

### June 1: Virtual Event, 7:00–8:15 p.m. EDT

#### *Patient Safety: Turning the Tide on Medical Error*

Preventable errors in patient care occur not only in hospitals, but also in nursing homes, pharmacies, physicians' and dentists' offices, and other sites where patients receive care. A recent report estimated that nearly 62,000 medical errors occurred in one year in Massachusetts alone, saddling many patients with lasting physical, emotional, and financial harm. Reducing such errors and ensuring patient safety are challenges that require coordination and vigilance among many stakeholders in our complex healthcare system.

Please join us via Zoom on **Tuesday, June 1, from 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.**, for a presentation on reducing the incidence of medical errors. Barbara Fain, JD, MPP, executive director of the Boston-based Betsy Lehman Center for Patient Safety, will present "Speaking of Patient Safety: Turning the Tide on Medical Error." The Q&A will be moderated by our chapter colleague Victoria Wilcox, PhD.

Ms. Fain has taught public health law at the Tufts University School of Medicine and has provided consulting services in the areas of health policy development, public engagement, and strategic planning to government agencies, academic and research institutions, and health care organizations. She also served in the Massachusetts Attorney General's Office where she oversaw the state's hospital Community Benefit Guidelines and has led many other major health policy initiatives.

The Betsy Lehman Center is a Massachusetts state agency that coordinates a statewide program of research, communications, and collaboration to lessen medical harm. Ms. Fain has served as its executive director since 2013. The Center is named for a *Boston Globe* health reporter who died in 1994 after a preventable and substantial overdose of chemotherapy during breast cancer treatment.

#### *Business Meeting*

**At 8:00 p.m.**, immediately following Ms. Fain's presentation, there will be a brief Annual Membership Business Meeting at which we will announce the chapter officers for the 2021-22 program year (see page 3).

**Registration:** There is no charge for this event, but you must sign up in advance. To register, please go to <https://amwa-ne.org/events/>.

This will be the New England Chapter's last event before the summer hiatus.

As always, guests and prospective members are welcome.

—*Jessica Solodar*  
*President-Elect/Program Director*

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## 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!

### 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](mailto: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.

### AMWA Annual Conference

AMWA's 2021 Medical Writing & Communication Conference, originally scheduled to take place in Chicago, will be held virtually October 27-29, 2021. For program information: <https://www.amwa.org/event/2021annualconf>.

## Chapter Meeting Reports

### *Roundtable Discussions for Professional Development & Networking*

In March, one year after it was cancelled because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the New England Chapter's winter roundtable meeting rose from the ashes and went virtual! The event, traditionally conducted with members seated at actual tables, included “tables” on regulatory writing, freelancing, breaking into medical writing, and other business-related topics. Knowledgeable guides from among our chapter members led the small-group discussions, with ample time for participants to share their thoughts and experiences.

After the roundtables, participants had the option of staying on for an hour of casual networking. During that time, participants were free to move among Zoom breakout rooms to continue discussing the roundtable topics or start new conversations.

The event was a great opportunity to share knowledge and get to know each other better, and we were happy to be able to continue the tradition, albeit in a new format!

### *Spring Social*

In May, members caught up with each other at a “Spring Social,” a Zoom event with breakout rooms on topics like gardening, food, and day trips.

—*Ellie Lin*  
*Secretary*

## BEHIND THE SCENES: CHAPTER BUSINESS

### *Updating Chapter Bylaws During Pandemic: A Team Effort!*

Thinking back to this time last year, you might remember a flurry of emails asking (begging) for your vote at a Special Meeting, either in person or by proxy, to approve the revised chapter bylaws. Some of you might remember receiving a phone call from a chapter volunteer who explained why your vote mattered so much. On the anniversary of the Special Meeting, I want to take a moment to update the chapter membership on the status of our Bylaws and Articles of Organization.

In February 2017, the New England Chapter of the American Medical Writers Association filed “Articles of Organization” and officially became a 501(c)3 nonprofit corporation in the Commonwealth of Massachusetts. Although the chapter already had approved bylaws that

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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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## Chapter Officers for 2021-22 Year

The New England Chapter's Nominating Committee, with the unanimous approval of the Board of Directors, has proposed the following slate of officers for the chapter year beginning on July 1, 2021.

### **PRESIDENT: Jessica Solodar**

Jessica Solodar has been a medical communicator for 20 years, specializing in educational content for clinicians and consumers. She is a freelance writer and editor working primarily with professional associations and disease-specific organizations on articles, training materials, manuscripts, health blogs, and other narrative material. Jessica joined AMWA in 2017. She holds the AMWA Essential Skills certificate as well as a certificate in editing from ACES: The Society for Editing. She has a BA from Brown University.

