2021 AMWA Southwest Chapter Virtual Conference
Saturday, April 24 | 10:00 AM – 2:30 PM CDT

REGISTRATION $10 (for anyone). Please register at https://amwasw.org/events-1/events.

PROGRAM

10:00 – 10:15 AM President’s welcome and member meeting

J. Kelly Byram, MS, MBA, ELS
CEO | Scientific and Medical Communications Lead
Duke City Consulting, LLC

AMWA-SW Chapter President J. Kelly Byram will share news about the chapter’s status and introduce this year’s board. The Southwest Chapter, comprised of members from Arkansas, Louisiana, Oklahoma, New Mexico, and Texas, welcomes all AMWA members to join our conference.

10:15 – 11:00 AM Session 1 Keynote address

Larry Lynam, DSc
Principal
The Lynam Group, LLC

The Conundrum of Communicating Science During the Age of COVID
It seems as if 2020 just carried us deeper into hopelessness. However, by the end of the year, many of us began to feel more hopeful, thanks to the remarkable news involving the COVID-19 vaccines. But why aren’t we feeling more confident that our pandemic life is ending soon? Vaccines in the vial aren’t going to end this pandemic, but vaccines in the arm will go a long way towards getting us there. Let’s talk about some of the stumbling blocks we are facing and how we as medical science communicators can play a role in overcoming them.

Biosketch
A microbiologist by education and training, Larry spent most of his career in the biopharmaceutical industry involved in infectious diseases programs primarily geared towards developing vaccine and antibody therapies. Leaving the corporate world in 2009, Larry formed
The Lynam Group, LLC. His company specializes in the development of training materials on a wide range of clinical topics, disease states, and public health issues. Larry has also been a frequent science writer and blogger of many vaccine related topics as well as public health issues. In 2020, his work involved following all aspects of the SARS-CoV-2 virus and the COVID-19 pandemic. This focus continues in 2021.

11:00 – 11:10 AM Break (Q&A with Larry Lynam)

11:10 AM – 12:00 PM Speed networking

We will use the Glimpse platform for our speed networking event. Each round will be 5 minutes, and the pairings will be random, generated by Glimpse. Glimpse is easy to use, and setup takes less than 5 minutes. You can maximize your speed networking experience by establishing a profile in Glimpse prior to the conference. Your profile does not need to be extensive, but adding your name, title/company (in the “Bio” box), and profile picture would be helpful for your networking! Glimpse works best in Google Chrome and, like Zoom, requires a stable connection and microphone and camera access.

To easily check your microphone and camera access in Glimpse:
1. Open the Chrome browser and navigate to Glimpse (https://www.joinglimpse.com/).
2. Click on the lock icon next to the URL and select Site Settings.
3. In the Permissions list, select Allow from the drop-down list for the Microphone and the Camera.

12:00 – 12:15 PM Break (self-selected breakout rooms)

Several topic rooms will be available for open discussions. This is an opportunity for conference attendees to choose a room, meet new people, and share interests.

12:15 – 1:00 PM Session 2 (three concurrent sessions)

Dean Colston, PhD, MA
Vice President, Social Media & Healthcare Content Marketing
A Flock of Scientists, LLC

Social Media and Accessibility
Medical communicators understand that social media has become an influential channel for reaching their target audiences. As more people with disabilities use social media, it is essential to make online health content accessible with the widest audience possible. This will create an inviting space for conversation where everyone's voice can be heard, and that's important. Accessibility practices don't sacrifice beautiful images or restrict your messaging. They amplify them. Accessibility is also a key part of your search engine optimization (SEO). Learn how to implement accessibility best practices to engage your potential readers and to boost your SEO efforts.
As VP of Social Media and Healthcare Content Marketing, Dean elevates social media and content marketing initiatives across his organization and for his clients. Accessibility is crucial in providing an optimal user experience across the digital landscape. By making content accessible, Dean helps organizations improve their SEO. His ongoing commitment to accessibility best practices is supported by his involvement with the Governor's Council on Blindness and Visual Impairment (GCBVI) and the Arizona Council of the Blind (AzCB). He serves as a social media strategist, outreach specialist/educator, and editor for GCBVI's public information committee. Plus, Dean manages AzCB's social media campaigns.

Kandice L. Tessneer, PhD
Scientific Technical Writer, Oklahoma Medical Research Foundation
Founder, SciComm Solutions, LLC

Navigating the NIH Broad-Sharing Policies on Large-Scale Genomic Studies
High-throughput sequencing technologies are rapidly improving the way scientists study disease mechanisms. Just as these technologies are being more widely adopted, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is continuing to revise its policies on the “broad sharing and usage” of sequencing data to improve research productivity and reduce redundancy. Study participants must now be adequately informed of these “broad sharing” policies and how scientists plan to protect their privacy. Attendees will learn about the fundamental differences between current sequencing technologies, the current NIH broad sharing and usage policies, and how to protect the privacy rights of the study participants.

Biosketch
Dr. Tessneer is a scientific technical writer with more than 6 years of experience writing and editing scientific publications and research grants. As a PhD student and post-doctoral research fellow, she studied biochemistry, molecular biology, genetics, and epigenomics. In 2015, she transitioned from bench science to scientific writer. She has authored scientific publications in the fields of diabetes, cardiovascular disease, and autoimmune disease. In addition to assisting in the development of scientific manuscripts and grants, she manages many of the regulatory aspects of research, including obtaining regulatory approval for projects involving human subjects research.
Authorship: Ethical Issues and Tools for Fact-Checking Communications
Medical writers need awareness and mastery of seven common ethical issues surrounding publication. In light of the coronavirus pandemic, there is an increased emphasis on the need for improving one’s fact-checking skills as well. No matter the medium, writers and editors should have confidence in the accuracy of their communications. In this presentation, we will review publication ethics and look at tools that can be used to evaluate information sources to avoid promoting misinformation.

