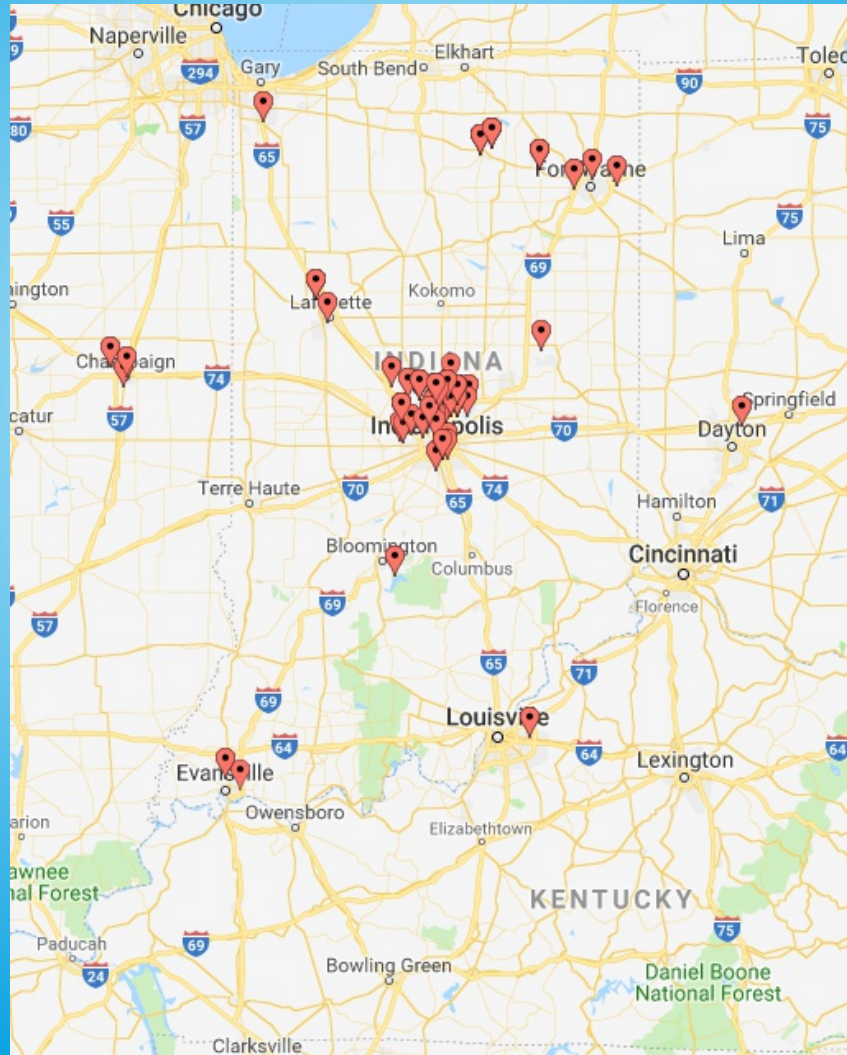


# AMWA

## *Indiana Chapter Newsletter*

July 2019



# American Medical Writers Association Indiana Chapter

## Executive Committee 2018-2019

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President-Elect	Leslie Hodge, PharmD
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Publications	Janelle Renschler, DVM, PhD

## Newsletter

### Editor

Janelle Renschler, DVM, PhD

### Publications Committee

Ravi Meibalane, MD

Uzma Nisar, MS

## *Coming Attractions*

**November 6-9, 2019**

**AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference**

**"Trends and Opportunities for Medical Communicators"**

San Diego, California

## Links

[LinkedIn](#)      [AMWA Twitter](#)      [AMWA Facebook](#)

[AMWA Indiana Chapter](#)      [Indiana Chapter LinkedIn](#)

[Global English Blog](#)

[Health Care Brand Journalism Blog](#)

[WilliamsTown Communication Blog](#)

## Please let us hear your voice!

Let us know if there is anything we can do to help you benefit professionally from your AMWA membership. Volunteering to help our chapter or national association is a great way to have fun while meeting some wonderful people, improving yourself and the profession, and becoming and being the leader you were meant to be. Join our LinkedIn group, come to the chapter events, or click on the name of a chapter officer or committee chair above to join the conversation about medical communication and our chapter.

