



American Medical Women's Association
The Vision and Voice of Women in Medicine since 1915

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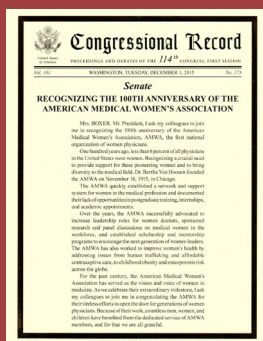
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Commemoration of AMWA's Centennial by Senator Barbara Boxer in the Congressional Record

Read about it here



AMWA Centennial Ornament

\$15 - free shipping. Order here



Connections

Winter 2015

President's Message

Dear AMWA Members,

A fabulous year! On November 18th we officially celebrated AMWA's 100th birthday. Over 100 years of empowering women to achieve more than what they thought possible. At the time AMWA was founded, women made up ~6% of all physicians. One of AMWA's missions was to help women find jobs because the jobs for women physicians were few. In 1921, AMWA helped spearhead the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act providing in-state federal funding for maternity and infant care, establishing over 3,000 healthcare centers across the country.

The development of the American Women's Hospitals Service was in part created because women physicians were not granted commissioned status in the military during WW1. A strong group of AMWA members raised funds so that AWHs could provide health care in war torn regions throughout Europe. It was not until 1943 that the Sparkman-Johnson bill was passed, officially allowing women physicians to be in the military. AMWA worked on that bill as well. Advocating and empowering women physicians by mentoring, working together, and supporting each other, AMWA is as viable now as it was then. Let's look at these facts from a recent article by Fatima Fahs in [KevinMD](#):



1. Women now constitute 47% of all medical students.
2. Women physicians make \$50,000 less every year compared to their male counterparts according to a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine in 2013 that reviewed earnings in 1987-2010. Despite this fact, 71% of women physicians are the breadwinners in their family, earning 75% or more of their family's household income, according to the 2015 Report on US Physicians' Financial Preparedness.
3. The AAMC's Women in Academic Medicine 2013-2014 report found that only 21% of full-time physician-professors, 15% of department chairs and 16% of medical school deans are women.

Thank you Bertha Van Hoosen and all of the women who have gone before us – our past AMWA presidents who stood firm when others opposed reproductive rights, who promoted leadership when others suggested we were not strong enough, who pushed to develop negotiation tools when others put in roadblocks. To you we owe not only a debt of gratitude, but a commitment to continue your legacy. The health of our global community needs our continued strength and courage.

As we push on to include sex and gender medicine in medical school curriculum, support reproductive rights, stop human trafficking, and delve into the reasons for emotional distress and suicidality amongst physicians, your continued activism makes a difference. We have much to do for the next 100 years.

Thank you.
Theresa

Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber, MD
President, American Medical Women's Association 2015-2016

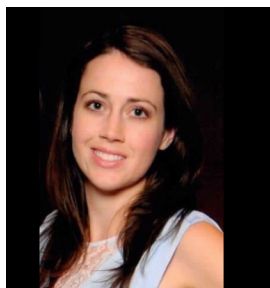
AMWA Legacy Quilt

Purchase a Personalized Digital Quilt Square that will be woven into AMWA's Centennial Quilt. These quilt squares will be an opportunity for members to celebrate AMWA's contribution to women and medicine over the past 100 years. Memorials, dedications, inspirational quotes, photos, and celebrations of AMWA are all welcome. Be creative. Submit a quilt square individually or as a group. Be a part of AMWA's legacy.

<https://www.amwa-doc.org/quilt-project/>

AMWA Residency Division

Letter from AMWA Residency Division President



Dear AMWA members,

The resident division continues to grow and take part in many activities. Of note, we have founded our first resident branches! Additionally, we have many advocacy issues we are taking part in, such as increasing the number of residency positions and our request for paternity leave policy updates. If you have any interest in either starting a branch or becoming active in these

efforts please check out our website.

Our interim meeting was a great success and offered many connecting opportunities with those involved in all stages of their medical careers. There are even more upcoming events to take part in including our Mindfulness Webinar (registration link: <http://goo.gl/forms/Bv56vXWkyC>) in January along with AMWA's annual conference this spring. For this annual meeting, we are collecting applications for travel grants, award nominations, and poster presentations. Keep up the hard work in residency!