Biosketch
Cindy Clark, MSLS, has more than thirty years of experience in the fields of surgery, journalism, public communications, and library science. With the addition of a certificate in copyright management, Cindy has used her knowledge to provide researchers with support from research concept to publication. For the past decade, Cindy served as a biomedical librarian and led the National Institutes of Health (NIH) Library Editing Service. Her work involved literature searching, writing, editing, and instruction (with a focus on publication ethics). Cindy is the owner/principal of Wordpower Pros, LLC.

1:00 – 1:15 PM Break (self-selected breakout rooms, Q&A with speakers)
Breakout rooms will be available for meeting with each of the session speakers and ask questions. In addition, rooms will be available for open discussion meet and greets with other conference attendees.

1:15 – 2:20 PM Roundtables
Roundtable #1: Starting Out in Scientific Publications
For a new medical writer, breaking into the field of scientific publications can be challenging. In this roundtable, we’ll discuss tips for getting into the field and what skills prospective employers might be looking for.
Biosketch
Stephen (Steve) Palmer has been a medical writer with the Texas Heart Institute's Department of Scientific Publications since 2003. Before becoming manager in 2015, Steve was responsible for hiring students for the department's internship program. He is a past president of AMWA.

Sahar Freedman, MA, ELS
Medical Editor
Self-Employed

Roundtable #2: Should I Work In-House or Freelance? The Thought Process
In-house editor: steady check, simple taxes, unlimited supply of office pens. Freelance editor: your own boss, your own home, your own work schedule. What factors contribute to choosing which career path for a medical communicator? This conversational roundtable aims to deconstruct the thought process behind deciding whether to work in-house or freelance. Discussion will include issues to consider when making the switch, notable information to help ease the process and avoid “mistakes,” and the pros and cons of each career path. The goal is to provide thought-out, experience-driven, and honest advice to help guide the decision-making process and manage expectations.

Biosketch
During her undergraduate studies, Sahar stumbled upon an internship in something called “medical editing,” which blessedly transformed into a career. Sahar worked as a medical editor, research coordinator, and event coordinator for an orthopaedics department for several years. She left to finish her graduate degree, earn her ELS certification, and transition into freelance (her dream job!). Most of her work involves academic medical writing (eg, journal manuscripts and book chapters). After 5 years of having worked in-house and almost 2 years of freelancing, Sahar experienced a new kind of professional epiphanic question: whom should I work for?

Anne Murray, PhD, MWC®
Medical Writer
Clinical Research Institute at Methodist Health System

Roundtable #3: Preparing for and Taking the AMWA’s Medical Writing Certified (MWC®) Exam
The Medical Writing Certified (MWC®) credential offers medical communicators an opportunity to continue professional growth and to distinguish themselves from the pack. While test taking is
not for the faint of heart, especially when you feel out of practice or underqualified, the MWC®
exam and credential are achievable. Are you considering pursuing the MWC® credential, but
need a bit more information before taking the plunge? This roundtable will engage dialogue
about the nuances of the MWC application process; preparing for the exam; taking the exam;
retaking the exam (if needed); and recertification.

Biosketch
Anne has a PhD in Cell Biology and over nine years of medical writing and editing experience in
basic science research and clinical research. Her primary roles in her current position are to
write, edit, and review manuscripts, abstracts, posters, and study material for clinical
researchers; assist researchers in developing comprehensive document strategies and detailed
timelines for research publications; and to create and disseminate informative documents and
medical writing seminars. Anne earned the Medical Writer Certified (MWC®) credential in 2020.

Michele W. Sequeira, MS, MBA, MWC
Senior Marketing Rep.
The University of New Mexico Comprehensive Cancer Center

Roundtable #4: Write Now!
Join us to share strategies for making more time in your life to do what you love: write! Medical
writing comprises many tasks beyond writing, like research, project management, expectation
management, and document design. Many of us, though, fell in love with writing, so why not
practice the craft regularly? In this roundtable, we will talk about how to carve out time to write,
how to capture thoughts for topics, and what to do when a blank screen stares us in the face.

Biosketch
Michele W. Sequeira, MS, MBA, MWC, holds master’s degrees in Materials Science and
Engineering and in Management from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She held
positions in factory leadership and management before publishing a book in 2010 which
described the science of cell phone technology for readers aged 12 and up. Through the
experience of developing, researching, writing, and publishing, Michele discovered her love of
writing. She started as an editorial specialist at the UNM Cancer Center in 2012 and began
studying writing and medical communications through AMWA. Michele earned her Medical
Writing Certification in 2020 and is completing work on the Essential Skills Certificate.
Roundtable #5: Professionalism in the Workplace and Beyond: Why How You Present Yourself Matters

It takes more than skill to be valuable in the workplace and in your community. This roundtable will explore professionalism in the workplace. We will talk about why presentation is important and how to best present yourself when both writing and speaking to make the greatest impact. Kim will also give some tips on how to nail your first impression so that you are remembered (for all the right reasons!).

Biosketch

Kim is a Scientific Editor at the Center for Translational Injury Research at The University of Texas Health Science Center in Houston. In addition to her 12+ years of medical writing and editing experience, Kim is currently the Immediate Past President, Chapter Advisory Council Representative, and Communications Chair for the AMWA Southwest Chapter. She has served on the boards of several organizations over the course of her career and has learned that how you present yourself to people (in work and in life) can make all the difference in finding career and life opportunities.

2:20 – 2:30 PM Closing remarks and group photo

AMWA Southwest Chapter https://amwasw.org/