Presidents’ Messages

From EMWA’s new President Carola Krause 2021–2022

A year of EMWA firsts has passed and while we are still not in a post-pandemic phase, one can see that our profession has regained its momentum.

In the past, you might have experienced the need to explain to family members and friends what “medical communications” is all about. I, at least, always received the same reaction: “People pay money for the services you provide?” Well, that perception has changed with the pandemic. Not only is there a better public understanding but actually an appreciation of professional medical writing and communications. In other words, societies associate a certain value to the services medical writers and communicators provide.

Professional, fact-checked medical communications became a key element in this pandemic. However, the toolkit to communicate medical facts has expanded and adapted to the individual audiences. Nowadays, medical communications utilise not only the written word but also audio and visual communications. Particularly, podcasts, infographics, and social media are becoming very popular tools to communicate medical facts.

It is interesting to see that medical communication is no longer seen as unidirectional. Engaging audiences is now state of the art. I believe that our profession has benefited from the pandemic, but with the increased public awareness, the demands on our profession have grown. Therefore, the question arises how EMWA adapts to this ever-changing world of medical writing and communications.

Over the next few months, we aim to revisit the role of medical writers and communicators and emphasise an update of the AMWA-EMWA-ISMPP Joint Positions Statement on the Role of Professional Medical Writers.1

Additionally, I am very happy to announce that we will have two new Special Interest Groups (SIGs) within EMWA: the Business Development SIG (#EMWABDSIG; chaired by Allison Kirsop) and Communicating with the Public SIG (#EMWACWPSIG; chaired by Lisa Chamberlain James).

We also aim to broaden the possibilities for our newbies. We are expanding the ‘Getting into Medical Writing’ conference sessions to year-long activities to increase awareness of our profession. Whereas the Ambassador’s Programme is an outreach initiative, the ‘Getting into Medical Writing’ activities (chaired by Evgenia

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1. https://www.ismpp.org/assets/docs/Inititives/amwa-emwa-ismpp%20joint%20position%20statement%20on%20the%20role%20of%20professional%20medical%20writers..._january%202017.pdf)
From EMWA’s Outgoing President Beatrix Doerr
2020–2021

Time to say goodbye! After having served on EMWA’s Executive Committee (EC) for six years in various roles, my term ended at our Spring conference in May. These have been rewarding years, with lots of work, but also lots of unforgettable experiences and memories.

I now want to take the opportunity to share some personal words. First, I want to thank the EC members for their support in these challenging COVID-19 times. I will truly miss you! Luckily, vaccinations are speeding up so that I hope that we can see each other soon. I also want to thank our people at the EMWA Head Office, particularly Debra Cairncross and Claire Whittingham, for their continuous support. Thank you, too, to all EMWA volunteers who are the backbone of our organisation.

Lastly, I want to thank all EMWA members. Thank you for being so kind and friendly, which makes EMWA unique. And thank you for helping me keep the faith that there are still smart people out there. Particularly in these times when hate and ignorance seem to have gained the upper hand, it is a blessing to have smart and kind people like you around.

Please hold on to your kindness. One of my favourite sayings is: “In a world where you can be everything – be kind.” Another credo I live by is that there are two ways of enlarging your business: either take it from your competitors or expand your business opportunities. I live by the latter and this is the spirit I feel during our conferences, face-to-face or virtual. This is what makes EMWA unique. I hope that during my presidency, we have enlarged the business opportunities of medical writers/communicators. And there is more to come!

So let’s aim to combat hate with kindness, and let’s combat misinformation with accurate information. Continue to be kind, but be firm, and stand up when needed.

Hold your ground when it comes to defending good scientific practice.

With the pandemic, misinformation grew. In the current environment, our role in science communication is more important than ever. We need to do our part to provide reliable information and (re)establish trust in science. To adequately inform patients, lay language and virtual aids are increasingly important. With my successor Carola Krause, you have a president well-equipped and qualified to prepare EMWA for these tasks and to transform it to an even more inclusive “Medical Writers and Communicators Association 2.0.”

It was an honour to serve you as president. I will continue to serve EMWA as a volunteer, but for now, I plan to take the time to travel around in our camping bus again. Over and out!

Kindly,
Bea

Carola
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