As Medicine Changes, the Doctor-Patient Relationship Remains Paramount

The New England Chapter’s next event is a dinner program featuring a presentation by Julian Seifter, MD, an associate professor at Harvard Medical School and a kidney specialist at Brigham and Women’s Hospital. Using anecdotes drawn from his experiences with trainees at Brigham and Women’s and with patients in his clinical practice, Dr. Seifter will talk about changes in medicine over the course of his 30-year career.

Some changes, he says, have been notable leaps forward, while others haven’t been for the better or have had unforeseen consequences. But he believes that, whatever the advances and setbacks, one thing should not change: the doctor-patient relationship. Even as we move toward a more digitalized medical world, the doctor’s connection to each individual patient must remain central to the treatment of illness and relief of suffering.

Among his many professional activities, Dr. Seifter chairs the Human Research Committee at Brigham and Women’s and is associate master of the Cannon Society at Harvard. He has been involved in medical education at Harvard at every level and has received many faculty teaching awards. He has also been on local, national, and international “top doctor” lists for the last twenty years. His extensive and varied contributions as a medical educator have ranged from consulting with the Boston Athletic Association about hyponatremia in marathon runners to consulting with patients in his clinical practice, Dr. Seifter will talk about changes in medicine over the course of his 30-year career.

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From both a personal and a professional perspective, we can all learn from Dr. Seifter’s insight into chronic illness as well as his masterly communication skills. One of the judges in our writing competition put it this way:

As a [long-time] medical writer who feels as if she has been there, seen that, and bought the T-shirt, I can say this book is truly transcendent. I’ve been living with chronic pain for 20 years, and

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Shanna McClennen
President-Elect/Program Director

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DOCTOR-PATIENT RELATIONSHIP

DATE: Monday, December 10

TIME: Social Hour (cash bar)—6:00 to 7:00 p.m.
Dinner—7:00 to 8:00 p.m. Program—8:00 to 9:00 p.m.

PLACE: Papa Razzi, 16 Washington Street (Route 16), Wellesley, Massachusetts (DIRECTIONS on page 5.)

BUFFET MENU: Starters: Focaccia, Cesare Salad, Campo Salad.

REGISTRATION: The registration fee is $34.00 for members, $39.00 for guests and prospective members. You can pay online with a credit card or by mail with a check. (See HOW TO REGISTER on page 2.)

DEADLINE: To guarantee reservations, we must receive your payment no later than Wednesday, December 5. (There will be no refunds for cancellation after 4:00 p.m. that day.)

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had things pretty well figured out. Then, 6 months ago, after being sick for 2 years, I received a new, serious, complicated diagnosis. Treatable, but not curable. It knocked me for a loop.... until I read this book. The writing is superb, the anecdotes are pitch-perfect, and the tone is ideal throughout. No condescension from this physician author. Instead, [he shows] that there are many paths to making peace with serious chronic illness.... This book illuminated those paths for me at a time I was only seeing what was right in front of me. It helped me realize that I can choose the path I take.

Come join your colleagues on December 10 for an evening of informal networking, a plentiful Italian buffet, and a presentation by an outstanding physician who is an adept storyteller and whose own medical challenges—type 1 diabetes and Parkinson disease—have made him especially attuned to the importance of the doctor-patient relationship.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

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Shanna McClennen
President-Elect/Program Director
Chapter Calendar

The New England Chapter's year begins in mid-June, when the new slate of officers takes over. The officers and other members of the chapter’s Executive Council meet during the summer, but there are no general activities during July and August.

Regular Meetings: The chapter holds six regular meetings from September through June. Four of these meetings are in the Greater Boston area, and two are in Connecticut. Typically, these meetings start with a social hour, followed by dinner (except for a Sunday brunch in midwinter), then a program with a speaker, a panel presentation, or roundtable discussions.

Special Events: In addition to the regular meetings, the chapter holds one special event each year. A writing competition, culminating in presentation of the Will Solimene Awards for Excellence in Medical Communication, is held every other year. In the alternate years, the chapter holds the New England Conference, a full day of workshops on a Saturday in the spring.