Heather B. Leisy, MD
President, AMWA Resident Division 2015-2016
President@amwa-resident.org

AMWA Student Division

Letter from AMWA Student Division President



Dear AMWA members,

Our student division is stronger than ever. Thank you for your tremendous efforts at your local branches this past recruitment season. We kicked off our first-ever national recruitment initiative by discounting our membership rate for the months of August and September and awarding chapters \$10 back for every new student member recruited and \$100 back for every five physicians recruited. I am happy to report that

we saw a nearly 300% increase in our membership rate compared to last year! Wow!

AMWA members never cease to amaze me. You have been busy conducting fundraising drives, hosting mentorship events and advocating for women's health issues. I was happy to meet many of you at our Interim meeting this past September in Washington, DC. Moreover, I am delighted to report that

there are regional conferences happening in nearly every region this year! In closing off the 2015 year and nearing the start of 2016, I hope you will continue to find fulfillment in being an active AMWA member. We have an exciting annual conference to look forward to in March. Please join our national team and I in Miami, Florida as we celebrate 101 years of AMWA! As a student member, you are eligible to apply for a travel grant and submit an abstract to present a poster! I hope you will take the opportunity to also submit an application for a national leadership position!

Thank you again for the opportunity to serve you. I hope you know that you can reach out to me at any time. I love hearing your fresh ideas and perspectives on future paths we can lead AMWA in together. This is your organization; help us help you utilize your membership to the fullest!

Kindest Regards,

Fatima Fahs
AMWA Student Division President
president@amwa-student.org

AMWA Premed Division

Letter from AMWA Premed Division President



Hello AMWA Premeds,

For the past few months, our division has taken huge strides to solidify our growing division, and I could not be more proud! Through our efforts to increase our division's membership, I truly believe that we have increased AMWA's visibility to other students.

Within our first year of being a separate division, our students and leaders have organized

our first symposium, with more to come, attended the interim meeting for the first time, and have extended our outreach to young high school students. These accomplished goals, to name a few, have now propelled us into a time period with greater eagerness to build and formalize a stable division. Our work to expand our premeds' national involvement is also magnifying.

During AMWA's upcoming 101st Anniversary Meeting, premed conference sessions will be incorporated into the itinerary for the first time. Students will be able to hear from respectable guest speakers, participate in panels, share their chapter's activities, and more. I hope to see a record-breaking number of premed attendees at this year's conference in Miami!

Lastly, as we head into elections, I encourage all students to run for a national position. Stepping up as a leader for AMWA has provided me with priceless experiences, along with the greatest role models and mentors. Join us as we escalate our division to greater heights.

Jennie Luu
AMWA Pre-Med Division President
premedpresident@amwa-student.org

AMWA Updates

AMWA Co-Sponsors the first Sex & Gender Medical Education Summit



The Sex and Gender Medical Education Summit was the first of its kind – a national collaboration dedicated to engaging educational thought leaders in creating a roadmap to integrate sex and gender based evidence into medical and inter-professional education. The Summit was co-sponsored by AMWA, the Laura W. Bush Institute for Women's Health, the Mayo Clinic, the Society for Women's Health Research, Texas Tech University Health Sciences Center, the Sex and Gender Women's Health Collaborative, Verizon, Brown University Division of Sex and Gender in Emergency Medicine, and Duke School of Medicine Office of Diversity and Inclusion.

The Summit featured world-renowned experts in the field of sex and gender based medicine as well as curriculum leaders in academic medicine. Over 100 representatives from medical schools in the United States and Canada were in attendance. To view the archived webcast, please visit sgbmeducationsummit.com.

During the summit, participants worked to: (1) Analyze the current climate of sex and gender education in medical schools, with a special focus on sex and gender based health disparities, (2) Assess curricular resources that can be utilized within medical schools or as inter-professional resources, (3) Identify facilitators and barriers to translating sex and gender difference research into evidence-based clinical practice, and (4) Determine how best to address present and future needs to bridge the gaps and disparities between sex and gender medical education and clinical practice.

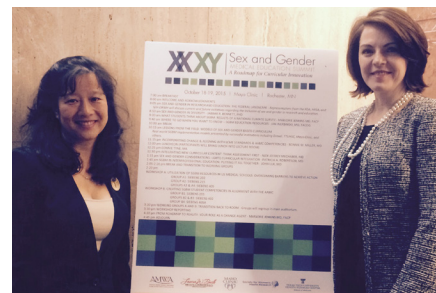
The outcome of the Summit will be the creation and publication of national student competencies focusing on sex and gender based health. The overarching goal for the Summit is the establishment or adoption of dedicated sex and gender education curricula in all medical schools within the next five years.



