

September 23: Virtual Event, 7:00–8:00 p.m. ET

Your MS Word Emergency Kit:

Five Things to Check When Your Document Breaks Down

Come join your colleagues on **Thursday, September 23**, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m. ET, for a presentation via Zoom on how to address common “emergencies” with Microsoft Word documents.

In the ideal world, all Word documents would format themselves and work exactly as expected during the writing and editing process. However, as writers and editors, we must occasionally deal with documents that leave us wondering: “Why isn’t this working?” “How do I fix this?” When this happens, we need an emergency kit — a set of tools and knowledge that allows us to efficiently diagnose and fix the problem so that writing and editing can continue as planned. During this session, we will explore five areas that often cause chaos and confusion in Word documents, and we’ll learn the most efficient places to look for solutions.

Bring your questions! A Q&A session will follow the presentation.

Our presenter is Kelly Crossett, quality reviewer and publishing specialist at Whitsell Innovations Inc., where her focus is compliant compilation and publishing projects for a wide variety of clients. Ms. Crossett has more than 20 years of experience reviewing and producing documents in the public health and pharmaceutical industries. She has presented on Microsoft Word strategies at national meetings, including the AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference, and regularly provides tutorials for her coworkers.

REGISTRATION

There is no charge for this event, but you must sign up in advance. Please register no later than **Tuesday, September 22**, at <https://amwa-ne.org/events/>.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

—*Patricia Fonseca*
President-Elect/Program Director

INDEX

2 Calendar
2 E-News

2 Meeting Report
3 Personal Notes

3 Linn Awards
3 LinkedIn

3 Members’ Input
3 LNCs

4 New Members
5 Leadership

CHAPTER CALENDAR

The New England Chapter's operating year begins on July 1, when a new slate of officers takes over. In normal times, we hold six in-person educational meetings from September to June—four programs in the Greater Boston area with a speaker, panel presentation, or roundtables, and two programs in Connecticut. We also hold several informal networking events during the year.

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, there are no plans to hold in-person events in the near future. The chapter will continue to offer virtual networking opportunities and educational programs while we look forward to being able to gather in person again!

Programming Plans

In July the chapter's Board of Directors met via Zoom, mainly to discuss programming ideas for the 2021-22 chapter year. The plan, still tentative, is to hold another meeting with a speaker or panel, our annual roundtable event, and the year-end meeting in June, along with networking events.

Watch Your Email for Chapter E-News

Keep an eye out for the *AMWA New England E-News* to find out what's in the offing. These occasional email blasts from President@amwa-ne.org—sent only to New England Chapter members—will keep you abreast of upcoming chapter events as well as local job openings, freelance opportunities, and other information of possible interest to you.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER NEWS, published 3 or 4 times a year for the New England members of the American Medical Writers Association (AMWA), is posted as a PDF on the New England Chapter's website.

The newsletter welcomes reports about members' professional activities and special achievements; notices of local meetings, conferences, and courses; and other items of potential interest to medical, biomedical, and health communicators in New England.

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER
AMERICAN MEDICAL WRITERS ASSOCIATION

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www.amwa-ne.org

AMWA Annual Conference

AMWA's 2021 Medical Writing & Communication Conference will be held virtually October 27-29, following two days of preconference workshops, October 25-26. For details go to <https://www.amwa.org/page/conference>.

June Meeting Report

Efforts to Eliminate Medical Errors

Even in Massachusetts, with its prestigious medical centers, 20 to 25 percent of adults have experienced a medical error or know of someone who has. In June, Barbara Fain, executive director of the Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety, spoke to the New England Chapter via Zoom about patient safety and the center's efforts to eliminate medical errors and their physical, emotional, and monetary cost.

The center, a state agency, is named for a 39-year-old mother and *Boston Globe* medical reporter who, in 1994, was being treated for advanced breast cancer at Dana Farber Cancer Institute. Ms. Lehman died of a severe chemotherapy overdose on the day before her scheduled discharge. Months later, a data manager noticed that she had received four times the intended amount of the chemotherapy drug. After the *Globe* reported the death, others reported serious medical errors occurring at other health care facilities, including some of state's top institutions.

At that time there was little awareness of medical errors by the public, public policy makers, or health care workers; mishaps were simply dismissed as chance occurrences or human error. The center was established to study the barriers to safer patient care, to raise awareness and call attention to medical error issues, and to help make strategic plans to reduce medical errors in health care by finding out where and how to direct resources and bring about safety improvements.

While an error may sometimes have no ill effects, other times it leads to additional or prolonged treatment, disability, or even death. Also, once patients find out a medical error was made, they become dissatisfied with lack of communication and support offered by health care workers, and they may end up avoiding medical care altogether. The economic impacts can be severe.

The center has studied how the public, media, as well as advocacy, policy, and research organizations perceive and discuss medical errors to investigate how to increase patient awareness of patient safety, make health care providers prioritize it and the role they play in it, and create a sense of

Meeting Report continued on page 5

Personal Notes

Jeanette Towles, MA, is author of a timely article, “A Brief History of the COVID-19 Pandemic and Current Efforts to Combat It,” in the Summer 2021 issue of the *AMWA Journal*. Jeanette is president and owner of Synterex Inc., a consortium providing publishing, clinical science, project management, medical and regulatory writing services, and IT collaboration services.