Occasional Extras: Once in a while, an informal event, such as a networking lunch or a tour, is scheduled.

February – Sunday Brunch
Greater Boston Area
In February the chapter will hold the traditional winter Sunday brunch meeting. The program will offer a selection of 10 roundtables, with knowledgeable members leading discussions on career-related topics for both beginners and more experienced medical writers.

March 5 – Informal Networking Lunch
Cambridge, Mass.
Everyone is invited to an informal networking lunch at 12:30 p.m. on Tuesday, March 5, at Changsho, 1712 Massachusetts Avenue, Cambridge, Mass. (between Harvard Square and Porter Square). Meet colleagues, raise work-related questions, and share tips on medical writing. Take the Red Line to Harvard Square and walk to the restaurant, or park across the street in the Changsho lot. Cost is the price of buffet lunch, plus your drink and tip. Please RSVP by Sunday, March 3, to Francesca Coltrera at coltrera@comcast.net or 781-641-9872.

April 6 – New England Conference
Sturbridge, Mass.
The 10th New England Conference—a full day of AMWA credit workshops, special sessions, luncheon roundtables, and informal networking—will take place at the Sturbridge Host Hotel & Conference Center in Sturbridge, Mass., on Saturday, April 6. The conference registration brochure will be posted in January. For information, contact Judy Linn at judylinn@aol.com.

April or May – Dinner Meeting
Connecticut
The New England Chapter will hold a meeting in Connecticut in the spring. If you have any questions or comments about our Connecticut meetings, please contact Michelle Horan, vice president for Connecticut, at michelle.r.horan@pfizer.com.

June – Dinner Meeting
Greater Boston Area
The last meeting of the chapter year will take place in mid-June.

How to Register for December 10 Meeting

To register for the upcoming dinner meeting you have two payment options:

(1) To pay by credit card, use the electronic registration form on the chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org). Fill it out and continue to the PayPal form, where you can enter your credit card information. (You do not need a PayPal account, and you will not be charged a fee for the transaction.)

(2) To pay by check, download the printable registration form from the chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org), print a copy, fill it out, and mail it with your check to the address on the form.

AMWA Professional Development Certificate

Validation of Your Commitment to Medical Writing

An AMWA Professional Development Certificate (PDC) attests to your ongoing participation in extracurricular professional activities and thus shows that you are really committed to your career. Attending New England Chapter meetings is one way to earn points toward a PDC.

The meeting on December 10 is worth 5 points. So if you are working on a certificate, or if you think you might want to enroll in the PDC program in the near future, be sure to pick up an attendance voucher at the registration desk. Fill it out, and ask any officer to sign it.

For more information about this certificate program, please go to www.amwa.org/default.asp?id=252.
September Meeting Report

Regulatory Writing

Kicking off the 2012-13 year, AMWA member and past chapter president Debbie von Rechenberg, ELS, gave an insightful overview of the regulatory submissions process. With 13 years of experience in document submissions in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries, Debbie brings a wealth of knowledge to the subject of regulatory medical writing. She is currently an associate director of medical writing at ARIAD Pharmaceuticals Inc.

Debbie described the multitude of pharmaceutical applications and documents that regulatory writers prepare, from investigational new drug applications (INDs) and investigator brochures to clinical study reports (CSRs) and product labels. She also discussed the regulatory agencies that govern document requirements—the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA), European Medicines Agency (EMA), Pharmaceuticals and Medical Devices Agency (PMDA), and Health Canada, to name a few.

She used her experience with a lightning-fast submission of a new drug application (NDA) as a case study to illustrate the intricacies of regulatory submissions. Debbie emphasized the importance of being a team player as the preparation and submission of regulatory documents requires the coordinated effort of many pharmaceutical company departments, from regulatory affairs/operations, chemistry, and manufacturing to preclinical, pharmacology, medical, and safety.

Although regulatory medical writers are often thought of as “template jockeys,” endlessly assembling content into document templates, they can also be key players in the regulatory submissions process. To strengthen their role, writers have to anticipate needs, step in when opportunities arise, be effective project managers, and know the rules, but also do what makes sense.

