

DELAWRITER

The quarterly newsletter of AMWA-DVC

Delawriter Editors

Fall Edition, October 2018

Finding Calm in a Crisis: a Look at the Opioid Epidemic and the Next Steps Moving Forward

By Sadie Dierschke

On the evening of June 7, 2018, Nina Drinnan, MSN, CRNP, discussed with attendees of the AMWA-DVC annual business meeting the ongoing opioid epidemic afflicting the whole of the United States. Drinnan's talk focused on three key areas: following the trajectory of the opioid epidemic to understand the current state of affairs; clarifying the demographic primarily affected by the opioid crisis; and suggesting methods to combat the crisis.

An opioid is a drug that acts on the central nervous system to relieve pain. Opioids can further be classified as natural (eg, morphine), semi-synthetic (eg, hydrocodone), or synthetic (eg, fentanyl). One fact put the alarming nature of the opioid crisis into perspective: The average lifespan in America is dropping due to overdose deaths, despite a nationwide decrease in opioid prescriptions.

A series of critical events led to the opioid crisis. First, in 1996, the American Pain Association recommended pain assessment every time a health care worker takes a patient's vital signs. According to Drinnan, this new task led to prescribers increasing the number of opioid prescriptions so as not to be negatively judged by employers and insurance companies as medicating patients poorly. From 1999 to 2010, opioid prescriptions quadrupled. Additionally, she added, the reasons for prescribing opioids expanded from alleviating only cancer pain to treating a wide variety of pain, including headaches, back pain, and belly pain. The chronicity of some pain, such as knee pain, also leads to a physiological dependence on higher quantities of opioid drugs over time. Other factors contributing to the crisis include the misleading of physicians on the addictive nature of opioids and the American cultural ideal of prioritizing personal comfort.

Next, Drinnan debunked the myth that only young people are affected by the opioid crisis. The 45- to 65-year-old age demographic makes up 40% of overdose deaths in America. Geographically, eastern Pennsylvania is a hotspot for opioid trafficking and use. In 2014, Bucks County, PA, had the nation's highest death rate in young men aged 19 to 25.

Most people initially obtain opioids from friends or family rather than drug dealers. However, as little as three weeks of daily opioid usage can lead to a dependence on the drug. Individuals then begin seeking other providers, such as drug dealers, to obtain opioids. Cost and access are the primary factors driving the progression from abusing opioid pills to using heroin. Obtaining heroin, or the even more potent fentanyl from a drug dealer is significantly cheaper than paying for prescription opioids.

Drinnan also offered a unique perspective on solutions to the opioid epidemic by evaluating the crisis as an issue of decreasing both supply and demand. Community efforts to reduce the opioid supply include opioid drop-off boxes in police stations where residents can dispose of unused prescription opioids. New opioid prescription guidelines and training requirements have been issued for physicians. For example, physicians may no longer prescribe opioids for periods longer than seven days. Pharmaceutical companies must also play a role in decreasing the supply of opioids. Currently, the risk of potential lawsuits, said Drinnan, outweighs the benefit of pushing the sale of opioids.

Drinnan discussed methods to decrease the demand for opioids by focusing on co-occurring treatment. For example, individuals with both a substance abuse disorder and mental illness should be treated by the same health care team. Furthermore, Drinnan called for thinking of addiction as a chronic brain disease. Then treatment plans can utilize a more prophylactic approach and reduce the number of addicted individuals seeking opioids.

Finally, Drinnan underscored the necessity of understanding the root of addiction to combat the opioid crisis. Sharing the stories of several celebrities who struggled with opioid addiction, she demonstrated that addiction does not discriminate on the basis of socioeconomic status. Overall, Drinnan offered audience members a unique perspective on the current opioid epidemic in a comprehensive presentation that integrated components of receptor pharmacology, behavioral science, economics, and health policy.

Sadie Dierschke, BS, is new to the field of medical writing and is a PhD Candidate in Biomedical Science at Penn State University College of Medicine in Hershey, PA.

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QUICK NOTES

Join the DELAWRITER

The DELAWRITER needs contributing authors for the quarterly publication.
Have an idea for an article?

Haven't used that byline recently?
If so, please contact the [editorial team](#).

Quarterly Quotes

"Those who bring sunshine to the lives of others cannot keep it from themselves." - James Matthew Barrie

"Revision is one of the true pleasures of writing. I love the flowers of afterthought." - Bernard Malamud

AMWA Annual Meeting

Save the Date
AMWA Medical Writing & Communication Conference will be held November 1-3, 2018 in Washington, DC. More information is available [here](#).