# Contents

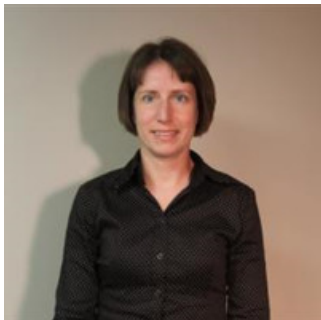
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Find updates to chapter and community events on our [Web site](#)

## Cover

Find AMWA members near you by searching the AMWA member directory by city.

This map of the locations of our 80 chapter members was created with [BatchGeo](#).



## Risks of Workplace Sitting: Solutions for Medical Writers

Janelle Renschler, DVM, PhD

Unquestionably, medical writing is a sedentary career requiring long hours at a desk. While this may be the path to professional success, it is not the path to optimum long-term wellness! Research has indicated that prolonged sedentary time is an independent risk factor for cardiovascular disease (CVD) and cancer mortality [1, 2], and public health campaigns have called out sitting as “the new smoking.” Medical writers need to find creative ways to work while avoiding long sedentary periods.

As I listened to a recent [Medical Writers Speak podcast](#) by Dr. Emma Hitt Nichols on this topic, I was prompted to review the current literature and assess my workplace situation. I was motivated a few years ago to stand while working, and my previous employer had purchased an expensive sit-stand desk. Unfortunately, in my current position, I have returned to sitting in a desk chair all day. I needed this call to action to seek out better options, and perhaps you do as well!

### What are the current literature findings?

There is an enormous amount of published research on this topic, so I will pull out a few recent interesting conclusions:

- Moderate and vigorous physical activity (at least 60 minutes/day) may eliminate the risk of CVD and cancer mortality associated with prolonged sitting [3, 4].
- Prolonged sitting reduces leg blood flow and shear stress and causes endothelial dysfunction [5-8], presumably increasing the risk of atherogenesis. Some evidence suggests that fidgeting [9] or light activity breaks every hour [7] can prevent this endothelial dysfunction.
- Prior aerobic exercise (45 minutes of continuous treadmill exercise at 65% maximal oxygen consumption or cycling at 11-13 rate of perceived exertion) prevented the decline in femoral artery flow-mediated dilation (FMD) at 1, 2, and 3 h of sitting. [10, 11]
- Standing for 3 h also prevented the decline in femoral artery FMD observed with sitting [11]
- Standing desks and treadmill desks have shown minimal to no reduction in

Prolonged sitting is an independent risk factor for CVD and cancer mortality

worker productivity [12]

### Strategies to increase movement or decrease sitting

The scientific evidence supports that daily, prolonged exercise (> 60 minutes) can likely overcome the effects of sedentary work. This is great news—if you are able to exercise that much. Studies have also supported exercise just prior to sitting (e.g., bike commuting, walking to work, or hitting the gym before work) as another strategy to decrease the risks of sitting.

Standing while working is another option, and there are many available standing desks. Even if your employer is unable to provide one for you, or if you freelance, there are affordable options that are non-electric. A basic “trial” of standing could be done by using boxes to prop up your monitor/s. Ideally, you would be able to easily shift between sitting and standing and allow for some time to gradually acclimate to standing. Accessories such as anti-fatigue mats and leaning stools are helpful for standing desk workers.

Treadmill desks and bike workstations are interesting, albeit expensive, options to consider. These provide a way to avoid conventional sitting and increase movement while productively working. Under-desk pedal stations might be easier to implement, and some very affordable models are available.

If the above options are not feasible, at least commit to hourly walk breaks and try to “fidget” your legs while working. The Apple watch has an activity monitor that can remind you to stand. Other software programs provide screen reminders to alert you to move.

I am committed to returning to a standing desk and possibly adding a pedal station for variety. As medical writers, we all need to implement some strategy to avoid the long-term risks of sedentary work. Consider the available options and get yourself out of that chair!

Consider  
standing while  
working

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## Letter from the Incoming Chapter President, Leslie Hodge

Greetings Members & Friends of Hoosier AMWA!

I am excited and filled with expectancy as I prepare to fill the role of President for the 2019 - 2020 year.

When I see the year 2020, the words vision, clarity and focus come to mind. As announced at this year's chapter conference, during my term as president, I will focus on three areas: Awareness, Involvement and Membership, or in other words, A.I.M.

To increase the awareness of AMWA, specifically Hoosier AMWA, the programs and initiatives created will highlight not only the existence of our organization, but also the availability of traditional and non-traditional opportunities and platforms for medical writers and communicators.

To increase involvement from our members, experiences and opportunities will be created to ignite professional and personal development and enhancement. Our chapter can only be successful when you are actively engaged, and sharing your knowledge and expertise.