Summit Speakers (partial group) and Chairs



L-R: Dr. Karolina Kublickiene, Dr. Marjorie Jenkins, Dr. Marianne Legato, Dr. Alyson McGregor, Dr. Virginia Miller



Dr. Eliza Chin (Summit Co-Chair, L) and Dr. Marjorie Jenkins (Summit Chair, R)

U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and AMWA Co-sponsor Human Trafficking Summit



The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services and AMWA co-sponsored Human Trafficking: A Summit to Engage Healthcare Organizations on September 21, 2015, bringing together over 50 organizations and institutions – from various healthcare professions including physicians, nurses, EMT's, social workers, technicians, psychologists, physician assistants, public health advocates, and more. Speakers included leaders from federal agencies, academic institutions, and non-governmental organizations who are leading anti-trafficking efforts both locally and nationally. AMWA speakers included PATH (Physicians Against the Trafficking of Humans) Co-Chairs, Dr. Holly Atkinson, Dr. Suzanne Harrison, and Dr. Kanani Titchen. Two trafficking survivors gave poignant accounts of their own struggles as victims and provided feedback to providers on how best to serve this patient population. Plans are underway for increased collaboration among organizations that attended the Summit to help unite the anti-trafficking efforts among healthcare organizations. View the Summit program and speaker information [here](#).

AMWA Updates



AMWA leaders with Vision2020 Chair Lynn Yeakel. Background - Tennessee Woman Suffrage Monument.

AMWA attends Vision2020 5th National Congress

AMWA leaders Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla (Immediate Past President), Dr. Roberta Gebhard (Gender Equity Task Force Chair), and Dr. Eliza Chin (Executive Director) attended Vision2020's 5th National Congress in Nashville, TN. Vision2020 was founded in 2010 as a decade long initiative to achieve gender equity and complete the work that the suffragists began nearly one century ago. The initiative will culminate in a Centennial celebration of women's suffrage in 2020. AMWA has been involved with Vision2020 since 2010 and has attended each Congress over the past 5 years. The theme of this Congress was Countdown to 2020: Honoring the Past, Enriching the Present, and Shaping the Future.

For more information about Vision2020, please visit <http://drexel.edu/vision2020>.



Patricia Pierce, Tennessee Delegate Vision2020 (L) with Dr. Roberta Gebhard, New York Delegate Vision2020 and AMWA Gender Equity Task Force Chair (R)

AMWA Centennial Interim Meeting

The AMWA Centennial Interim Meeting brought together over 75 physicians, residents, and students for a weekend of networking and strategic planning. Highlights of the meeting included the Women in Medicine Reception with inspiring keynote presentations by Dr. Janis Orlowski, Chief Health Officer of the Association of American Medical Colleges, and Dr. Alice Chen, Executive Director of Doctors for America. The evening concluded with a screening of *Someone You Love: The HPV Epidemic* and a special appearance by Tamika Felder, one of the cervical cancer survivors portrayed in the movie. A short commentary by Dr. Shobha Krishnan, president of the Global Initiative Against HPV and Cervical Cancer, sounded a call to action for increased education on cervical cancer prevention and screening. Special thanks to our generous hosts, the AMWA Branch at George Washington University School of Medicine and Health Sciences. View photos from the event [here](#).

AMWA's strategic planning session identified several key areas for AMWA to grow and expand over the next few years, including women's health and women's leadership. We encourage members to get involved in one of our many initiatives locally and nationally. Please e-mail associatedirector@amwa-doc.org regarding your interest.



Left to Right: Dr. Sharonne Hayes (program co-chair) Mary McGowan (Women Heart CEO), Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla (AMWA Immediate Past President, Preventive Medicine Task Force chair)

AMWA attends National Policy and Scientific Summit for Women with Heart Disease

On October 26-27, WomenHeart held the first National Policy and Scientific Summit for Women with Heart Disease. The event included national experts and thought leaders who worked together to define scientific and policy changes that will promote women's heart health. The Summit, co-chaired by Dr. Sharonne Hayes and Dr. Susan Wood, included keynote speakers Dr. Nanette Wenger, Congresswomen Capps, Warren, Dingle and Stabenow. "This active working session served as an energized forum where novel ideas were seeded into action. I was thrilled to participate in this historical turning point for women's heart health on behalf of AMWA" said Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla, AMWA Immediate Past President. For more information on this summit, click [here](#).

