

# DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

Fall, 2022

## Breaking News

Volume: Fall 2022

New Issue

AMWA-DVC welcomes our new officers for President Elect and Secretary. Congratulations to Deborah Anderson, PhD, MS (MT(ASCP)SH and Suzanne Bujara, MBA. Helen Fosam, PhD has ascended to the role of President and Mark Bowlby continues to work in his role as Treasurer.

### Volunteer Corner

*Showcasing members who contribute time, energy, and expertise to AMWA's Delaware Valley Chapter*

#### Our new President: Helen Fosam

by Jacqueline M. Mahon, MA

Not too many freelance medical writers can say they have never pitched a potential client. But that is the case for Helen Fosam. She started **The Edge Medical Writing** in 2011 with a previous boss as her first client. Since then, her work has come from recommendations and repeat business. “Also, when client contacts change jobs, they bring me into their new company,” she shares. These are auspicious circumstances, but Helen clearly forms long-lasting relationships. “I always give more than asked, and I think that has benefitted me,” she notes. In addition, Helen has had her share of challenges.



Helen Fosam, PhD

Back in 2001, Helen was content in the UK, working as a preclinical researcher in academia and as a research and development advisor in the healthcare sector—and raising her three children. She had grown up in Sheffield after her parents relocated from Nigeria and had attained her PhD in Physiology from Sheffield University. But the new company her husband had joined started requesting his temporary presence in the US, and eventually they asked him to move. Helen was, shall we say, adverse to the idea. She stayed; he went. Time passed. Many long-distance phone calls and international flights ensued.

However, in 2002 the family settled in the US, and Helen started afresh — “with all the fears and difficulties that involves,” she notes. *Everything* was new. The 2-year-old, 4-year-old, and 6-year-old acclimated well. As is often the case, Helen and her husband established new friendships with other parents via the children’s activities. It was at this point that medical writing became a career possibility. Helen had not considered it before, even though she had published extensively in peer-reviewed journals, but her

experience flowed naturally into this field in the US. She began in continuing medical education (CME) in Cranbury, NJ, and then oversaw related projects as a scientific director for 6 years at Medscape in Manhattan.

After transitioning to a different company that was building a new CME unit, Helen found herself unemployed a year later. Company leaders had not been able to create a flourishing unit. Providentially, Helen's former boss at Medscape contacted her from her new position at what was then Primedica. Thus, Helen's 11-year (and counting!) freelance career was born. She works directly with pharmaceutical companies as well as with medical communications agencies. You can visit her website at [www.theedgemedicalwriting.com](http://www.theedgemedicalwriting.com)

Helen joined AMWA in 2015. She became active with our local chapter when Kathy Molnar-Kimber, the long-term editor of the Delawriter, asked her to write articles describing a couple of workshops. She also suggested committee involvement. Helen has experience organizing conferences and volunteered to co-chair the AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop in 2020, 2021, and 2022. Interestingly, because this large event was virtual, we had attendees from Japan and other far-off locales.

Helen is also the founder of the **Missing Link to Improved Health Outcomes (MiLHO) Initiative**, which creates online CME courses for healthcare professionals in Africa. The first course, a pilot on type 2 diabetes, was developed in 2020. Since then, several courses have been completed and others are in development. They cover topics such as stroke, coronary artery disease, and lower respiratory tract infection. You can imagine the new learnings arising from such an endeavor. Helen says, "I had not considered my target audience's internet speed and stability. During my first sales pitch, in Nigeria, the interactive sample course on my laptop would not operate. I also didn't know we needed a learning management system platform. I decided, too, that my sales skills needed work."

So what did she do? Helen enlisted mentors, joined Toastmasters, attended webinars on personal growth, and joined professional organizations where she volunteered for leadership roles. She acquired the knowledge and skills she needed. "This approach also applies to my business," Helen remarks. "When a client asks 'Can you ...?' I always say 'Yes.' And if necessary, I figure out how to do it."

Helen wanted to give back to her birthplace, and developing MiLHO is that gift. She remarks, "I'm proud of being an African, and I love the culture. It's not perfect; there are aspects I don't like. However, as one positive example, the respect we have for our elders should be emulated worldwide." You can learn more about MiLHO at <https://milho.net/about-us/>

Running your own freelance medical writing business is not for the faint of heart, whether you are starting out, mid-career, or even extremely experienced. We are always facing new challenges and learning. Here are some tips from Helen for the freelancers among us:

- Be ready to make mistakes. I made tons of them.
- Be humble and patient. It is easy to get frustrated and think you're not progressing.
- Put in the sweat. You do not have to know everything, but you must know enough to be able to write as an expert.
- Always do your best work.
- Be reliable.
- Remember that the customer is always right.
- **Be paid what you are worth. We are highly skilled. Stand by the quality of your work.**

When she is not doing all these activities, Helen finds time to garden: tomatoes, cucumbers, pumpkins, and fruit trees. Plus, her family keeps many chickens for their eggs and offers them to friends and neighbors. Perhaps, if we are very nice, she will share some vegetables with us at the next AMWA-DVC event.

We are fortunate that Helen's life path brought her to AMWA-DVC.





**AMWA-DVC Chapter Dinner in Denver**  
**Thursday, November 3 at 6:15 pm**

**Delaware Valley Chapter**  
**AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION**

Catch up with old friends and make new ones

- Choice of 3 restaurants near conference hotel
- We will meet 5:30–5:45 pm in the conference hotel lobby and walk together to the restaurant.
- No registration fee. Pay your own way.