Volunteer Corner Fall 2018: Freelance or Employed: AMWA Benefits All

By Jacqueline M. Mahon

Julie Munden first joined AMWA's Delaware Valley Chapter 24 years ago.

With location, career, and other life changes, her membership briefly

lapsed, but she rejoined in 2003 and immediately began contributing her skills. Julie helped organize, along with Lori De Milt and Jennifer Maybin, the AMWA Delaware Valley Freelance Workshop held then in Blue Bell, PA. This popular event now has a storied history in King of Prussia, PA, and attendees come from hours away to participate.

As Julie pitched in, she met more AMWA members, and her professional circle grew. Lisa Breck, who was president of the Delaware Valley Chapter 2009-2010, suggested that she assume the Program Chair mantle, and Julie filled this role while continuing to help co-chair the Freelance Workshop. Eventually the vibrant network resulting from her many commitments benefited Julie in unexpected ways, including new work projects and friendships. "Everyone's life is so busy; it's easy to think there's no time available to help out," she says. "But it energizes your career and, perhaps surprisingly, your personal life."



As expected, AMWA resources were invaluable to Julie as she started and grew her business, Blue Ink Communications - a successful editing and copywriting firm in pharmaceutical sales and marketing as well as medical communications for 15 years. Currently, she is employed by Curtis Learning, LLC, as a Senior Medical Editor and Content Manager. Julie remarked on the seamless transition of her AMWA membership: "The connections and resources retain the same value for me in my new role. In addition, my company benefits from my relationships with many writers, editors, and graphic and instructional designers, and I bring back AMWA information and educational materials for my colleagues."

While leading her daughter's Girl Scout troop, Julie stepped back from leadership positions in AMWA. However, she is an Advisory Counselor liaising with national AMWA to share ideas and best practices. In an exciting new development, she was recently elected to her town council in the borough of Souderton, PA. There are many ways and places to offer time and talent.

Not all AMWA members enjoy frontline positions. Opportunities abound to help AMWA thrive without taking a formal position in the organization. Contact any officer for more information. Hopefully we will see you at national AMWA's annual conference in Washington, DC in November!

Jacquie Mahon, MA, is owner of Acorn Freelance in Philadelphia and has been a writer and editor of medical education, marketing, and hospital and pharmaceutical communications for 23 years.

Passing of the Gavel at June, 2018 Business Meeting

By Megan Hemphill

New Officers: These volunteers have accepted greater responsibilities in the chapter this June. Please congratulate and thank them. Our newly elected officers for the 2018-2019 year are:

- President: Darryl Z. L'Heureux, PhD
- Vice President: Mark Bowlby, PhD
- Interim Treasurer: Jen Minarcik, MS
- Secretary: Monica Nicosia, PhD
- Past President: Jen Minarcik, MS
- Program chair: Debbie Anderson, PhD
- Princeton co-chairs: Katherine Molnar-Kimber PhD and Dan Benau, PhD
- Freelance Workshop chair or co-chairs: open

At the 2018 June business meeting, Jen Minarcik, MS, thanked the many volunteers for all their help throughout the year. She presented the AMWA-DVC President's Award to Julie Munden, Ruwaida Vakil, MSc, and Katherine Molnar-Kimber, PhD. She also thanked the many volunteers for their efforts in organizing and running the AMWA-DVC large educational events this past Spring:

Freelance Workshop

- Ruwaida Vakil, chair
- Lori De Milt, MJ
- Christine Durst, PhD
- Kelleen Flaherty, MS, MWC
- Karen Golebowski, MS
- Jennifer Maybin, MA, ELS
- Kristina Wasson-Blader, PhD, ELS
- Brian G. Bass, MWC

Princeton Forum

- Darryl Z. L'Heureux, PhD, co-chair
- Dan Benau, PhD, co-chair
- Mark Bowlby, PhD
- Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD

We are looking for volunteers for the Freelance Workshop and the Princeton Forum.

- If you'd like to volunteer for events or other opportunities, please contact the [volunteer coordinator](#).
- We are currently looking for Freelance Workshop Chair and Co-chairs.
- If you would like to lead a session or roundtable, fill out the [Request for Proposals](#) for Freelance Workshop or contact the [Princeton Co-chairs](#).

Step up and volunteer for 2018-2019 year!

Hone Your Skills and Network at the AMWA National Conference 2018 in Washington, DC on Oct 31 to Nov 3.

We invite our AMWA-DVC members and friends to our Chapter Dinner and Networking event on Thursday, Nov. 1 at 6:15 PM in Washington, DC. We have made three sets of restaurant reservations (with two tables of 8 at each restaurant [n=48]).