AMWA Attends Women's Health Policy Stakeholders Roundtable with HHS Secretary Burwell

The Affordable Care Act is transforming healthcare and AMWA is part of the continuing dialogue between proponents for women's health and government. The latest AMWA action was the participation in a roundtable hosted by Secretary of Health and Human Services Sylvia Burwell and over a dozen women's health advocates. Diane Helentjaris, MD, MPH, an AMWA Past President, represented AMWA at this event. Discussion centered around current challenges including the high cost for some birth control devices, the need for services to people who have limited English proficiency, challenges in Medicaid services and the sensitivities to discussions around sexuality and reproductive health. While the ACA has significantly decreased the number of Americans lacking healthcare, it is estimated that over 10 million still are without coverage. Of these, HHS finds that about one third are people of color. Open enrollment is now through the end of December for coverage next year. Information is available at www.healthcare.gov.

AMWA Updates

AMWA Attends the 2015 TEDMED Conference

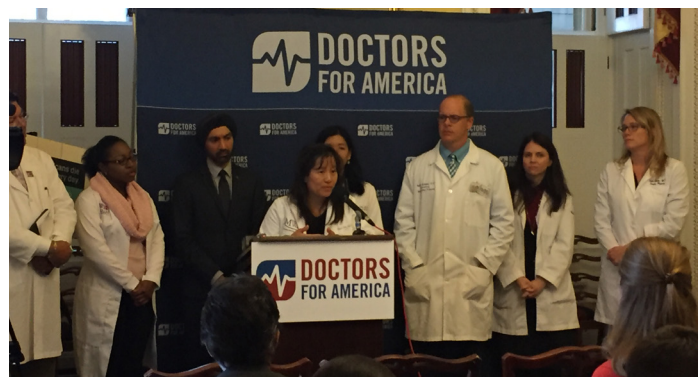
AMWA Executive Director, Dr. Eliza Chin, represented AMWA at the 2015 TEDMED Conference in Palm Springs, CA. The theme of this year's conference, "Breaking Through," challenged attendees to think beyond conventional practices, break through barriers, and embrace innovation. AMWA Centennial Speaker, Dr. Nassim Assefi, was Director of Stage Content. The outstanding speaker line-up included top-level medical officials, cutting edge researchers, public health advocates, and artists. Networking opportunities were abundant throughout the meeting, particularly in the Hive, where ideas were shared, discussed, and promoted. For the full TEDMED agenda and speaker list visit tedmed.com/event/stage2015.



Dr. Nassim Assefi, Director of Stage Content for TEDMED

AMWA Joins Doctors for America and Other Organizations to urge Congress to end the CDC gun violence research ban

AMWA joined Doctors for America and other medical groups in a press conference to [urge Congress to end the CDC gun violence research ban](#). Following the press conference, a [petition](#) with over 2000 signatures was delivered to key Congressional leaders. Just hours later, two gunmen opened fire in San Bernadino, California, killing at least 14 people. To join AMWA's Gun Violence Prevention Task Force, e-mail associatedirector@amwa-doc.org.



AMWA joins the Society for Women's Health Research and the American Association of Women Dentists to discuss research needed for women's oral health

On November 4, the Society for Women's Health Research brought together a group of women from AMWA and the American Association of Women Dentists to assess the need for research into women's oral health. Given the myriad of topics that are still incompletely understood – from the effects of pregnancy on oral health to the anticipated rise in oral malignancies from HPV infection – the group decided to move forward in seeking funding for an upcoming Roundtable of experts. This Roundtable will bring together experts to identify the most pressing healthcare issues for women related to oral health and to identify a public education plan. Past President Dr. Diane Helentjaris represented AMWA at this meeting.

Report of Medical Women's International Association (MWIA) Representatives to the United Nations, March – June 2015

MWIA and AMWA were well represented by members during the Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) in March 2015 at the United Nations. Drs. Murthy and Keswani have been following the various UN activities with regard to Post 2015, Beijing Plus 20 and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Dr. Murthy has been working on behalf of MWIA and AMWA with Zonta International and Afya foundation and has been able to send 900 Birthing Kits to Nepal in May 2015. She has also been working with her medical students at New York Medical College (NYMC) and Afya foundation, and in June 2015, this resulted in sending 38 bags of warm clothing and other supplies to Nepal as well.