Debbie’s advice for those trying to break into regulatory medical writing is to learn as much as you can about the various pharmaceutical marketing applications, learn the lingo so that you can sound informed when talking with hiring managers, and craft examples from your experience to illustrate your ability to perform successfully in new areas.

She suggested these links as a great start to learning the regulatory submissions process:

- www.ich.org
- www.fda.gov
- www.ema.europa.eu/ema

For additional information, visit the Resources/Links section of the AMWA website (www.amwa.org), and be on the lookout for a summary of Debbie’s presentation on the New England Chapter website (www.amwa-ne.org).

—Theresa Singleton
Secretary

Personal Notes

In October, Cheryl Lathrop presented “No Portfolio? No Problem!” as a webinar, sponsored by the Editorial Freelancers Association as part of their education series. The 1-hour session covered generating writing/editing samples, artistic presentation of the samples, and creating a green e-portfolio. Cheryl has frequently led roundtables on this topic at the Delaware Valley Chapter’s annual Freelance Workshop and at New England Chapter meetings. She is a freelance medical writer in Walpole, Mass.

Charlotte Crowder, MPH, ELS, is author of Sex Education: A Young Person’s Guide, published earlier this year by Need2Know Books (Peterborough, UK) and now available on Kindle. Charlotte is a freelance medical writer in Brooksville, Me.

CHAPTER CHANGES: Carol F. Colasacco, MLIS, moved to Pleasant Prairie, Wis. (Greater Chicago Area Chapter); Kathleen J. Kovacs, MS, DVM, to Savannah, Ga. (Southeast Chapter); Rachael Racine, PhD, to Albany, N.Y. (Empire State-Metropolitan New York Chapter); Celine F. Runham, BSc, to Perth, Australia (no chapter); and Jeanette M. Towles, MA, to Plano, Tex. (Southwest Chapter).

AMWA New England E-News

Brief Messages About Local Activities and Jobs

Watch for e-mail from President Derek Dore—it will come from derek.dorrx@gmail.com with “AMWA New England E-News” in the subject line. These occasional brief messages let you know about a local job opening, freelance opportunity, upcoming chapter meeting, or other event of possible interest to you.

The E-News is sent only to chapter members, but others are welcome to submit items to Derek for consideration.

There is no charge for job postings, but they must conform to the submission guidelines, which can be downloaded from the chapter website (http://www.amwa-ne.org/jobs).

Chapter LinkedIn Subgroup

Social Networking with a Local Focus

As a member of the New England Chapter, you can connect with regional colleagues in our LinkedIn subgroup, providing you have already signed up for the main AMWA group. To join the local online conversation, go to www.linkedin.com and follow the links to subgroups. If you have any questions, please contact Laurie MacDougall (calicomemedcomm@gmail.com).
New Members
The New England Chapter cordially welcomes those from our six-state region who have recently joined AMWA, reestablished their affiliation with the association, or moved here from another chapter area:

Ross H. Albert, MD
Avon, Connecticut

Louis Alexander, PhD
Hamden, Connecticut

Aisha Bajwa
Boston, Massachusetts

Larissa M. Balogh, PhD
Stonington, Connecticut
Pfizer Inc.

Suzanna Borges, MS
Canton, Massachusetts

Margaret M. Burke, PharmD
Manchester, Connecticut

Agnes Costello, PharmD, MS
Lexington, Massachusetts

Arundhati Datye
Westford, Massachusetts

Charlotte De Leon, PhD
Somerville, Massachusetts

Caroline E. Donnelly, PhD
Bedford, Massachusetts

Deborah Elbaum, MD
Newton, Massachusetts

Luiz Fernando R. Falcao, MD, PhD
Harvard Medical School
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

Tanya Feke, MD
Durham, Connecticut

Lisa A. Giordano, MA
Stonington, Connecticut

Marilyn Greenberg
Orleans, Massachusetts

Pamela Guggina, MD, PhD
Northborough, Massachusetts

Thomas M. Hadley
Sanofi
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Laurie A. Harriman
Arlington, Massachusetts
Ziopharm Oncology Inc.