Last but not least, membership. Yes, growing our chapter's membership is important, but what is even more important is successfully serving our existing members. I want you to view your membership as a good investment of your time, experience, and money.

I am here and I am ready. I look forward to meeting, connecting and working with you, as we aim for a great year!

Thank you in advance for your effort and support!

With enthusiasm,  
Leslie Hodge, PharmD, RPh

## Reflecting on the 2019 AMWA Indiana Chapter Conference

Uzma Nisar, MS

### Medical Writing: My Passion, My Aim...

This year I had the pleasure of attending my very first AMWA Indiana Chapter Conference. Personally the timing and the theme of the conference could not have been better, 'Elevate Your Platform... Invest in Your Medical Writing and Communication Career'. And I am looking to break into a full time medical writing career. I would like to share some of the key takeaways for me from the conference.

The conference seemed to be very well organized and a balanced one. The speakers came from various backgrounds and gave presentations that covered everything from improving health literacy, understanding drug approval process, grant writing to strategies for time management and so on. I was very excited to be a part of this conference because I knew I was not only going to hear great speakers but also be able to talk to a lot of accomplished medical writers face to face. And as I happened to be the registration host at this event, that kind of gave me an advantage of meeting and greeting all the guests upfront!

I was really looking forward to the keynote address by Stacy Robison, co-



founder of [CommunicateHealth](#). Her presentation: Simplifying Health Information and Tools to Improve Health Literacy, focused on how patients with various literacy levels and background perceive health information and that how this complex information can be simplified into more comprehensible and useful language. Of course, the aim is to help people better understand their health condition, make more informed decisions and establish a more meaningful relationship with their healthcare provider. Stacy provided very valuable insights into how simplifying health information can improve the delivery of care. I found it very interesting that often times it's not just the limited literacy skills that leads to poor understanding of health information but it's the poorly designed content that makes it challenging. This hit home for me because in one of my past roles where I assisted in providing genetic counseling service, I witnessed people with limited literacy skills found it especially challenging to make sense of the information about genetic conditions and the risk assessments. I realized then the importance of breaking up complex health information into more understandable form so people are better educated about their health and find it easier to talk to their doctors. But back then, I was not aware of the role of medical writers. As Stacy put it, Be Part of the Solution. The message is clear to all medical writers and aspiring medical writers that our aim is to make it easy for people to understand their own health and make their lives better.





Another highly informative presentation was delivered by Art Gertel, founder of an independent consultancy, MedSciCom, LLC. I found it especially interesting learning about the FDA regulatory processes involved in the pre-approval of drugs. As a researcher and scientific communicator, I find regulatory writing and clinical trial process highly intriguing and want to understand it at a deeper level. This presentation was quite educational in that it made me and I am sure many guests in the audience familiar with new concepts like Expanded Access and Right-To-Try Legislation. The way clinical trial regulations are constantly evolving to accommodate patients with debilitating conditions and limited options for treatment is nothing short of amazing! Who would have thought that drugs that are still under investigation would be made available to individual patients thereby giving them an additional chance at saving their lives.



I am sure many attendees would agree with me that one of the most interesting and very engaging presentation was by [Robby Slaughter](#). He is a workflow and productivity expert and has authored several books, helping many organizations as well as individuals to be more effective and productive. The idea is simple. In today's fast paced world, we find ourselves dominated by constant stress from lurking deadlines, elusive work-life balance, toxic work environments, distractions, high expectations and demands. I feel it's imperative to understand the value of time from a new

perspective. Working smarter and not harder is becoming a new mantra in many organizations. Managing our energy and utilizing it ergonomically could potentially make us less stressed and more focused and effective. One of the most important points that Robby mentioned was that we need to develop the ability to distinguish between important and urgent tasks. This made so much sense to me as I sometimes find myself stressed by the thought of tackling so many important projects at one time, forgetting to prioritize the most urgent ones first.



I would like to mention here that I found this whole event very enriching and refreshing. I enjoyed talking to so many medical communication professionals. Volunteering is always a great way to network and learn from so many people. I am grateful to AMWA Indiana Chapter for giving me this opportunity and I would love to be a part of many more of their future events.