In April 2015, Dr. Murthy attended the 100th Centennial Celebration of AMWA at Chicago and presented a report of UN activities on her own behalf and on behalf of Dr. Keswani. In May 2015, Dr. Murthy was invited to speak representing MWIA and AMWA at the 9th Annual Women's Symposium at SIAS International University in China, on maternal and child health and post 2015. She was named "Millennium Maker awardee" at this symposium. Dr. Murthy has been attending various UN briefings on the post 2015 agenda representing MWIA and AMWA. In June 2015, Dr. Murthy represented MWIA and AMWA and moderated a high level panel discussion on Cervical Cancer which was co-sponsored by the Permanent Mission of Grenada under the My Sisters Health Watch Initiative. She was invited to present at a panel commemorating the UN 1st International Day of Yoga which was co-sponsored by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN staff Recreation Council Enlightenment Society.

Dr. Murthy has been reelected to the executive committee of the NGO CSW NY for a 2 year term and will continue to represent MWIA.

AMWA Committee News

AMWA Obesity Prevention Initiatives

The Strategies to Overcome and Prevent (STOP) Obesity Alliance, which includes AMWA as a member organization, has released a series of educational videos and website for health care providers as part of its continued efforts to improve communication with patients affected by obesity. The information is based on STOP's Why Weight? A Guide to Discussing Obesity & Health With Your Patients, a unique tool designed to help providers build a safe and trusting environment with patients to facilitate open, productive conversations about weight. This series is part of a larger effort STOP is making to improve the patient experience and educate health care providers. The Why Weight? A Guide to Discussing Obesity & Health With Your Patients series of information is available at www.WhyWeightGuide.org.

AMWA Joined the first-ever National Obesity Care Week Campaign, Nov 2-7, Los Angeles

AMWA was a partner for ObesityWeek 2015, held November 2-7, 2015 in Los Angeles. ObesityWeek is the premier annual scientific and educational conference dedicated to obesity including cutting edge research, clinical management and policy. This was an opportunity to learn, network and connect with more than 5,000 obesity professionals, including physicians, surgeons, scientists and clinicians. The meeting combined a variety of formats, ranging from poster presentations to live debates. With nearly 1,500 research abstracts unveiled and more than 100 educational sessions, attendees had unique access to the latest information about obesity and its management.



Find out more about ObesityWeek 2015 at www.obesitycareweek.org.

The Campaign needs more voices. Take the Treat Obesity Seriously Pledge at www.treatobesityseriously.org to show that you too consider obesity a serious medical disease.

Dr. Connie Newman has been appointed to serve as the AMWA liaison to the Campaign to End Obesity Action Fund, Advisory Council

AMWA Maternity Leave Task Force – Open Letter in IndyStar

State Should Require Paid Maternity Leave

Read the full letter [here](#)

Are you a present/former member of the armed forces or interested in serving those who serve our country?

We are currently looking for students, residents, and physicians to join the AMWA subcommittee to help shape and lead this unique and very important committee. If interested, please contact Kaitlyn.H.Mayer@gmail.com

AMWA's Preventive Medicine Task Force Signs Healthy Campus 2020 Pledge

On October 19, 2015, AMWA's Preventive Medicine Task Force Chair, Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla, signed a pledge from the American College Health Association to promote campus wide health.

Creating healthy campuses requires collaboration across disciplines. In 2009, the ACHA Task Force invited colleagues from other higher education professional organizations to participate in the ACHA Healthy Campus Coalition, formerly known as the National Health Objectives for 2020 Coalition. As a result of this interdisciplinary collaborative effort, the scope of Healthy Campus 2020 has evolved to include: national health objectives for students and faculty/staff; promote an action model using an ecological approach; and provide a toolkit for implementation based on the MAP-IT framework. For the first time, Healthy Campus 2020 is web-based and available free of charge, which will allow higher education professionals, regardless of professional affiliation, to utilize these resources.

"After meeting with Surgeon General Dr. Murthy at our centennial national meeting, our Task Force has carried out an all-encompassing approach to promoting campus wide health. Signing the Healthy Campus 2020 pledge further cements our support and use of national resources to promote national campus health, fitness and wellness" said Preventive Medicine Task Force chair Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla. "We intend to select resources from this program that will target the academic centers linked to our members and leaders." For more information on the Healthy Campus 2020 initiative, click [here](#).