As always, New England Chapter members are contributing to AMWA’s 2021 conference program.

Theresa E. Singleton, PhD, Singleton Science LLC, Beverly, Mass., is co-leading an education session on “The Quick and the Dirty: Best Practices for Writing and Editing Under Tight Timelines.”

Laurie LaRusso, MS, ELS, Chestnut Medical Communications, Walpole, Mass., is leading an educational session on “DIY Graphics for Medical Writers.”

Jill Shuman, MS, ELS, Life Science Communication, Reading, Mass., is leading an educational session on “Copyright 101: A Practical Guide to Properly Reusing and Sharing Journal Publications Information.”

Kristen Hawley, MS, ELS, LATG, and **Diana Najarian, PhD**, Alnylam, Cambridge, Mass., are co-leading an education session titled “The Future of Medicine Is Now: Scientific and Regulatory Aspects of RNA-Targeting Therapeutics in Rare Diseases.”

Shawn Watson, PharmD, PhD, BCPS, Bicycle Therapeutics, Lexington, Mass., is leading two roundtables on “A Medical Writer’s Guide to Single-and Multiple-Ascending Dose-Escalation Combination Studies.”

Jeanette Towles, MA, Synterex Inc., Dedham, Mass., is co-leading a roundtable on “Hiring New Writers from Adjacent Fields: Challenges and Opportunities” and leading another on “Regulatory Writing for Vaccine Development.”

During the 2021 AMWA conference, two chapter members will receive special honors.

Dikran Toroser, PhD, CMPP, will be the recipient of this year’s President’s Award, given to someone who has been a member for at least 10 years, has not served on the Executive Committee, and has made distinctive contributions to the association. Dikran joined AMWA in 2008 and soon became a key volunteer in the Pacific Southwest Chapter. He has also been active in the national organization, contributing to conference programs and serving on committees.

In 2020 he accepted a position as a director and publication planning group lead at Takeda in Cambridge, Mass., and he now belongs to the New England Chapter.

Theresa Singleton, PhD, will be named an AMWA Fellow in recognition of her “significant contributions to the goals and activities of AMWA as well as [her] other professional accomplishments.” Theresa joined AMWA in 2010 and soon became a dedicated chapter volunteer. In 2012-13 she served as chapter secretary and the following year became president-elect. She was president in 2014-15 and immediate past president the next year, and since then has been an at-large member of the Board of Directors. Along with continued involvement in chapter activities, she has led sessions at the AMWA annual conference, chaired or served on national committees, and was an at-large member of the AMWA Board of Directors.

Theresa is owner and principal scientific writer at Singleton Science LLC in Beverly, Mass.

Linn Membership Awards

If you are just starting your medical writing career, and you live in New England, you may be eligible for the chapter’s Linn Membership Award, which covers AMWA dues for one year. For details, go to <https://amwa-ne.org/awards/>.

Chapter LinkedIn Subgroup

Join the conversation! The New England Chapter’s LinkedIn subgroup is an open forum for members and prospective members and an easy way to connect with other medical writers here in our six-state region. All you have to do is go to www.linkedin.com, sign up for the main AMWA group, and then sign up for the New England Chapter subgroup.

Members’ Input Welcome

The New England Chapter’s leaders (see page 5) are always open to members’ suggestions, comments, and critiques. Please feel free to contact the president or any other leader via the New England Chapter website (<https://amwa-ne.org/contact/>).

Local Networking Coordinators

The chapter currently has local networking coordinators or LNCs (pronounced “links”) who plan and coordinate informal events in Cambridge and in Worcester. If you are interested in becoming a chapter LNC for your area, please get in touch with President Jessica Solodar via the chapter website (<https://amwa-ne.org/contact/>).

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. We are also happy to welcome AMWA members from outside of New England who are planning to move here in the near future or have personal or professional ties here.

Rachelle Baker, BS, ELS
Meadowlark Scientific Writing
Great Falls, Montana

Ellen Beauchamp, PhD
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

Daniel Cardin, PharmD
Lisbon, Connecticut
SingleCare

Amanda Cavanaugh, MD

Jacqueline Cellini, MPH
Harvard Medical School
Boston, Massachusetts

Courtney Chaulk, DPT
Chaulk Writings
Westford, Massachusetts

Melanie de Reynal, PhD
Beam Therapeutics
Boston, Massachusetts

Frank DeSanto, MFA, MWC
SWOG Cancer Research Network
Trumbull, Connecticut

Stephanie Nagle Emmens, PhD
Emmens Medical Communications
Rocky Hill, Connecticut

Marisa Fife, BS, BSN, RN
iQ Solutions Inc.
Rockville, Maryland

Ian Fritz, MD
South Portland, Maine

Manveen Gupta
Giner Life Sciences
Newton, Massachusetts

Alla Hamilton, PhD
Alkermes Inc.
Waltham, Massachusetts

Amy Holbrook, MS
Ultragenyx Pharmaceutical
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Karen Hunt, MD
Andover, Massachusetts

