

# President's Message

Back in January, I drafted my President's Message and was so looking forward to seeing many of you soon in Prague at what would have been our 50th conference. Then, with the pandemic spread of COVID-19, the world changed, and our conference was cancelled. I find myself greatly heartened by a wonderfully supportive Head Office and Executive Committee, all of whom stepped up to the mark – thank you!

Our conference plans may have changed, but EMWA's work continues. I would still like to provide you with an update on what EMWA has been doing in recent months.

## Dear EMWA Members,

Well, did you notice it?

Of course, you were pleased to receive this issue of *Medical Writing* and the December issue too, but what was different from previous issues? Content aside, did something else catch your eye?

As you are medical writers, I am sure you have a good eye for detail. In your haste to open the package and seize your journal, however, did you notice the packaging itself? We have changed to packaging made from potato starch that is 100% compostable. I am glad to write that after one person suggested this change, Phil Leventhal – our Editor-in-Chief – was able to quickly organise it. Do you have a suggestion for how EMWA can be more eco-friendly in its activities? We welcome your suggestions, no matter how small.

What has EMWA been doing over the last few months since I last wrote? Here are just some of the highlights:

- The Education Committee worked with EMWA Head Office to plan a diverse offering of workshops for the May conference – a mammoth logistical challenge. Their efforts are not completely lost as they will be able to build on this for subsequent conferences.
- In addition to the workshops, the Conference Director together with EMWA Head Office firmed up earlier discussions with potential symposium and seminar speakers. Again, all is not lost as sound relationships have been established and a new programme can be readily prepared.
- Each of the five special interest groups have had updates in the last few months. Check them out on the website, where each has a dedicated page:
  - Medical Communication
  - Medical Devices
  - Pharmacovigilance
  - Regulatory Public Disclosure
  - Veterinary Medical Writing

- Our ambassadors have been representing EMWA at a variety of events. We had planned to have a stand in March at the National Exhibition Centre in Birmingham, UK, for the MediWeek healthcare event, expected to have had over 3000 visitors in the one hall where we were to be located – with over 30,000 attendees overall. The organisers have rescheduled for November 2020, and we hope to attend.
- Several excellent webinars have been presented. If you didn't manage to catch them on the day, you can view past webinars through the website: look for the EMWA Webinars Programme. If like many in the world, you are currently in "lockdown", seize the opportunity, grab a coffee, then drink and listen!
- Translations continue to be made of the Joint Position Statements on both the *Role of Professional Medical Writers* and *Predatory Publishing*. These position statements were developed by representatives from the American Medical Writers Association and the International Society for Medical Publication Professionals, as well as EMWA. The translations that EMWA has organised help to spread awareness among non-English speakers about the responsibilities of medical writers.

## In closing, two reminders:

- If you have any photographs or memorabilia from previous conferences, please do scan and send them to me. Although we won't be sharing them in Prague, there will be an opportunity in the future to view some of the



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In the meantime, **STAY HEALTHY!**

highlights of the last 28 years, from the first meeting in February 1992 to date.

- If you would like to be more involved with EMWA and can spare a little time, we are always looking for more volunteers. Keep an eye on *EMWA News* on the website and the monthly *Newsblast* email for updates and opportunities. All are welcomed.

Although we won't meet in May in Prague, I hope to see many of you at future conferences. In the meantime, **STAY HEALTHY**, and I wish all of you well – you, your families, and your friends.

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