



Getting the Most
from the

AMWA
AMERICAN
MEDICAL WRITERS
ASSOCIATION

Annual Conference



About AMWA

- 71 years of experience in providing an extensive educational program for medical communicators at all levels of experience
- Annual conference: about 200 educational offerings, including open sessions and workshops



Benefits of Attending the Conference

Develop or improve your skills:

- Writing and editing
- Interpreting and reporting statistical data
- Designing tables, graphs, and charts to support medical conclusions
- Conducting computerized searches for comprehensive literature reviews



Open Sessions and Other Events

- Open sessions on topics of importance to medical communicators with panels of industry experts
- Short “how-to” sessions: eg, using software
- Breakfast roundtables with educational topics
- Keynote speaker
- Networking meal functions with featured speakers
- Coffee and Dessert Klatches with fun topics about interests and hobbies
- Receptions



Other Opportunities to Reach Your Goals

- New to the field? Begin your conference experience with the Conference Coach Connection and the open session “Scope of Medical Communication” (FREE with registration fee).
- Many general, specialty, and noncredit workshops are offered. You do not have to be pursuing an AMWA certificate to attend these workshops.
- There is no limit on the number of open sessions you can attend.
- An extensive Job Board is offered with available positions posted by companies that are hiring.



Certificates offered

- Essential Skills Certificate
- Business specialty certificate
- Composition & Publication specialty certificate
- Concepts in Science & Medicine specialty certificate
- Regulatory & Research specialty certificate



Essential Skills certificate

- Workshops provide many opportunities to improve basic editing, writing, communication, and bibliographic skills.
- The Essential Skills (ES) workshops provide the basis for the certificate program and the Essential Skills certificate (or an existing AMWA Core or Advanced certificate) is required to pursue a specialty certificate.
- Earning this certificate requires the completion of 8 ES workshops, including 1 Essential Skills ethics workshop.



Business specialty certificate

- Workshops are designed to provide information to develop and expand freelance businesses, as well as provide management and operation skills.
- The Essential Skills certificate (or an existing AMWA Core or Advanced certificate) is required to earn this certificate.
- Earning a Business (B) certificate requires the completion of 8 B workshops, including 1 Business ethics workshop.



Composition & Publication specialty certificate

- Workshops provide experienced medical communicators with specialized editorial and publication skills, as well as in-depth consideration of issues in writing, editing, management, bibliographic research, education, and other topics of interest.
- The Essential Skills certificate (or an existing AMWA Core or Advanced certificate) is required to earn this certificate.
- Earning a Composition and Publication (CP) certificate requires the completion of 8 CP workshops, including 1 Composition & Publication ethics workshop.



Concepts in Science & Medicine specialty

- Workshops provide tools for writing about the sciences.
- For people educated in nonscience fields: workshops provide an orientation to a scientific area and a foundation for further study.
- For people educated in science: workshops provide opportunities to increase knowledge and to learn about areas outside their specialties.
- Earning a Concepts in Science and Medicine (SM) certificate requires the completion of 8 SM workshops, including 1 Concepts in Science and Medicine ethics workshop.



Regulatory & Research specialty certificate

- Workshops provide experienced medical communicators with specialized regulatory/drug development writing and science research skills.
- The Essential Skills certificate (or an existing AMWA Core or Advanced certificate) is required to earn this certificate.
- Earning a Regulatory and Research (RR) certificate requires the completion of 8 RR workshops, including 1 Regulatory & Research ethics workshop.



Advanced-Level certificate

- Each advanced workshop has a maximum of 16 registrants.
- Homework must be completed and received by the workshop leader by the specified deadline in order to attend an advanced workshop.
- Advanced workshops are currently offered for people enrolled in the Advanced certificate program. Advanced specialty certificates will be launched in the future and will require completion of the related specialty certificate to enroll.



Sample Workshops to Improve Medical Writing/Essential Skills

- Basic Grammar I & II
- Bibliographic Resources
- Effective Paragraphing
- Effectively Searching Online Databases
- Elements of Medical Terminology
- Outlining
- Punctuation for Clarity and Style
- Sentence Structure and Patterns
- Statistics for Medical Writers and Editors
- Tables and Graphs

Refer to www.amwa.org for additional workshops offered.



Sample Workshops to Enhance Business Skills

- Business Aspects of a Freelance Career
- The Creative Process in Pharmaceutical Advertising and Promotion
- Launching a Freelance Writing Career
- Making Effective Presentations
- Public Relations Materials and Techniques
- Project Management

Refer to www.amwa.org for additional workshops offered.



Sample Workshops to Improve Composition & Publication Skills

- Essentials of Copyediting
- Organizing the Medical Paper
- Proofreading
- Sentence Diagramming
- Words into Type: Editing the Spoken Word
- Writing About Health and Medicine for Consumer Publications
- Writing Abstracts

Refer to www.amwa.org for additional workshops offered.