William G. Harris, MD
Windsor, Connecticut

Emmett E. Hedblom, PhD
Arlington, Massachusetts

Nancy Jackson, PhD
Westford, Massachusetts

Kara Judson, MD
Madison, Connecticut

Alice Lesch Kelly, MA
Newton, Massachusetts

Karen M. King, MD
Brunswick, Maine

Kelley L. Lennon-Hopkins, DSc
Hull, Massachusetts

Lucas Z. Lund, DO, MFA
Coherent Expression
Nashua, New Hampshire

James McLaughlin, BA
Lee, New Hampshire
ORA Inc.

Joseph Mercado
Spine Wave Inc.
Shelton, Connecticut

Stacia M. Mesleh, RN, MSc
Somerville, Massachusetts

Nina Moliver, PhD
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

Dawn Murphy, MD, MPH
Avon, Connecticut

Katie B. Oleksak, MAc, LicAc
Arlington, Massachusetts

Claudia Prahst, MD
Yale University
New Haven, Connecticut

Gavrielle M. Price, PhD
Jamaica Plain, Massachusetts

Geraldine Ruffa, MD, MPH
Hope Valley, Rhode Island

Rebecca Stephenson, PT
Medfield, Massachusetts
Brigham and Women's Hospital

Bradford S. Turner, MS, MEd
Belchertown, Massachusetts
Whole Systems International

Hua Wang, PhD
Topsfield, Massachusetts
New England Biolabs
Membership Awards
Applications invited

Since 2002, the New England Chapter’s competitive Judy Linn Membership Awards—named to honor Judy for her many contributions to the chapter since its inception in 1976—have provided support for up to three new medical writers at a time. The award covers the cost of one year’s membership in AMWA (annual dues automatically includes chapter membership) as well as registration fees for regular chapter meetings in Massachusetts or Connecticut during that time. Experienced medical communicators, including the chapter members who serve on the awards committee, are available to provide guidance in their various areas of expertise.

The chapter will consider applications from candidates who are at an early stage in their career and are living and working in New England. Candidates may apply on their own, or they may be nominated by a chapter member. There is no application fee, and an application may be submitted at any time.

To learn more, go to www.amwa-ne.org and click on Awards. If you have questions, please contact David Olle, Membership Awards Director (davidolle@comcast.net).

AMWA’s 2013 Annual Conference

As you start to fill in your new 2013 calendar, make a note: “Nov. 6-9, AMWA, Columbus, Ohio.”

It’s not too soon to begin planning for the 73rd AMWA Annual Conference, especially if you need to submit travel budget requests early in the year. Even though the conference is many months away, headquarters staff (amwa@amwa.org) should be able to give you basic information about registration fees and hotel rates.

The annual meeting, which attracts hundreds of members from around the country and beyond, offers an unparalleled educational program with workshops, roundtables, lectures, panel presentations, how-to seminars, and exhibits, as well as many opportunities to network and socialize.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL 2012-13

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- Connecticut Programs: Michelle R. Horan, Anita P. Kuan, Manjula Puthenedam
- Membership: Judy Linn
- Membership Awards: David A. Olle, Francesca Coltrera, Nancy Knoblock Hunton, Jill M. Shuman, Debbie von Rechenberg
- E-News: Derek Dore
- Newsletter: Judy Linn
- Linkedin Subgroup: Laurie A. MacDougall
- Chapter Conference: Judy Linn/Laurie MacDougall/Jill M. Shuman/Siobhan Gallagher
- Nominating Committee: Shanna J. McClennen
- Web Site: Aaron Federman
- Judy Linn, Jill Shuman

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Francesca Coltrera, Andrea Gwosdow, Laurie B. LaRusso, Donna A. Lynch, Margaret Lynch, Joann H. Merriman, Olivier Morteau, Nicola M. Parry, Debbie von Rechenberg

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Alternates: Kristin Stephan, Michelle R. Horan