AMWA Advocacy Updates

- AMWA signs provider letter opposing the "Pain-Capable Unborn Child Protection Act"
- AMWA joins the White House efforts to address the growing problem of prescription drug abuse
- AMWA requests changes to labeling of low dose estrogen products
- AMWA sends letters to Congressional representatives in support of Planned Parenthood funding
- AMWA signs letter on foreign aid for reproductive services
- AMWA advocates for the ban of flame retardants in household products
- AMWA supports letters from End-of-Life Option Act (SB 128)
- AMWA signs letter supporting Pregnancy Workers Fairness Act

AMWA Branch News



Drs. Joyce Monac, Tracy Madsen, Frances Conklin, Elaine Fain, Lynn Iler, Nancy Littell, Marlene Cutitar, Rachel Sullivan, Alyson McGregor, Darlene Gabeau & Reena Bhatt

Annual Rhode Island Women's Medical Association (RIMWA) Board Dinner

The Rhode Island Medical Women's Association's Board of Directors' annual dinner could not have been held on a more glorious summer's night in July 2015. We missed all of those Board members unable to join us for this evening of friendship and networking.

AMWA Past Presidents Celebrate Women in Medicine Month with Cleveland Clinic Physicians

On Wednesday, September 2, 2015, the Women Physician Staff Association of Cleveland Clinic Florida celebrated Women in Medicine month with a Gala held at the luxurious Carolina Golf and Country in South Florida. Keynote speaker and AMWA Immediate Past President, Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla, spoke on achieving work-life balance. AMWA Past President and cherished mentor Dr. Diana Galindo received the highly esteemed "Physician of the Year" award.

Book Review – Petticoat Surgeon: The Extraordinary Life of Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen

Historian Maureen Thalmann has penned a fascinating biography about AMWA founder and "petticoat surgeon," Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen. Based on years of research, the biography takes the reader through Dr. Bertha's upbringing on the family farm, her early student years in Michigan, her later success as a surgeon, and her final years back at the farm where she continued to practice and write. The book is full of humorous anecdotes – about her personal and professional life. Thalmann has a gift for storytelling that brings Dr. Bertha to life as a vibrant, formidable woman physician who succeeded, against all odds, in a male dominated profession. More than succeed, her legacy has continued to live on through the many "surgical daughters" she mentored and the organization she founded, AMWA, which continues to support and promote women in medicine, now one century later. To order an autographed copy of the book, click [here](#).

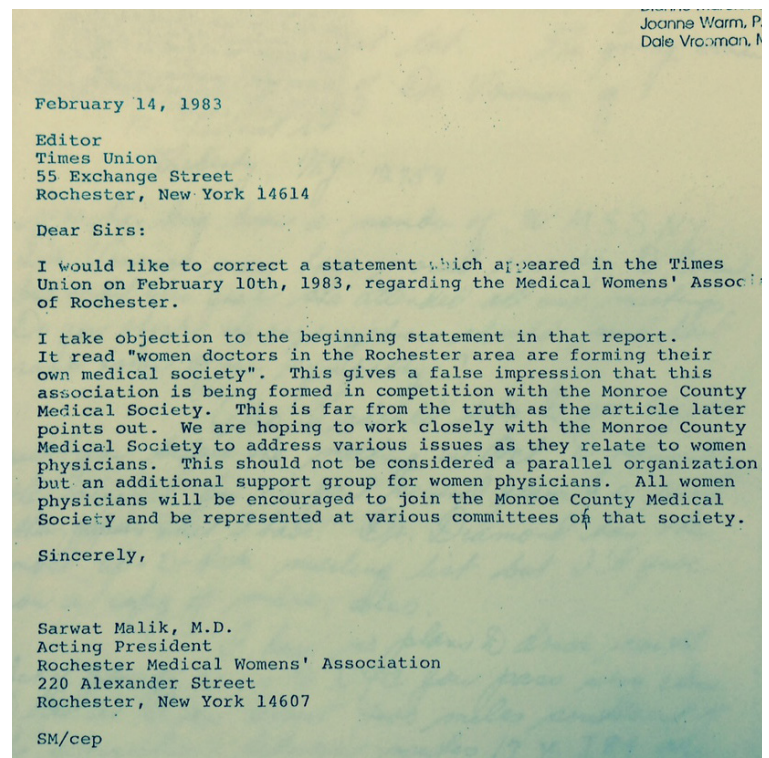


AMWA Represented at the 13th Annual UC Davis Pre-Medical and Pre-Health Professions National Conference