### **PRESIDENT-ELECT: Patricia Fonseca**

Patricia Fonseca, originally from Portugal, has a BS in applied chemistry from New University of Lisbon and earned a PhD in human molecular genetics at Baylor College of Medicine in Houston. She joined AMWA in 2009, when she decided to start a career in medical communications, and she has been a New England Chapter member since 2018 when she moved here from the Southwest. She has worked as a medical writer for Envision Pharma, Chameleon, and IMS Health (now IQVIA) and in 2016 joined Excerpta Medica, where she is a medical publications manager, specializing in scientific publications for peer-reviewed journals. She is a Certified Medical Publication Professional.

### **SECRETARY: Ellie Lin**

Ellie Lin has served as Secretary since 2017. She is a freelance medical editor specializing in manuscripts and physician-facing medical communications. Her clients include researchers, publishers, and medical communications agencies. She is a board-certified Editor in the Life Sciences with a BA in journalism from the University of Massachusetts–Amherst and an MS in environmental science from the University of California–Riverside, where her research focused on microbiology. She has been an AMWA member since 2016 and is a local networking coordinator and member of the chapter's Program Committee.

### **TREASURER: Ana Bozas**

Ana Bozas is nominated for a fifth term as Treasurer. Ana is assistant director, global medical communications at Akcea Therapeutics, Boston. Previously, she worked for Sanofi and Akebia Therapeutics in the medical publications function and Analysis Group as a medical writer for the HEOR consulting arm. She has a PhD in biochemistry from the University of Utah and is certified as a medical publication professional. She has been an AMWA member since 2014, when she received a Linn Membership Award from the New England Chapter.

## Personal Notes

Three New England Chapter members have recently presented webinars in AMWA's Online Learning program.

In January, **Patricia Fonseca, PhD**, talked about "Digital Enhancements for Scientific Publications – What Medical Writers Need to Know." Patricia is medical publications manager at Excerpta Medica. She is the nominee for the chapter's president-elect for the coming program year.

In April, **Jeanette Towles, MA**, discussed "Creating a Strategic Plan for a Medical Writing Department." 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.

In May, **Andrea Gwosdow, PhD**, presented "Avoiding Rejection: Tips for Manuscript Writing Success." Andrea is president of Gwosdow Associates Science Consultants LLC, a science and medical communications firm, and she is author of *The Complete Guide to Scientific Manuscript Writing* (Aviva Publishing, 2018). She is a past president of the New England Chapter.

These webinars were recorded and have been added to the AMWA catalog. They are available as on-demand videos (<http://amwa.mycrowdwisdom.com/diweb/catalog>).

## 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.

**Linda Aronova**

Penfield Search Partners  
New York, New York

**Kristin Barton, MA, CHES**

Boston Children's Hospital  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Joel Beatty, PhD**

Simpson Healthcare Executives  
Danbury, Connecticut

**Erin Bekes, PhD**

Hamden, Connecticut

**Krista Blome, DC**

Xenon Pharmaceuticals  
Boston, Massachusetts

**David Bochniak, MS**

Crystal Clear Communication  
Southbury, Connecticut

**Rebecca Breslow, MD**

gWell  
Lexington, Massachusetts

**Steve Briscoe, PhD**

Acceleron Pharma  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Steffen Cambon, MPhil**

Allston, Massachusetts

**Jason Casavant, JD**

Synterex  
Dedham, Massachusetts

**Amanda Chase, BS, MA**

East Harwich, Massachusetts  
*Sinai Hospital of Baltimore*

**Shubham Dayal, PhD**

Leica Biosystems  
Danvers, Massachusetts

**Keith Fine, MA**

Harbor Clinical  
Hingham, Massachusetts

**Shradha Khurana, PhD**

Envision Pharma Group  
Fairfield, Connecticut

**Polly Lathrop, BSN**

Granville, New York

**Brenda Lawrence, MD**

Bedford, New Hampshire

**Madeleine Morrissette, BA**

Northeastern University  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Nick Osborne, PhD, RAC**

Belchertown, Massachusetts  
*Cato SMS*

**Patricia Purcell, BSN, RN, MED**

Purcell Healthcare Communications  
Quincy, Massachusetts

**Thomas Rauch**

Boehringer Ingelheim Pharmaceuticals  
Ridgefield, Connecticut

**Naresh Singh Redhu, PhD**

Morphic Therapeutic  
Waltham, Massachusetts

**Claudia Rosu, MD, PhD**

MGH Institute of Health Professions  
Boston, Massachusetts

**Marcia Rotondo**

Reading, Massachusetts

**Emily Ruzich, PhD**

IQVIA Consulting Group  
Cambridge, Massachusetts

**Mandakini Singh, PhD**

University of Connecticut  
Storrs, Connecticut

**Emma Spikol, BS**

West Lebanon, New Hampshire

**Phuongoanh Stephan, PHD**

Durham, Connecticut  
*Bristol-Myers Squibb*

**Samantha Stone, PhD**

Somerville, Massachusetts  
*MJH Life Sciences*

**Christina Varvatsis, PharmD**

Waterbury Hospital  
Waterbury, Connecticut

## 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 Leaders Welcome Input

The New England Chapter's Board of Directors and Advisory Council 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/>).

