

PostScripts...

Vol 1, Issue 5, April 2010

**Congrats to
AMWA 15, 20, and
25 year members!**

Next Meeting: Networking Tea Social

Come network and mingle as you enjoy a Victorian afternoon tea in the beautiful, elegant, relaxed outdoor setting of the Hidden Chateau & Gardens in Los Angeles.

Many members enjoyed this event so much last year that they requested that we host it again. Besides, it's also a good chance to dust off your fancy hats!

Cost: Members/Nonmembers \$20.00

Because we need a minimum of 25 registrants to hold this event, reservations are required by 9 PM on Tuesday, May 4, 2010.

Payment must be received by Sunday, May 9, 2010.

Location: Hidden Chateau & Gardens
23130 Sherman Way
West Hills, CA 91307
818-610-3228

Agenda: Saturday, May 15, 2010
11:00 AM – 1:30 PM

Please send your reservation to Valerie Breda at treasurer@amwa-pacsw.org, then mail a check, payable to AMWA-Pacific Southwest Chapter, to Valerie Breda at 5216 Prosperity Lane, San Diego, CA 92115.

You will receive an e-mail confirmation by May 10. Please bring your printed e-mail confirmation on the day of the event; it will serve as your ticket to the networking tea social.

15-Year Members

Karen Cooksey
Lauri Graham
Steven Halasey
Robin Weaver
Terry Williams

20-Year Members

Ann Ciemnoczolowski
Karen McKeown
Michael Schneir
Esther Tazartes

25-Year Members

Jennifer Fissekis
Ann Dawson

Chip's Editorial—I Smell Something Rotten In Recruiting: *Big Pharma Subterfuge to Lower Pay for Medical Writers?* By Chip Reuben, MS



Within the past month you may have received a poorly written email or a telemarketing-sounding phone call from a recruiter urgently looking for contract medical writers for one of their big pharma clients. They want you to hurry, claiming that the job will fill quickly. Or perhaps an e-mail came from someone claiming to be a vocational expert seeking information about medical writer salaries. As the Employment Coordinator of the Pacific Southwest Chapter of AMWA, I've discovered waves of both efforts. Are they related? It's hard to know, but my personal examples came within a very short period of time related to the same US city.

If you got far enough along in the recruiting process you learned that the non-negotiable hourly rate was very low (not more than \$50/hour), less than full time, and on-site. To make matters worse, the recruiter's client may have tried to reduce your rate another 5%. And if you allow yourselves to be rushed by the recruiter, you may fall prey to your own bad decision, just as one might with a real estate agent or car salesman.

Why is this scheme happening now? Are medical writing fees declining with the new economy? Are the new recruiting efforts a response to perceptions of the new healthcare law? Actually, the letter of the new reform bill does nothing to curb the inflation of healthcare costs. Perhaps it is the spirit of the bill that has spurred an interest among drug company executives to cut the costs of the people who do the work.

But should the medical writers take the blow? We communications professionals offer a valuable service, and should be properly compensated for it, especially in this new era of healthcare reform. If there's one group—it's the medical writers—who offer goodwill and collaboration, who strive to offset the waste and needless healthcare inflation that comes from poor coordination, lack of careful planning, wasted and uncoordinated research efforts, strategies of minimally incremental advancements in healthcare (to increase returns on investments), and the needless politics and posturing that goes on so rampantly and ubiquitously in industry and institutions. Why can't everyone just work together in a collegiate fashion? Typically, I find that the medical writers have to pull everything and everyone together to accurately document the progress of what these companies and institutions are (or at least should be) all about—**advancing healthcare.**

So, *please* hold the line; stick to your guns. Be assertive and encourage overall operational efficiency in the industry. Such efforts will do substantially more to save healthcare costs than buckling to these shoddy recruiting efforts.



March 20 Joint AMWA-AWIS Meeting (from left to right)

Lisa Tushla, PhD, President of Terranova Medica, LLC
Huong Huynh, PhD, AWIS President
Alice Yu, MD, Pediatrics Research Professor at UCSD Medical Center
Jenny Grodberg, PhD, RAC
Noelle Demas, MS, AMWA President

Welcome to Our New Chapter President-Elect, Dr. Jennifer Grodberg, PhD, RAC

Jenny has a PhD in Microbiology from the State University of New York at Stony Brook, and completed post-doctoral work at both the Weizmann Institute of Science in Rehovot, Israel and Harvard Medical School. She has over 16 years experience in the pharmaceutical industry and currently serves as Director of Regulatory Affairs at Trius Therapeutics. Before joining Trius, she worked at TargeGen Inc., in the Department of Regulatory Affairs and Drug Development. Before entering the pharmaceutical industry, she held a faculty appointment at Harvard Medical School in the Department of Medicine.

Jenny has been a member of AMWA for 14 years. At the Annual AMWA National conference, she co-leads a workshop on Investigational New Drug Applications and has led various other AMWA workshops and chaired and organized open sessions. She's currently developing a pharmaceutical session for this year's annual conference, again will co-lead the workshop on INDs, and will be giving a short session entitled "*How to Work in the Overlapping Roles of Medical Writer and Regulatory Affairs Professional,*" a talk that she gave at the 2009 AMWA Pacific Coast Asilomar Conference hosted by our chapter.

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