AMWA Leaders, Umber Ahmed (Pre-med External Relations Chair), Kristine Lilac (Pre-med Region 8 Director) Coordinator), Dr. Karen Poirier-Brode (Social Media Co-Chair), and Dr. Eliza Chin (Executive Director) represented AMWA at the 13th Annual UC Davis Pre-Medical and Pre-Health Professions National Conference, the largest pre-med meeting in the country with over 8000 attendees. Many interested pre-meds stopped by the AMWA booth and signed up for information about joining AMWA or starting a new branch.

Dr. Sarwat Malik penned 1983 letter to support the founding of AMWA Branch 65: Rochester, NY

Read about Dr. Malik [here](#).



AMWA Member News

Member Updates

- An Interview with Dr. Kathryn Ko, AMWA Artist-in-Residence
- AMWA Artist in Residence, Dr. Kathryn Ko, hosts Art on Call, Episode 1: Grand Rounds in Blue Major 7
- AMWA President Dr. Theresa Rohr-Kirchgraber awarded a Seat at the Table: Women Who Inspire from the Power of Women's Fund
- Dr. Kirchgraber named a 2015 Women of Influence Trailblazer by the Women of Influence Marion County Coalition
- Dr. Kirchgraber receives AMA Joan F. Giambalvo Grant to study suicidality in women physicians.
- AMWA Past President, Dr. Farzanna Haffizulla, speaks about her alternative career path.
- Dr. Vanessa Al Rashida examines medicine through the eyes of native Americans
- MWA Global Health Chair, Dr. Mini Murthy, helped coordinate the donation of gently used wigs to developing countries for women with cancer. Anyone who knows groups in the U.S. who would benefit from gently used wigs should contact global-health@amwa-doc.org.



A Tribute To The Men Who Support AMWA – Remembering Bob Oaks

Bob Oaks, husband of AMWA leader Dr. Mathilda R. Vaschak, was known for his longtime dedication to AMWA. He helped with many AMWA programs, including the famed “Bob Oaks” tours during AMWA annual meetings. He was awarded the Camille Mermod Award in 1971. Below is his acceptance speech:

“My services to AMWA have been rewarding in themselves. What memories this occasion recalls! – beginning with San Antonio where Dr. Rosa Lee Nemir succeeded the dynamic Dr. Ruth Hartgraves as your president and, by a brilliant inaugural address, changed my concept of the woman physician. Then there have been the many tours we have enjoyed together, especially the unforgettable trip to Mexico. There were periods spent typing biographical releases in the old AMWA office and the difficult, but rewarding, work for the MWIA Congress in Rochester. (Little did I realize 31 years ago that I was marrying not just one woman, but a profession!)

What other man can boast of squatting on the floor of a Rochester hotel suite, surrounded by the cream of the U.S. medical profession, all of us busy collating Congress documents that had arrived unassembled from the printer? It was about then I began to realize how your Association has accomplished so much with so little. Yet, I have often wondered what would have been the actual cost of those documents if each woman doctor had charged her customary office rates.

You have heard it said that behind every successful man you will find a woman – pushing! To most of you it is no secret that in my case that woman has been Mathilda R. Vaschak, MD. Perhaps

some of you have wondered how I persuaded her to say “I do.” It wasn’t easy and I can assure you that it was in spite of her better judgement. There are still times, I am certain, when she wonders whether this merger can ever succeed...

In once sense I was pre-conditioned to become a doctor’s husband. I grew up in western New York within 30 miles of Geneva where Elizabeth Blackwell had become the first woman medical graduate and of Oswego, Seneca Falls and Phelps which produced Drs. Mary Edwards Walker and Maria Minnis, both medical pioneers, and such early women’s rights advocates as Sarah VanderVot Eery and Carrie Chapman Catt. My grandfather insisted on his daughters and daughters-in-law retaining their maiden names and their individual identities after marriage.