Sample Workshops to Improve Knowledge of Concepts in Science and Medicine

- Basic Cell Biology
- Basic Immunology
- Basics of Human Anatomy and Physiology
- Basics of Molecular Biology
- Diseases of the Nervous System
- Drug Interactions
- Introduction to the Cardiovascular System
- Introduction to the Nervous System
- Introduction to the Renal System
- Pharmacokinetics in Clinical Practice

Refer to www.amwa.org for additional workshops offered.



Sample Workshops to Improve Regulatory and Research Writing

- Background to Writing Informed Consent Documents
- Basics of Health Care Compliance
- The Electronic Common Technical Document
- Interventional and Observational Research design
- Regulatory Aspects of the Drug Development Process
- Reporting Correlation and Regression Analyses
- Writing an Investigator Brochure
- Writing the Final Report of a Clinical Trial

Refer to www.amwa.org for additional workshops offered.



Noncredit Workshops

- Offered to investigate new areas, enhance learning, and refresh skills.
- No precourse assignments to complete!
- Workshops don't apply to certificate program.



Tools and Tips: Pre-Registration

- Planning: How many days at the conference?
 - Consider current workload and travel time.
 - Costs: registration fee, costs for workshops, meal functions. (See Web site for details.)
- Hotel room costs are negotiated to be much lower than those of other related organizations.



Pre-Registration (cont.)

- Familiarize yourself with the registration brochure which will be posted online about 2 weeks before registration opens (www.amwa.org).
 - First stop: Read “Program in Brief.”
 - Check offerings for career benefit.
 - Note day/time for all events to avoid conflicts.
- Use the brochure to plan what events and/or workshops you want to attend. **Remember you can register for a maximum of 3 credit workshops.** There is no limit on the number of open sessions or noncredit workshops you can attend.



Pre-Registration (cont.)

- Working toward a certificate
 - Determine which certificate you wish to pursue and choose workshops with the related designation.
 - Check workshop descriptions for suggested experience level.



Pre-Registration (cont.)

- Check the approximate time needed to complete the precourse assignment (homework).
 - Allow extra time to complete just in case!
 - Homework is due several weeks before conference.
 - **LATE or NO HOMEWORK—NO credit!**
 - **LATE or NO HOMEWORK for advanced workshop—NO attendance allowed and NO refund**
 - **LATE TO CLASS—NO entry 10 min after start time and no refund**



Registration Process

■ FIRST RECEIVED; FIRST PROCESSED

- Register early to improve chances of getting your first choice. The maximum number of participants for Advanced workshops is 16 and the maximum number of participants for other credit workshops is 30.
- List second and third choices. Note that some workshops are offered more than 1 time during the conference.
- Be sure you read and understand the conference registration agreement.



Registration Process (cont.)

- Conference registration fee includes all receptions, Breakfast With the Exhibitors, Creative Readings, at least 40 open sessions, and hospitality beverages.
- Note separate fees for meal functions, workshops, and certificate enrollment.



Budget your time during the conference to include:

- Conference Coach Connection for first-time attendees
- Schedule quiet time to refresh energy level
- Open Sessions
- Social events
- Networking opportunities



Thrifty Tips

- Free open sessions including keynote speaker
- Free receptions: food & drink
- Eat on your own and come to only the speaker portion of the luncheons
- Poster presentations
- Exhibits



Networking Tips

- Pick up valuable information and tips to help develop your career while becoming acquainted with other members who share common interests.
 - Hand out & receive business cards; add notes on the back as a memory aid.
 - Take 50-100 cards with you.
 - Deflect “hard sell” pitches graciously.
 - Do not make hiring promises.
 - Maintain confidentiality regarding proprietary work.



Professionalism

- You are a representative of your company or business. We suggest business casual rather than jeans, for example.
- Professional demeanor reflects well on yourself and your company.
- Professionalism builds trust for business relationships (goods & services vendors as well as recruiters attend conferences).



Conference Aids & Services

- Upon request, Conference Coaches are assigned to guide first-timers through the conference—meet at Conference Coach Connection.
- Job Boards with available positions posted by companies
- Hospitality Center for tea, coffee, & nonalcoholic beverages
- Dining guides
- Social Events: Chapter Greet & Go, 2 receptions with complimentary food: Welcome Reception (live music) and President's Reception (Saturday evening closing)



Tips to Maximize Your Conference Experience

- See and do a little bit of everything—not a lot of everything.
- Socialize with other medical communicators. For example, introduce yourself to new people at the receptions.
- Take advantage of the open sessions to maximize your learning experience.
- Pace yourself—you'll be back!



Conclusion

- The 2011 AMWA Annual Conference in Jacksonville, FL, will offer more than 200 opportunities for learning.
- About 1,000 attendees are expected.
- Join us in Jacksonville this October for an exciting learning and networking experience!



Based on an original presentation by Marjorie Winters & Michael Jones—Empire State-New York Metro Chapter

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The Resource for Medical Communicators