For more information and to register, go to <https://www.amwa-dvc.org/events>  
 Deadline to register is 5 pm MST on Wednesday, November 2.



I invite you to write an article about one of the AMWA Conference sessions for the Winter issue of the Delawriter. See the list here as well as the list under “Presentations by AMWA-DVC members.” Select from these lists. Please email your first and second choices to [delawriter@amwa-dvc.org](mailto:delawriter@amwa-dvc.org).

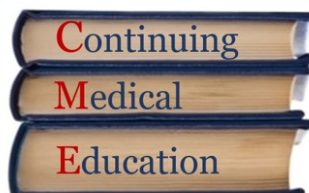
Thank you! Jacquie Mahon, Editor

Presenter(s)	Session Title	Date/Time
<b>Recipient: Peter J. Hotez, MD, PhD</b> <i>Internationally recognized physician-scientist, global health advocate, author, and 2022 Nobel Peace Prize nominee.</i>	<b>McGovern Award and address</b> <i>Priority presentation</i>	Thursday, November 3, 11:15 am – 12:30 pm
<b>Stacy L. Christiansen, Annette Flanagan, and Tracy Frey</b>	Updates to Inclusive Language for Medical Writers and Editors	Thursday, November 3, 2:00 – 3:00 pm
<b>Hope Lafferty</b>	Public Speaking for Private People	Friday, November 4, 9:00 – 10:30 am
<b>Recipient: Leana Wen, MD</b> <i>Emergency physician, public health professor at George Washington University, and nonresident senior fellow at the Brookings Institution.</i>	<b>Alvarez Award and address</b> <i>Priority presentation</i>	Friday, November 4, 4:00 – 5:00 pm
<b>Leila Emery and Joyce Hicks</b>	Inclusive Language: Best Practices and Practical Applications for Medical Writers and Editors	Saturday, November 5, 9:00 – 10:00 am
<b>J. Kelly Byram</b>	The Use of Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Clinical Research and Health Care	Saturday, November 5, 9:00 – 10:00 am

## Presentations by AMWA-DVC members at the 2022 AMWA Conference in Denver

Support your local colleagues at the 2022 National Conference. Hope to see you there!

AMWA-DVC Member	Session Title	Date/Time
Dan Bilodeau	New EU CTR Landscape Changes for Medical Writing	Friday, November 4, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Mark Bowlby	How to Develop Efficient Submissions and Successfully Lead Submission Teams	Thursday, November 3, 9:30 – 11:00 am
Tim Day	The New Normal in the Medical Publications Sector	Thursday, November 3, 9:30 – 11:00 am
Donald Harting	Moving from Worst to Best in Medical Writing for Continuing Education in the Health Professions	Thursday, November 3, 4:00 – 5:00 pm
Shirisha Kanthala	New EU CTR Landscape Changes for Medical Writing	Friday, November 4, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Andrea Klingler	What Is Plagiarism? Putting Out Fires Around This Hot Topic	Thursday, November 3, 4:00 – 5:00 pm
Cyndy Kryder	Jam Session for Seasoned Freelancers	Friday, November 4, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Monica Nicosia	Tools and Tips for Tackling Research Manuscript Projects	Saturday, November 5, 11:00 am – 12:00 pm
Laura Sheppard	How to Develop Efficient Submissions and Successfully Lead Submission Teams	Thursday, November 3, 9:30 – 11:00 am
<b>Workshops (require pre-registration and fee)</b>		
Elizabeth Brown	Project Management: A Practical Approach to Document Leadership	Wednesday, November 2, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Cyndy Kryder	Visual Communication	Wednesday, November 2, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Michelle E. Stofa	Creating Effective Posters	Thursday, November 3, 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm
Elizabeth Brown	Lean Authoring	Friday, November 4, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm
Don Harting	How to Write a Literature Review for a CME Needs Assessment	Saturday, November 5, 9:00 am – 12:00 pm



### Dinner for CME Writers at the AMWA Annual Conference

Join us Friday, November 4 at 6 PM MST to socialize and with your colleagues at a restaurant near the conference hotel.

Contact [don@hartingcom.com](mailto:don@hartingcom.com) or [Haifa.kassis@crispwriting.com](mailto:Haifa.kassis@crispwriting.com) for more information.





For more information and to register: <https://www.amwa.org/page/Conference>

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AMWA-DVC Holiday Networking and Socializing event, January 2023  
Watch this space for details about upcoming festivities!

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## 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Freelance Workshop March 2023

The AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop features extraordinary opportunities for learning and networking for seasoned, new, and aspiring freelance medical writers and editors. The Workshop will be packed with practical tips.

- Hear from speakers who are experienced freelancers
- Select from several roundtable sessions
- Access handouts and meeting recording

*More details coming soon.*

**Opportunity:** AMWA-DVC is looking for volunteers to assist with planning the 2023 Freelance Workshop. This is a great opportunity to contribute to AMWA-DVC, and doing so will give you and your freelance business desirable exposure. If interested in volunteering, please contact Helen Fosam: [president@amwa-dvc.org](mailto:president@amwa-dvc.org)

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### Quotable Quotes from Notable Folks



*Words do two major things: they provide food for the mind and create light for understanding and awareness.*

~ Jim Rohn, personal development and motivational speaker



*Time does not wait for you to become well prepared. If you do not dream or take action, life will simply pass you by.*

~ Ken Keis, leadership and emotional intelligence expert

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### ***Delawriter* Editorial Team**

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