

From **Silly** to **Serious** at the AMWA Conference in Orlando!

By Kelly Schrank, MA, ELS / 2016–2017 Annual Conference Administrator

The 2017 Medical Writing & Communications Conference will take place November 1–4 in sunny Orlando, Florida, and the Annual Conference Committee, AMWA Staff, and many of your peers have been working hard on plans for a great conference. Whether you are new to AMWA or an experienced practitioner, we are sure you will find many educational and networking opportunities to enrich your learning and enhance your career.

The Location Might Seem **Silly**...

Orlando has such a focus on children (who are masters of silly), and Florida has its share of kitschy places (such as Gatorland), but in November, Orlando will also have the Medical Writing & Communications Conference—which will have your peers seriously seeking to learn new information and connect with like-minded medical communicators to boost their careers and businesses.

While holding our conference at a Disney Resort may seem silly, the Disney focus on magic, imagination, and making memories all resonate. There is a certain magic when like-minded people gather in one place to talk about their careers and lifestyles, the work they love, and unmet needs or unrealized dreams. Memories are made and relationships formed. And connecting with different people with different perspectives in a different environment can often spark innovative solutions to vexing problems. Your imagination runs wild with options when you're free of the usual constraints. Consider new work or roles, talk to new people, and see where your imagination takes you.

...But We Have Some **Seriously** Great Sessions...

Regulatory folks will find many sessions, from introductory to advanced, covering CMC, narrative writing, clinical trials, and more. Freelancers will find sessions on social media, how to choose where to focus your efforts as a freelance, the nuts and bolts of running your business, and a reboot of last year's popular Jam Session. There are introductory and advanced sessions on health economics and outcomes research and grant writing to provide depth to your learning. We'll have sessions covering technology, with advice on creating podcasts and science videos, using software for content repurposing, incorporating tech tools for freelancers, and making Microsoft Word work for you. There are open sessions focused on science, such as the molecular biology of cancer, and Zika, which is a hot topic in Florida. Spend time with your peers at the roundtables discussing big ideas, such as scientific storytelling, the fears and frustrations of newbies, and mentoring writing teams.

Check the AMWA conference website (www.amwa.org/conference) for more information on the workshops, open sessions, roundtables, and posters scheduled to be at the conference.

...And Our Award Recipients Have Some **Serious** Cred(ibility)

Every year, we recognize a variety of award winners at the conference, including AMWA members who are awarded AMWA Fellowships, publication awards, and other awards. We are also fortunate to hear from speakers who are well known outside of AMWA for their contributions to medical communication, such as the Alvarez Award winner and the McGovern Award winners.



Alvarez Award Winner

Helen Osborne MEd, OTR/L
*President of Health Literacy Consulting,
Natick, Massachusetts, and founder
of Health Literacy Month*



Helen Osborne has been an outspoken advocate of the need for health literacy and plain language in communicating health information for more than 20 years. She started her career as an occupational therapist, witnessing firsthand the need for clear and understandable health information. Ms Osborne wrote a monthly patient education, health communication, and health literacy column in *On Call* magazine, published by the *Boston Globe*, for 10 years, and she has written numerous books, including the AMWA award-winning *Health Literacy from A to Z: Practical Ways to Communicate Your Health Message*, Second Edition, which many consider to be one of the most important health literacy texts in publication.

Ms Osborne founded Health Literacy Month in October of 1999 and, in partnership with the Institute for Healthcare Advancement, continues to spread the word about the importance of understandable health information. As president of Health Literacy Consulting, Ms Osborne helps professionals communicate health information that patients and the public can understand through her speaking engagements, consulting work, and plain language writing and editing. She is the producer and host of the podcast series “Health Literacy Out Loud,” which she started in 2008, interviewing experts in plain language and health literacy.

➤ Ms Osborne will present the Alvarez Award address on Thursday, November 2, 9:00 AM to 10:30 AM.

A Silly Place, but Serious Learning and Networking!

You can come to the Medical Writing & Communications Conference with serious intentions—to learn, to make connections, and to bring back important information to your teams—but you will still have time to indulge your silly side a bit and relax with your peers. We hope you embrace the full experience, but this means you’ll need to make your plans soon.

Register early to save—regular registration rates are available through October 1. Staying at the Walt Disney World Swan and Dolphin will provide the best conference experience, with sessions in the same building and the opportunity for informal networking everywhere you look. The hotel block is still open, but don’t wait...this is Orlando, and your options will be more limited and expensive as the conference draws nearer.

Don’t miss out...that would just be Silly!



McGovern Award Winners

Steven Woloshin, MD, MS, and Lisa Schwartz, MD, MS
Professors of Medicine and Community & Family Medicine and Co-Directors, Center for Medicine and the Media, Dartmouth Institute for Health Policy & Clinical Practice, Geisel School of Medicine, Dartmouth College, Hanover, New Hampshire

This year, AMWA is honored to have 2 winners of the McGovern Award: Steven Woloshin, MD, MS, and Lisa Schwartz, MD, MS. Together, Dr Woloshin and Dr Schwartz have conducted extensive research to help improve the communication of medical evidence to physicians, journalists, policymakers, and the public. Their work has 2 main approaches: improving the quality of messages that present health information to people and preparing audiences to make sense of the messages they receive. They have coauthored 2 books—*Know Your Chances: Understanding Health Statistics* and *Overdiagnosed: Making People Sick in the Pursuit of Health*—and their essays have been published in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, and the *Los Angeles Times*. For more than a decade, they have organized and led a health journalist workshop, “Medicine in the Media,” with the National Institutes of Health and have taught at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Medical Evidence Bootcamp. They are also founding organizers of the international Preventing Overdiagnosis meeting (sponsored by Dartmouth, *BMJ* and Consumers Union, and Oxford and Bond Universities). They have also collaborated with the FDA’s Center for Drug Evaluation and Research to develop better prescription drug information and with the National Cancer Institute to develop better presentations of cancer statistics.

➤ Dr Woloshin and Dr Schwartz will present the McGovern Award address on Friday, November 3, 4:00 PM to 5:00 PM.