All restaurants are within a few blocks of the conference hotel. Check out the menus at:

- Brasserie Beck (contemporary European style brasserie) 1101 K Street NW
- Acadiana (contemporary Louisiana eatery) 901 New York Avenue NW
- NoPa (American brasserie) 800 F Street NW

A follow-up email will be sent to registrants for choice of restaurant next week. Good eats!

Support your fellow AMWA-DVCers at the 2018 AMWA National Conference in Washington, DC.

If you would like to write an article about one of the sessions for the Winter, 2019 issue of Delawriter, please send a note with the preferred presentation to delawriter@amwa-dvc.org.

AMWA-DVC Member	Topic	Day and Time
Wednesday Oct. 31	Workshops and Sessions	
Art Gertel	WS-20 Serving Two Masters - Comparing and Contrasting US and EU Regulatory Processes (note this workshop ends at 5:30 PM)	Wed, Oct. 31 2pm - 5pm
Janet Novak	WS-22 Advanced Data Presentation: Tables, Graphs, and Charts	Wed, Oct. 31 2pm - 5pm
Thursday Nov. 1	Workshops and Sessions	
Becky Nuttall	Regulatory Medical Writing in the Digital Age	Thurs., Nov. 1 9:30am - 10:30am
Art Gertel	WS-32 Fundamentals of Ethics and Practical Applications (note: this workshop ends at 5:30 PM)	Thurs., Nov. 1 2pm - 5:30pm
Ann L. Davis, MPH, CMPP	WS-33 Ethical Standards in Medical Publications	Thurs., Nov. 1 2pm - 5:00pm
Cynthia L. Kryder, MS, CCC-Sp,	The Communication Conundrum	Thurs., Nov. 1 4pm - 5:00pm
Diane R Petrovich, PhD, Mitzi Allred, PhDEE	The CSR Simplification Project: Creating a Clear, Compliant, and Concise CSR	Thurs., Nov. 1 4pm - 5:00pm
Deborah Anderson, PhD	Instructional Design: Where Do You Fit in as a Medical Writer	Thurs., Nov. 1 4pm - 5:00pm
Mandy Pennington, with Pamela Fioritto	QC Detours: Improving the Quality Control Process	Thurs., Nov. 1 4pm - 5:00pm
Friday Nov. 2	Roundtables	
Donald Harting MA, MS, ELS CHCP	Are You Excited About SQUIRE 2.0 Yet?	Friday, Nov. 2 7:30am - 8:45
Sandra Buckley	How do I get Out of Here???	Friday, Nov. 2 7:30am - 8:45
Kelleen Flaherty, MWC, CMPP	How to Find a Job	Friday, Nov. 2 7:30am - 8:45
Michelle E. Stofa	I Have the Abstract: How Do I Make it into a Poster?	Friday, Nov. 2 7:30am- 8:45
Friday, Nov. 2	Workshops and Sessions	
Lawrence Liberti, PhD, RPh, RAC,	WS-40 Assessing and Communicating the Benefits and Risks of Medicines	Friday, Nov. 2 9am - 12:00 pm
Lori De Milto, MJ with Genevieve J. Long	Networking for Introverted Freelancers: How to Get Better Results with Less Stress	Friday, Nov. 2 10:30am - 12:00
Monica Nicosia, PhD with Kathy Boltz	Tools to Thrive in a Digital World	Friday, Nov. 2 10:30am - 12:00
Art Gertel with Julia Forjanic Klapproth	Responses to Regulatory Authorities: Measure Twice-Cut Once	Friday, Nov. 2 2pm to 3:30pm
Saturday, Nov. 3	Workshops and Sessions	
Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD	27 Tips for Efficiently Writing Scientific Publications	Sat., Nov. 3 9am to 10am
Mitzi Allred, Director,	Accelerating Drug Development through Protocol Harmonization: TransCelerate's Common Protocol Template and the Technology Enabled Addition	Sat., Nov. 3 9am to 10am
Lori De Milto, MJ with Kathleen Labonge & Eva Stabenow	Your Freelance Brand: How to Stand Out in a Sea of Freelances	Sat., Nov. 3 10:30am to 12:00pm
Cynthia L. Kryder, MS with Lori Alexandria & Jia You	Think and Communicate Visually	Sat., Nov. 3 10:30am to 12:00pm
Saturday, Nov. 3	Roundtables	
Donald Harting MA, MS, ELS CHCP,	Can We Standardize the CME Outcomes Report?	Sat., Nov. 3 12:15pm - 1:45pm
Kathy Molnar-Kimber, PhD	The Art of Writing an Effective Response Letter to Editor and Reviewers	Sat., Nov. 3 12:15pm - 1:45pm
Saturday, Nov. 3	Workshops and Sessions	
Kelleen Flaherty, MWC, CMPP,	Fake News in Medicine	Sat., Nov. 3 2:00pm - 3:30pm
Thursday Nov. 1 and Friday Nov. 2	Posters	
Donald Harting MA, MS, ELS CHCP & Andrew Bowser	Best Practices for Writing CME Needs Assessments: 2017 Survey Results	Thursday to Friday
Diane R Petrovich, PhD, & Mitzi Allred, PhDEE	The CSR Simplification Project: Creating a Clear, Compliant, and Concise CSR	Thursday to Friday