## Chapter LinkedIn Subgroup

The AMWA 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](http://www.linkedin.com), sign up for the main AMWA group, and then sign up for the New England Chapter subgroup.

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outlined how the chapter was to be governed, changes to the legal relationship between individual chapters and AMWA National required the bylaws to be updated. AMWA National had anticipated this requirement and provided draft chapter bylaws in 2018. The chapter formed a Bylaws & Governance Committee and began working with a nonprofit lawyer to ensure the chapter's bylaws would be in compliance with Massachusetts nonprofit law. Together, we revised the chapter bylaws and submitted them to the AMWA Board of Directors for approval in 2019.

In many states, the process would have been complete after this step. In Massachusetts, however, unless the chapter's directors are authorized by the Articles of Organization to amend the bylaws, the power to do so resides with the nonprofit's membership. Since the chapter's original Articles of Organization did not authorize the directors to amend the bylaws, Massachusetts law required two-thirds of the chapter's membership to vote at a Special Meeting to approve changes to both the Articles of Organization and the Chapter Bylaws. With over 300 members in six states, this was not an easy feat!

We had originally planned to hold the Special Meeting in conjunction with the annual roundtable brunch on March 22, 2020, hoping for a great turnout and relying on electronic voting for those members that could not attend. On March 18, we had received just over half the number of votes we needed and were faced with cancelling the roundtable brunch due to the COVID-19 pandemic. At that point, we were convinced we would have to start over. Fortunately, we learned that we could keep the proxy votes we had already collected for 6 months, which gave us enough time to reschedule the Special Meeting to coincide with our annual membership meeting that is typically held in June. This was when the flurry of emails really intensified (apologies to your inboxes). As the meeting date approached, we inched closer and closer to our goal. Finally, on June 29, 2020 we had collected a total of 221 votes, surpassing the two-thirds threshold that was required. The revised Articles of Organization and Chapter Bylaws were submitted to the Commonwealth of Massachusetts and to AMWA National in August 2020.

This was truly a team effort. I thank the chapter membership for responding to this important request. We could not have done this without your participation. I also thank the members of the Bylaws & Governance Committee, Theresa Singleton and Dara Chadwick, for their countless hours reviewing and revising the language in the bylaws. Special thanks also to Ellie Lin, chapter secretary, for validating and tallying the votes and for filing the documents. Finally, I thank the rest of the New England

Chapter officers and volunteers—in particular, Brian Head, Haifa Kassis, Ana Bozas, and Margaret Burke—for taking the time to make phone calls to chapter members in the last days before the vote.

*—Deborah Ferguson  
Chair, Bylaws Task Force*

## NEW ENGLAND CHAPTER 2020-21 LEADERSHIP

### Board of Directors

#### OFFICERS

PRESIDENT: Haifa Kassis

PRESIDENT-ELECT: Jessica Solodar

SECRETARY: Ellie Lin

TREASURER: Ana Bozas

IMMEDIATE PAST PRESIDENT: Brian Head

### Advisory Council

#### COMMITTEE CHAIRS

CONNECTICUT PROGRAMS: Margaret Burke

MEMBERSHIP: Judy Linn

MEMBERSHIP AWARDS: Debbie von Rechenberg

LINKEDIN SUBGROUP: Sami Hiemer

BYLAWS TASK FORCE: Deborah Ferguson

WEBSITE MIGRATION: Brian Head

#### LOCAL NETWORKING COORDINATORS:

Andrea Gwosdow (Cambridge, Mass.)

Haifa Kassis (Dedham, Mass.)

Ellie Lin (Worcester, Mass.)

NEWSLETTER EDITOR: Judy Linn

WEBSITE COORDINATOR: Sami Hiemer

REPRESENTATIVE TO AMWA CHAPTER ADVISORY  
COUNCIL: Dara Chadwick

#### COUNCILORS-AT-LARGE:

Marisa Greenfield

Jennifer Hellwig

Jill Shuman

Theresa Singleton

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#### OTHER POSITIONS

AMWA New England E-News Editor: Haifa Kassis

Program Director: Jessica Solodar

Nominating Committee Chair: Jessica Solodar