

AMWA NEWS

AMWA's Health Communication Certificate Program is Coming!

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With health communication taking center stage in this special journal issue, we want to share an exciting update on one of AMWA's major upcoming initiatives: our Health Communication Certificate Program.

BUILDING ON LORI ALEXANDER'S LEGACY

This program builds on the comprehensive AMWA Health Communication Curriculum for Medical Communicators¹ that our task force developed throughout 2024. The curriculum addresses the practical challenges medical communicators face when creating content that connects with diverse audiences.

The initiative honors Lori Alexander's enduring passion for health literacy and plain language principles. Throughout her remarkable AMWA journey—as member, leader, faculty, journal editor, presenter, president, and director of education—Alexander championed health communication at every turn. Her posthumous Swanberg Award² in 2021 recognized her transformative impact on our field.

When the AMWA Board launched the Lori Alexander Legacy Recognition Initiative in April 2023, they knew exactly what Alexander would want: practical tools that help medical communicators create clearer, more accessible health content.

WHAT THE CURRICULUM INCLUDES

The curriculum covers 7 essential areas:

- Basic principles of health communication, centered on audience awareness and health literacy.
- Planning for the ideal user experience with all types of health communication.
- Understanding the importance of, and strategies for, creating consistent content.
- Prioritizing when developing health communication: identifying priorities and managing them within content lifecycles.
- Copyediting and proofreading text, data, and images in health communication.
- Using health literacy tools and strategies in the workplace.

Box 1. AMWA Health Communication Education Subcommittee (2025)

Genevieve Walker, PhD, Independent Writer, Patient Education, Bridge Health Communications (Board Liaison)

Eva Stabenow, MA, MPH, Patient Education Writer, Wordplay Lab, LLC

Bill Koslosky, MD, Managing Member, Heartland Narrative LLC

Kelly Crowley, MWC, Director, Patient Education Content, Wolters Kluwer

Benjamin Riggs, BS, Senior Communication Specialist, Kettering Health

Toni Willis, MFA, Editor, RTI Health Solutions

Damiana Chiavolini, MS, PhD, Co-owner, Evergreen Biomedical Communications Group, LLC

Camille DeSantis, BS, MT, Executive Vice President, Edelman

Box 2. AMWA Health Curriculum Task Force (2024)

Larissa Biggers, MA, Senior Communication Specialist, Duke Health

Amber Boehm, PhD, Director of Editorial Services, Palladian Partners, Inc

Kelly Crowley, MWC, Director, Patient Education Content, Wolters Kluwer

Kimbra Edwards, PhD, Associate Director, CISC RP

Leila Emery, MA, Senior Medical Editor, RTI Health Solutions

Susan Krug, MS, CAE, CEO, AMWA

Geri Metzger, BS, Senior Content Manager, WebMD Ignite

Helen Osborne, MEd, OTR/L, President, Health Literacy Consulting

Kelly Pincus, PharmD, Sr. Director/Head, Medical Communication & Scientific Training, GSK

Liz Proper, MA, Managing Editor, Mayo Clinic Health Education & Content Services (Co-Chair)

Ben Riggs, BS, Senior Communication Specialist, Kettering Health

Sarah Stone, MPH, Freelance Health Writer & Editor, Health Literacy Consultant

Genevieve Walker, PhD, Independent Writer, Patient Education, Bridge Health Communications

Deb Whippen, BA, President, Editorial RX (Co-Chair)

- Considering ethical and legal issues when creating health communication.

YOUR CERTIFICATE PROGRAM TAKES SHAPE

We're now transforming this curriculum into AMWA's Health Communication Certificate Program. A newly formed subcommittee of the Education Committee is developing 7 online modules, which are created by subject matter experts who understand the nuances of effective health communication. We're also expanding our education offerings with new workshops, education sessions, webinars, and other online programs.

Target timeline: We're tentatively planning a Fall 2026 launch via AMWA Online Learning.

STAY TUNED FOR UPDATES

This certificate program represents an important step forward for our profession. We're developing resources that will help medical communicators tackle health communication challenges more effectively. Keep watching for updates on this game-changing initiative—we can't wait to share more details as we get closer to launch!

Author declaration and disclosures: *The authors note no commercial associations that may pose a conflict of interest in relation to this article.*

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