*Editor's note: Uzma has a Master's degree in Human Genetics. She worked as a clinical cytogeneticist and genetic counselor in India, and as an editor/proofreader of scientific manuscripts at Cleveland's Case Western Reserve University, Department of Pharmacology. She is currently pursuing a certificate in 'Writing in Sciences' from Stanford University.*

*Photo credit to AMWA Indiana chapter member William Pietrzak. Many thanks go to him for also serving as moderator of the conference again this year!*

## Additional Conference Recap

The IN AWMA Chapter Leadership Award was given to **Barbara Lightfoot** and **Esther Brooks-Asplund** for their dedicated leadership and service to the chapter. Both have served as a past president and continue to contribute to the governance of the chapter. Thank you Barbara and Esther!

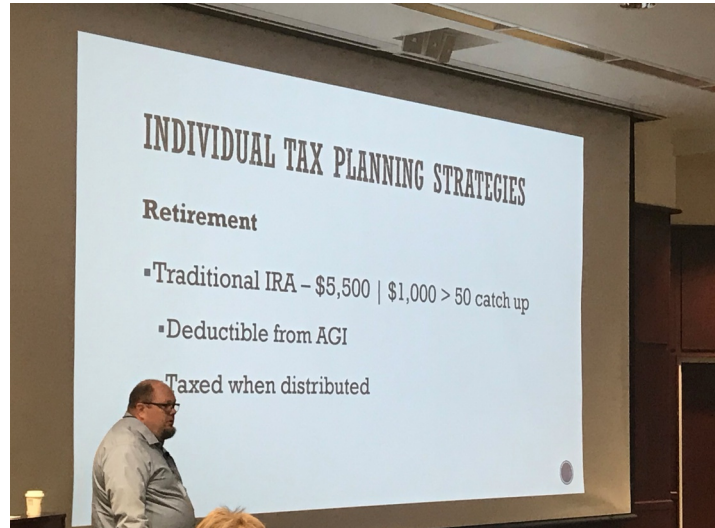
John Spence, PhD from the [Indiana Clinical and Translational Sciences Institute](#) discussed training junior faculty in grant writing through the Independent Investigator Incubator program.



Royce Rajan interviewed Laura Yunes-Medina, PhD, regarding the transition from postdoctoral fellow at Indiana University to Scientific Communications associate at Eli Lilly in Indianapolis.



Jason Crace, CPA, gave an overview of tax tips for medical writers.



Denise Viquez interviewed Eric Metcalf, MPH, senior medical writer with Health Services Advisory Group.



Sarah Halter from the [Indiana Medical History Museum](#) discussed communicating medical history through patient stories.



Tenille Lawson, PharmD, addressed the crowd as the current chapter President and lead conference organizer.



The Friday night dinner at the Rathskellar restaurant was a wonderful opportunity for networking and fun.



Moderator Bill Pietrzak with President-Elect Leslie Hodge and President Tenille Lawson



*Photo credit to AMWA Indiana chapter members William Pietrzak and Denise Viquez.*

## Upcoming Chapter Events

TBD August Education Event--watch for updates through email, website, and social media for details.

### Other AMWA events

Wednesday, July 17, 2019

[Tools to Thrive in a Digital World, Part 2](#)

Live Webinar, 12PM-1PM EST

Friday, July 19, 2019

[2019 Greater Chicago Area Chapter](#)

[Regional AMWA Conference](#)

Evanston, IL

Wednesday, Nov 6-Saturday, Nov 9, 2019

[2019 Medical Writing & Communication Conference](#)

San Diego, CA

AMWA  
Educational  
Opportunities  
in 2019

## Miscellaneous Chapter Business

### Update your profile on the Indiana AMWA membership directory

The directory of IN AMWA members is now functional on the website. Before you can register for the directory, you must contact us through the [Join link](#) to receive an initial user name and password. The user name and password may then be changed, and you will be able to update your profile and view other members.

### Connect with the chapter on social media

Follow us on [LinkedIn](#), Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram at #hoosierAMWA. Create your network with the Indiana Chapter today.

Help out, meet  
others, and  
give back to  
your  
organization!

### Volunteering with the chapter

We are always looking for volunteers! If you are interested in getting more involved in the chapter, let us know at [Member-Resources@hoosieramwa.org](mailto:Member-Resources@hoosieramwa.org).

### New Members since November 2018

Thank you for joining us! Welcome to the Indiana AMWA Chapter:

Marimar	Hernandez-Perez
Amanda	Austin
Kelly	Moench
Edward	Nickolich
Eimile	Oakes
Jasmine	Moore
Holly	Andreas
Benjamin	Troy
Paula	Hauck
Rachel	Richardson
Virginia	Martin
Miki	Ishida
Susanna	Scott
Catherine	Mindrum