UPCOMING EVENTS

Upcoming educational and networking events for our members



Calling all CME Writers

We'd like your insights on the best way to write an educational needs assessment. The annual survey on best practices opens October 5 and closes October 19. All respondents will receive the raw results by November 30. While some questions are repeated to track trends, this year new questions address where to find quotations from patients, whether non-peer reviewed materials belong in your reference list, and any unprofessional practices you may have noticed in NAs written by others. If you have written at least several needs assessments, please visit the [survey](#).

CME Palooza Fall 2018 Wednesday, October 17, 2018

A 1-day event that will feature a series of unique sessions focused on topics relevant to the broad CME community. Broadcasts will stream live on the LIVE page of CME Palooza website and will be available for viewing shortly after their conclusion on the Archive page. There is no charge to view or participate in any of these sessions. Live page is: <https://cmeplaoza.com/fall-2018/>



AMWA-DVC Freelance Workshop Request for Proposals, due Oct 30

Request for Proposals for the Freelance Workshop are due Oct 30., The Freelance Workshop focuses on all aspects of running a freelance business including getting started, marketing, and soft skills. It will be held in March in King of Prussia. More details to come in Dec.1. Click [HERE](#).



A student's perspective on the Freelance Workshop: The AMWA-DVC Freelance Conference was an interactive and informative event for students and medical communication professionals. The collaborative environment allowed me to network and learn tips, tricks, and shared knowledge from other writers. The roundtable sessions provided extensive resources for medical writers, including tools, guidelines, and essential skills. The appeal of a freelance career is the writer's independence, after establishing significant experience in their craft.

Rafi Naseer is a graduate student at Temple University's Professional Scientific Masters in Scientific Writing and recently completed an internship at AdMed. He looks forward to his next opportunity in medical writing/editing.

MAACME Basics Training Camp and Annual Conference Nov. 14-15, 2018

MAACME Basics Training Camp and Annual 2018 Conference are being held on Wednesday, November 14, 2018 and Thursday, Nov 15, 2018 at the Resorts Casino Hotel in Atlantic City, NJ. This conference is designed to meet the educational needs of CME professionals working in a variety of settings, including academic centers, specialty societies, medical education companies, hospital and health care systems, and medical writing. For more information, click [HERE](#) to visit the event website.



AMWA-DVC's Annual Holiday Networking Event on Thursday, December 13, 2018



Celebrate a great year and join your fellow AMWA-DVC colleagues for food and cheer at the Triumph Brewery in Princeton on Thursday, December 13, 2018 from 6:30-9:30 pm. Enjoy appetizers, buffet dinner, dessert, and beverages (wine/beer/soda/coffee/tea) with old and new friends!

Registration is coming soon.

Questions: Contact AMWA-DVC Program Chair Debbie Anderson at amwa.dvcnetworking@gmail.com.

Survey for AMWA-DVC Princeton Forum May 4th, 2019 and Save the Date

The Princeton Forum focuses on how to write various documents and gain leadership skills essential for all medical writers.

Save the date Saturday May 4, 2019, for the Princeton Forum. To provide the topics that interest you, we would greatly appreciate it if you would fill out the 7 question survey-it only takes 5 min. Click [HERE](#) for survey. Thanks so much for filling it out! More details on Princeton Forum to come in next issue.

A student's perspective on the Princeton Forum:

Jane Miller's seminar was the keystone of the 2018 Princeton Forum with her presentation on writing about numbers. Dr. Miller provided interactive lessons on how to write about numerical data for a general audience, and best practice when using charts and tables. She discussed the need for both magnitude and direction and the importance of providing the relevant context when presenting numbers. Don't forget the "who, where, what, and when" in scientific writing.

Mojan Arshad is a graduate student at Temple University's Professional Science Masters in Scientific Writing and works as a Grant Administrator at Temple University College of Engineering.



The Princeton Forum



Saturday, May 4, 2019

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