications and scientific writing. These dual tracks allow participants to pick and choose relevant sessions for their individual needs.

The **Regulatory Writing Primer** is a single-day offering that includes four open sessions as an overview of medical writing deliverables needed to succeed as a regulatory writer. This comprehensive primer will allow both new and established medical writers to learn the legal and regulatory requirements of these documents and will review current FDA and EU Guidances. By discussing best practices in authoring these documents and reviewing templates and tools, these sessions will give the writer a solid foundation in authoring **Investigator Brochures (IBs)**, **Clinical Study Protocols**, **Clinical Study Reports (CSRs)**, and **Product Labels**. More importantly, the logic thread that weaves between the comprehensive information in the Investigator Brochure, to the design and data collection outlined in the clinical protocol, to the dissemination of results in the CSR will allow writers to grasp the larger picture of the Product Label, which outlines the approved indications and usage, as well as information on

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### QUICK NOTES

#### Delawriter Editors

The DELAWRITER editorial team is seeking editors and contributing authors for the quarterly publication. *Have an idea for an article?*

*Haven't used that "byline" recently? Like to edit and improve other's work?* Please contact the **editorial team**.

#### Volunteer Opportunities

AMWA-DVC is an all volunteer organization whose mission is the promotion of medical communication to members and the community. *Interested in*

safety, pharmacology, toxicology, and clinical trials. These deliverables are the "bread and butter" for the regulatory writer and contribute to regulatory submission for all marketed drugs and devices.

The conference will also offer **Process and Practice** sessions in continuing education, systems approach, clinical transparency, review-revision cycles, and the soft skills we need as medical writers. These sessions will give writers an overview of authoring processes and best practices. As every document requires authors to review and revise, the **Review/Revise** session will share the different archetypes of reviewers and shared experiences to find consensus for approval. With new regulatory requirements for clinical transparency, the **Transparency** session will provide clarity on new guidances that affect regulatory and publication documents. A **Systems Approach** will integrate problem solving and explore design-thinking techniques across documents in medical communications. The **Continuing Education** session will highlight another area of growth in our industry, legal education.

This year's Princeton Conference coincides with both **Earth Day** and the National **March for Science** in Washington, DC, so please join us for this forum in medical communications and scientific writing (*and networking*) at the **beautiful, pastoral** Princeton Forrestal Center Marriott (Go Earth Day!). **Stand up** for the communication of medical and scientific knowledge and then sit down with your medical writing colleagues for a day of learning.

**March your career forward and make more green! Register today!**

The Princeton Conference is chaired by Dan Benau, PhD of University of the Sciences and Darryl Z. L'Heureux, PhD of Bristol-Myers Squibb

## Learn and Network at the 2017 Freelance Conference Workshop

If you're a freelance medical writer or editor, or thinking about becoming one, don't miss **AMWA-DVC's 2017 Freelance Workshop**, to be held on Saturday, March 18, 2017, at the Crowne Plaza Philadelphia in King of Prussia, PA. In addition to three interactive presentations on marketing, business savvy, and the science of learning, two breakout sessions will list common challenges and describe best practices: one for aspiring and newer freelancers, and one for seasoned pros. As always, the workshop will feature a networking luncheon and roundtable discussions.

For more information, click [here](#).

The Freelance Conference is chaired by Ruwaida Vakil, MS, Jen Minarcik, MS, and Karen Golebowski, MS.

## Will Medical Writers Find Their Place in the World of Big Data?

Every second, vital signs monitors, electronic medical records systems, health insurers, smartphone apps, and wearable activity tracking bands are creating an enormous amount of data. Indeed, 30% of all data in stored in the world are medical data, according to a 2010 European Union [report](#).

These data are unstructured, chaotic, and difficult to harness because they are stored across an unconnected archipelago of individual computers, proprietary software systems, and databases. Most of these systems can't even talk to each other, said Angela N. Johnson, MSE, PMP, RAC, a clinical writer at GE Healthcare, in [her presentation](#), It's Time for Medical Writers to Get Big & Dirty: Writing Opportunities in Data, Biometrics, & Technology, at the 2016 Medical Writing & Communication Conference in Denver in October.

Gathering, sorting, and analyzing all this medical data could lead to better care for patients and cost savings, said Johnson. For example, an estimated \$36 billion in healthcare spending could be saved if more data traveled between providers.

Analyzing seemingly unrelated data is already generating interesting findings. Johnson cited a [data mining study](#) performed at the University of Pennsylvania that found that aggressive, negative, and profane posts on Twitter in a geographic area can predict heart disease in that area.

Jobs in data analytics, data engineering, and other Big Data professions will grow by 58% between now and 2020. This includes jobs at research and clinical facilities, said Johnson. For medical writers, there will be plenty of opportunity because the software designers, medical device makers, and data analysts will need writers to create device approval submissions, technical manuals, and reports based on data analysis, said Johnson.

Good writing in user manuals, for [example](#), can improve the usability of medical devices and help reduce the more than 195,000 deaths that occur in US hospitals because of preventable medical errors.

Kent Steinriede, MS, is a Senior Medical Writer at inVentiv Health Clinical and Immediate Past President of AMWA-DVC.

## Tools Editors Use

The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) annual meeting coincided last year with Hurricane Matthew,

presenting a session?  
*Paying it forward?*  
*Helping out with an event?*

Please contact our [Volunteer Coordinator](#).

## 2017 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference

This year's annual **AMWA Conference** will be held at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin in Orlando, Florida. The conference dates are from November 1-4, 2017.

Program and registration information coming soon.

## AMWA Journal

Be on the lookout for the March issue of the AMWA Journal, which will include the association's annual financial report and new editorial staff.

meaning several sessions were canceled as presenters were unable to attend. Luckily, one of the last open sessions was still on the agenda: "Tools for Editors."

AMWA may have "writers" in the title, but at Elizabeth Frick's session, it was standing room only! Frick, a long-time AMWA presenter, is, in this writer's opinion, a copy editing rock star!

Not only did she provide information on digital tools, software, and style manuals, but she also supplied sound and soulful advice that addressed many barriers and stumbling blocks that editors face every day.

For this editor, Frick's review of "spiritual and self-care tools for overworked editors" was invaluable. After 30 years of editing, I still have not found a solution to combat burnout, which is a real occupational hazard. Also, she offered suggestions on how to organize one's office ergonomically to avoid common injuries, such as carpal tunnel syndrome.

My favorite piece of advice she offered is, "Just say 'No,'" which is difficult for all editors to say because we try to accommodate everyone, no matter how difficult the task or how tight the deadline. As Frick made me realize, this approach is self-defeating, because if you do not take care of yourself, you cannot do your best on any project. It is a hard lesson to learn, but it is very true!

Carol DiBerardino, MLA, ELS, is a medical editor and writer with more than 25 years of experience in medical publishing and pharmaceutical promotional materials. She lives in Lindenwold, NJ.

### **March 18, 2017: 15th Annual Freelance Workshop in King of Prussia, Pennsylvania**

- Tailored to new and seasoned freelance medical writers, this 1-day intensive program covers topics from the science of learning to the business of freelance to instructional design
- Register [HERE!](#)

### **April 22, 2017: 21st Annual Princeton Workshop in Princeton, New Jersey**

- A 1-day intensive program offering Regulatory Writing Primer and Open Sessions in Systems Approach, Transparency, and Review/Revision.
- Register [HERE!](#)

### **June 2017: DVC Annual Chapter Business Meeting**

- Dinner Meeting
- Stay tuned for a location and date!

Want to help make these events a success? [Volunteer](#) to be part of the programs committee.

## **Delawriter Editorial Team**

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