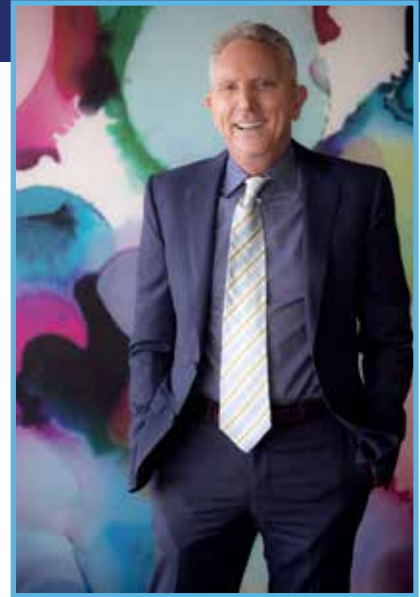


FROM THE EDITOR

MICHAEL G. BAKER, PHD



First Word

You and I as medical communicators are fortunate to be living in a time that reasonably can be characterized as a medical renaissance period. Meaningful, rapid advances in research, preventive, and treatment-oriented medicine are in evidence not just in our professional but also our personal lives. Witness the emergence of not one but multiple COVID-19 vaccines that have been developed and approved in a strikingly short period of time relative to how long previous vaccines have taken to go from virus identification and characterization to vaccine candidate development to shots in arms. With recently embraced messenger RNA technology, as just one example of contemporary research-based medical advancement, have we vanquished the typical 10+ year timeframe to develop a safe and effective vaccine? Multiply this concept across tens of thousands of areas of medical advancement and you grasp the magnitude of our progress.

Simply put, we have the privilege of contributing to and reporting on the fruits of this renaissance. Our role as medical communicators is to inform, educate, and contribute to the scientific body of knowledge during this period of rapid and prolific advancements. Although the opportunity is exciting and a privilege, the sheer volume of information to which we are exposed, need to absorb, and operationalize is daunting. Regulations governing the development of diagnostics, devices, and therapeutics are evolving rapidly in the United States and around the world, thousands of medical journal articles are published each day in English alone, and medical practice standards are changing at an unprecedented rate.

Thus, the skills required to be a medical communicator are substantial—not only scientific and linguistic, but also interpersonal, with a capacity for prioritizing and juggling multiple projects, adapting to change, and adhering to tight deadlines. It is a rare individual who can thrive as a modern day medical communicator. Whether working in regulatory writing, scientific publications, health communication, continuing education, or promotional writing, we face the ongoing challenge of getting our messages to our often information-overwhelmed and time-constrained audiences quickly, clearly, and meaningfully.

So, I ask, what does the *AMWA Journal* do to help you thrive as a medical communicator? We will continue to provide opportunities to learn from and connect with peers, practical tools to do your job, and insights into ethical concepts, regulatory issues, scientific matters, and other topics. Key upcoming goals are to provide improved access to our content via an enhanced digital presence, emphasize the value of our diversity across a range of indicators, and further connect with our medical communication counterparts around the world. Theme issues, new regular columns, and forward-looking topics on medical communication also are in the works. In coming issues, you will hear further from me on our progress in these areas.

As the proud tradition of the *AMWA Journal* continues with a new Editor and my sincere appreciation to Jim Cozzarin and the Editors before him, the top-notch editorial team and I welcome your contributions, insights, and, yes, constructive criticism. Serving our audience with a spirit of information-sharing, collaboration, and mutual support will continue to be guiding principles of the *AMWA Journal*.

Yours in medical communication excellence,
—Michael

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