

Depth, Practice, and Community: What Awaits You at #AMWA2026 in Washington, DC

The 2026 Medical Writing & Communication Conference, November 4–7, brings together the profession's deepest expertise, useful best practices, and the community that makes our work possible.

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Nearly every AMWA member who has attended the annual Medical Writing & Communication Conference has had a moment when the value of the conference became clear. It might have happened when you attended an education session covering an issue you had been wrestling with for months, or during an unplanned hallway conversation with a colleague who provided inspiration or encouragement at just the right moment. In those moments, the isolation that we sometimes feel within our work—especially freelance or highly specialized work—eases as we realize we are not alone. That moment is the reason we gather. From November 4 through 7, 2026, we will gather at Westin DC Downtown in Washington, DC.

This year's conference theme, *Improving health and scientific understanding through medical communication*, highlights the fact that the best professional development for medical communicators comes from being in the same room with those who are actively shaping the field and taking part in the conversation. The program reflects the Annual Conference Committee's dedication to choosing proposals that will advance the clarity, accuracy, and accessibility of health and science information. This year, the Committee reviewed 128 proposals to build a program of approximately 45 education sessions, 20 preconference workshops, 60 roundtables, 7 jam sessions, 38 poster presentations, and 8 technology showcases, creating an experience in which new, mid-career, and experienced medical communicators can come together and each find value in the conference offerings.

A PROGRAM BUILT ON DEPTH OF KNOWLEDGE

Scanning any recent *AMWA Journal* will reveal the caliber of subject matter expertise present in our membership and represented at the annual conference. The Summer 2026 theme issue, *The Present and Future of AI in Medical Communication*, drew directly from session reports authored by attendees of the 2025 conference in Phoenix, Arizona. These summaries covered frameworks for evaluating artificial

intelligence (AI) vendors, strategies for human–AI collaboration, the mechanics of expedited regulatory submissions, and the content of the inaugural regulatory writers' jam session. These *Journal* reports illustrate that conference sessions move beyond introductory talks (although introductory-level material is also provided for career transitioners) into the realm of practical, road-tested guidance provided by medical communicators who are grappling with emergent issues, solving problems, and sharing with AMWA what they have learned.

THE 2026 PROGRAM COMES INTO FOCUS

The value of this year's conference is reflected in the program: the 2026 schedule is built around the real work medical communicators are doing every day. The program offers sessions on artificial intelligence, editing, freelancing, publications, regulatory writing, and health communication, emphasizing cutting-edge knowledge and practical judgment in a rapidly changing field. Attendees will find sessions that move beyond broad trends to focus on the decisions professionals face on a daily basis: for example, how to use AI-enabled workflows responsibly, how to balance style rules with author needs and reader expectations, how to manage freelance business challenges, and how to build publication plans that are transparent, collaborative, and effective.

The balanced program gives attendees room to shape a conference experience around the questions that matter most to their own work. A regulatory writer may focus on submission strategies and document quality. A publications professional may gravitate toward peer-reviewed communication sessions and editorial practice. A health communicator may look for content that highlights audience-centered messaging. A freelancer might focus on business and career-focused sessions, and a manager may combine technical sessions with leadership or business-development content. For all attendees, the 2026 program aims to connect hands-on learning with the art of medical communication.

MULTIPLE WAYS TO LEARN

The 2026 AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference offers varied learning formats that allow attendees to personalize their experience to meet their professional goals. The 60-minute education sessions are divided between focused deep dives from one or two speakers and panel discussions that assemble multiple perspectives on a single issue. Approximately 20 preconference workshops allow for extended skill building within specialized topics. Roundtable discussions on Friday morning (included in the registration fee this year; no ticket required) will provide facilitated small-group conversations in which attendees trade experiences and best practices. Focused jam sessions allow attendees to share current challenges and have candid conversations with peers. There will be poster presentations running throughout the conference, and eight technology showcases will take place on Thursday and Friday, providing a chance to see, question, and try tools that sponsors are bringing to the field.

What ties these formats together is a common expectation of quality and a shared commitment to communication that supports better understanding and improved practices. Conference session evaluations have consistently rated overall satisfaction between 4.32 and 4.54 out of 5 across the past 6 years; the 2025 Phoenix conference recorded an average content quality rating of 4.36, with the top-rated session scoring 4.84. Behind those numbers is a rigorous process of proposal review and program development led by the AMWA staff and dozens of volunteer committee members.

THE VALUE OF BEING TOGETHER

In her recent *AMWA Journal* column, AMWA President Kimberly Korwek highlighted “the warm and welcoming community that our organization is so known for.” New attendees may not realize how that warmth translates into professional value until they experience it, but it is what keeps members returning to the conference year after year. The annual conference is where volunteers meet the leaders and other members they have been working with all year. It is where a mid-career writer, uncertain about a career pivot, sits at a chapter dinner across from a peer who has made the same shift and is willing to speak candidly about it. It is where a freelancer picks up a referral from a colleague. It is where a first-time attendee is welcomed at a meet-and-greet and, by the end of the week, has a mentor. And it is where old friends return to reconnect and recharge their professional batteries for another year.

These connections are why AMWA continues to invest in networking formats alongside educational ones. Chapter

dinners, speed networking, meet-and-greets, and unstructured time in the exhibit hall are not filler. They are opportunities to create relationships that shape careers. In an era in which it feels like our tools are changing faster than we can adjust to them, there is true value in being in a room with peers who understand our work and its challenges.

The annual conference is also a rare space where the full ecosystem of medical communication is present in one place: regulatory writers alongside publications professionals, freelance editors alongside their in-house counterparts, educators alongside health communicators, and new career-changers alongside experienced AMWA Fellows. Few other events offer this breadth of intentional connection.

WASHINGTON, DC, AS THE BACKDROP

Washington, DC, is a walkable capital filled with iconic monuments, world-class museums, and vibrant neighborhoods where American history, science policy, and culture converge. The conference hotel, the Westin DC Downtown, places attendees within reach of the Smithsonian museums, the National Mall, and the neighborhoods that give DC its character. For medical communicators whose work so often intersects with federal regulators, funders, and science policy institutions, there is a particular resonance to gathering here.

AN INVITATION

The 2026 Medical Writing & Communication Conference is an invitation to invest in your craft, build your career, experience the community that defines AMWA, and recommit to the work of improving health and scientific understanding through medical communication. The program will reward attendees who come with open minds and open notebooks, and the community is ready to welcome new friends and colleagues to this rewarding field. Our profession will continue to be shaped by the ideas that are exchanged in DC this November.

Registration and hotel booking are open now. Our block at the Westin DC Downtown will fill quickly, so members are encouraged to secure their spot as soon as their travel is confirmed. Full program details, session listings, and registration are available at www.amwa.org/conference and at site.pheedloop.com/event/AMWA2026/home.

We look forward to seeing you there.

Author declaration and disclosures: *The authors note no commercial associations that may pose a conflict of interest in relation to this article. The authors acknowledge the use of Microsoft CoPilot to assist with the first draft of the article.*