

The American Medical Writers Association (AMWA) Announces New Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Statement

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Diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) is a phrase that refers to organizational principles and policies that promote inclusion and representation of diverse people, including individuals of different ages, genders, races and ethnicities, religions, cultures, sexual orientations, and abilities. The AMWA leadership is committed to maintaining a welcoming environment in which all members are treated fairly, have access to programs and resources, and are empowered to contribute toward advancing the association's mission.

To further that commitment, the AMWA Board of Directors (BOD) began an important initiative in 2021 to discover, understand, and set a direction for enhancing DEI efforts within the organization. The first outcome of that initiative was AMWA's new organizational DEI statement adopted by the BOD in July 2022. The AMWA Statement on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion reads as follows:

AMWA is committed to creating and maintaining a culture that embraces a diverse community of individuals who value excellence in medical writing, editing, and communication. We believe that AMWA functions more effectively with diversity of thought and inclusion of varied perspectives in the shared pursuit of our mission. We strive to

- Demonstrate the values of diversity, equity, and inclusion.
- Encourage the interest, participation, and leadership of underrepresented groups within our organization.
- Cultivate an inclusive, diverse, and accessible community of medical communicators.

A second outcome of AMWA's DEI initiative was the creation and engagement of a Diversity & Inclusion Assessment Task Force that developed the 2022 AMWA DEI Survey. The survey launched in August, and results will help AMWA gain a clearer understanding of the existing diversity

of our membership, learn about current challenges or shortcomings, and recognize what AMWA is doing well so that we can continue to build upon that foundation.

By leveraging the welcoming culture of AMWA, we hope to create an even more inclusive, diverse, and collaborative environment for all. It is important that we demonstrate our commitment to diversity, equality, and inclusion to our members and staff as well as the medical communication community at large. As medical communicators, our members play a crucial part in ensuring that information about health, medicine, and science is communicated accurately and clearly to help a variety of audiences make important health-related decisions.

AMWA previously issued a statement in June 2020 (<https://www.amwa.org/news/511877/A-Message-from-the-AMWA-President-and-Executive-Director.htm>) on the effects of systemic racism and inherent bias that have led to health disparities that adversely and disproportionately affect minority groups. The statement acknowledged that health and well-being for all cannot exist alongside endemic racial health inequities. The message also emphasized that diversity is a strength that enriches the AMWA membership.

These are just the first steps that AMWA will take as it continues to address DEI needs. We are proud of our warm and welcoming community and the diversity among our regional and national leaders; however, there is always room for improvement. As we move forward, we plan to ensure that our programs, policies, and practices are fair and equitable for all among our diverse membership. We look forward to implementing enhancements throughout the organization that will align our commitment to DEI with our overall mission as we aspire to maintain a welcoming environment that celebrates differences and where people of different backgrounds feel comfortable sharing diverse, mission-advancing perspectives.