Faisal Islam, MD
HMP Global Communications/NACCME
Greenville, New York

Katherine Kahn, DMV
Holyoke, Massachusetts

Corey Laskey, PharmD
Granby, Connecticut

Cynthia Lehouiller, MS
PSI CRO
King of Prussia, Pennsylvania

Shirie Leng, MD
Newton, Massachusetts

Dora Levin, PhD
Dana-Farber Cancer Institute
Boston, Massachusetts

Alex Lupella, BA
Krames/webMD
Yardley, Pennsylvania

Jennifer Mahon, DVM
Syracuse, New York

Erin McMullin, PhD
Bard College at Simon's Rock
Great Barrington, Massachusetts

Kate Mercier, BA
Rockland, Maine
PSI CRO

Margaret O'Connor, MA
Boston University
Boston, Massachusetts

Chiamaka Okechukwu, BA, PA-C
South Shore Medical Center
Norwell, Massachusetts

Sarah Ondrizek, BS
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania

Sowmya Parthiban, BS
West Newton, Massachusetts
Johns Hopkins

Emily Pugach, PhD
Boston, Massachusetts

Regina Raz, PhD, PMP
Certara-Synchrogenix
Cambridge, Massachusetts

John Redue, BS
Seagen Inc.
Bothell, Washington

Ashley Roberts, MS, RAPS
Regeneron Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Tarrytown, New York

Anthony Rosner, PhD
Medical Information Services
Watertown, Massachusetts

Tithi Dutta Roy, PhD
Smith and Nephew
Andover, Massachusetts

Gregory Scott, PharmD
WriteHealth LLC
Kennebunk, Maine

Jennifer Secula, MPW
Genmab
Plainsboro, New Jersey

Regina Souza, RN, BSRT, RRT
MaineHealth
Waterville, Maine

Emily Stackpole, PhD
Leicester, Massachusetts
ICON plc

Ava Taylor, BA, MS
Agiros Pharmaceuticals Inc.
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Jaya Vatsyayan, PhD
Lexington, Massachusetts

Sabine Voigt, PhD
SV Translations
Boston, Massachusetts

Rebecca Ward, PhD
Massachusetts General Hospital
Boston, Massachusetts

Meeting Report continued from page 1

urgency to improve it. Most people, as well as the media, do not use the term “patient safety,” for example, and the term is often not well defined when used. Further, when medical errors are found, they are not assumed to have consequences on society at large, but solely on the individuals.

A particularly interesting finding is that cultural models, or deep-seated ideas that are taken as a given by individuals, may interfere with patient safety being prioritized as a public issue. The cultural models shared by the public and clinical workers that have been found to be strong barriers to advancing patient safety are 1) the “caring doctor” model, which takes for granted the good intentions of the physician and therefore assumes that adverse events will not happen; 2) the “to err is human” model, which assumes that mistakes are inevitable because the caretaker is human and fallible; 3) and the “monitor and punish” model, which assumes that the best way to increase safety is to simply remove doctors who commit errors. Further, the public and caretakers both have a deep distrust of safety systems, i.e., they believe that individual caretakers do a better job at monitoring patients than any system put in place to prevent errors.

There needs to be a shift to educate the public and health care workers and convince them that a safety system should be a part of healthcare, that human error can be more easily avoided with such systems, and that this does not mean that patients should distrust their medical doctors. One major challenge is to counter fatalism and emphasize that harm is preventable. To combat this skepticism, the center has tested what it calls “metaphors” for safety systems. The one that resonated the most with patients and physicians was comparing health care to flying on an airplane: there are people in charge, but a set of protocols must be followed to mitigate danger.

The Massachusetts Health Care Safety and Quality Consortium, made up of the Betsy Lehman Center and other safety associations, has produced a “Roadmap to Healthcare Safety for Massachusetts” to provide evidence-based strategies to reduce the risk of harmful medical errors (https://betsylehmancenterma.gov/assets/uploads/Roadmap_report.pdf). The information will be released to the public later this year.

To watch a video of Barbara Fain’s presentation, go to: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uKbWbSWcWYA>

—Alba Cid

NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER 2021-22 LEADERSHIP

Board of Directors

OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Jessica Solodar

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Patricia Fonseca

SECRETARY: Ellie Lin

TREASURER: Ana Bozas

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Haifa Kassis

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Ellie Lin (Worcester, Mass.)

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MEMBERSHIP AWARDS CHAIR: Debbie von Rechenberg

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LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Sami Hiemer

REPRESENTATIVE TO AMWA CHAPTER ADVISORY COUNCIL: Dara Chadwick

COUNCILORS-AT-LARGE:

Marisa Greenfield

Brian Head

Karishma Manzur

Joyce O'Connell

Jill Shuman

Theresa Singleton

Other Positions

AMWA New England E-News Editor: President Jessica Solodar

Program Director: President-Elect Patricia Fonseca

Nominating Committee Chair: President-Elect Patricia Fonseca