These things are history. But the American Medical Women’s Association is today continuing work of these pioneers and bringing their dreams to fruition. Medicine, marriage and motherhood are no longer incompatible goals for the able young woman, but it is the AMWA which can show her the way to resolve the conflicts which often arise. To me and to my wife it is sad that not every young woman who could become an excellent physician is exposed to the AMWA material which might raise her vision of her own potential. But saddest of all, perhaps is the fact that so many women physicians choose to struggle alone with their problems without the insights they might gain through the Association or, having solved them, fail to share their solutions with other women doctors through AMWA channels.

– L. Robert Oaks

AMWA Member News

Women Medical Organizations Are Still Relevant

Did you know that September is Women in Medicine Month?

When I tell someone I'm involved in the American Medical Women's Association (AMWA), my favorite response is, "Are organizations like that still necessary? It's 2015."

First, thanks for the clarification of what year we are in. Isn't it shocking that in 2015 women in medicine are still not equal to their male counterparts? And second, to answer your question: Yes, AMWA is extremely necessary in today's day and age. Allow me to explain why, after a brief history lesson.

AMWA, established in 1915 by Dr. Bertha Van Hoosen, stands as the oldest multispecialty women's medical organization. At the time it was founded, women made up less than 6 percent of physicians. The organization served to connect these women to one another, mentor and help new physician graduates find work (by publishing lists of institutions that would actually consider hiring a woman).

In World War I, the U.S. government called on physicians across the country to step up and serve, but would not accept women physicians in an official capacity (I still can't wrap my head around this). It was then that the American Women's Hospital Service (AWHS) was founded and raised \$200,000 to develop hospitals and clinics across Europe to aid in the war-torn areas. They were eventually recognized alongside the Red Cross for their heroic work. Needless to say, by the time the Second World War hit, AMWA did not allow women physicians to be excluded from serving in the same capacity as men. They put forth the Sparkman-Johnson bill and its passing in 1943 ensured that women physicians had official, commissioned status in the war.

But let's just say you don't really care much about the details of those two huge history-changing wars all those years ago ...

You know those basic prenatal rights that every woman is entitled to? Like access to a clinic and rudimentary prenatal care? You can thank AMWA for that. In 1921, AMWA lobbied for the passage of the Sheppard-Towner Act to instate federal funding for maternity and childcare, which established over 3,000 healthcare centers across the country — many of which are still used today.

Oh, and you know those magical pills women can take daily to prevent an unwanted pregnancy? Thanks for that too, AMWA. In 1929, AMWA advocated for birth control, way before the medical community, and their male-physician colleagues were ready to accept it. Despite the extreme backlash they received, they persevered on their stance for this fundamental women's right.

OK, enough of the history lesson. Let's get to the solid facts on the status of women in medicine today:

1. Women now constitute 47 percent of all medical students.
2. Women physicians make \$50,000 less every year compared to their male counterparts, according to a study published in JAMA Internal Medicine in 2013 that reviewed salaries from 1987 to 2010. Despite this fact, 71 percent of women physicians are the breadwinners in their family, earning 75 percent or more of their family's household income, based on the 2015 Report on U.S. Physicians' Financial Preparedness.
3. The AAMC's Women in Academic Medicine 2013-2014 report found that only 21 percent of full-time physician-professors, 15 percent of department chairs and 16 percent of medical school deans are women.

So are women medical organizations still necessary, even in 2015? Absolutely.

If you don't want to take my word for it, ask one of our thousands of members across the United States who use AMWA to:

- promote and celebrate women leaders in medicine
- foster career development through our online mentorship database
- teach negotiation strategies to close the wage gap
- release advocacy statements on issues pertaining to women's health (maternity leave during training, breast cancer screening, domestic violence, women's heart disease, sex and gender medical research, etc.)
- support AWHS-supported clinics in underserved areas of Nepal, Peru, Haiti, Tanzania and Uganda
- educate medical providers on identifying victims of human sex-trafficking
- provide over \$20,000 worth of scholarships each year to female medical students

For women in medicine who resent being "pinned down by their gender" and refuse to join women societies because they feel they are excuses for women to get together and "complain about why they can't succeed," you're sadly wrong. If you as a women physician have experienced success in your field and have been recognized for your abilities and intellect, these are better reasons to join organizations like AMWA in order to provide mentorship for those struggling.

Lastly, just for the record, we do not sit around painting our nails and cry about men who are more successful than us. We're simply too busy following in the footsteps of pioneers like Drs. Bertha Van Hoosen and Elizabeth Blackwell.

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American Medical **Women's** Association

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