



## **2020-2021 Certification Board Candidates**

### **Bios and Personal Statements**

**LeAnn Berens**  
**Prescott Medical Communications Group**

#### **Brief Bio**

A nearly 25-year career in the medical communications field, I have held various titles and responsibilities along the way:

- from my beginnings as an Account Executive at a global public relations firm where I was responsible for media relations on the successful Celexa launch for Forest Labs
- to my role as CME Division Supervisor leading our team and clients on all CME-related activities; then due to the pharma environment and subsequent firewall between Medical Affairs and Marketing
- to my role the last 10 years focusing nearly solely on publication planning
- including expertise on Sunshine Act reporting and trusted internal expert for advisory boards, KOL engagement

Having received my bachelor's degree in Communications/Journalism and spending 6 years post-college as newspaper editor/reporter, my writing and communication skills have allowed me to thrive.

#### **Qualification Statement**

I am qualified to serve because I have a passion about our profession, a drive to communicate its importance to others, and the professional experiences to serve as my backdrop and toolkit. It is a very unique and demanding arena that we all are in together and I would be honored to have the opportunity to hold this position where I can help drive others in our field to be their best. I can't tell you how excited I was to learn there was a certification (ie, CMPP) to be had, and how many times I've provided my "CMPP study binder" to others in preparation for their testing! Aside from my professional experience, I have been told that people find me to be very approachable, trustworthy, and a good team member to be around. I feel those qualities are equally as important to professional experiences. Lastly, I am able to commit to this role as my two kids are now in college and I have more time to pursue this passion.



**Laura Carlson**  
**Envision Pharma Group**

### **Brief Bio**

Laura Carlson is a Division Head at Envision Pharma Group and an ISMPP Certified Medical Publication Professional™ (CMPP). Laura has been an active member of the 2018-2020 ISMPP CMPP Certification Board, and served as Vice Chair. In this role she has collaborated to support improvements in the certification program such as awareness raising about the importance of the ISMPP CMPP credential, development of a digital badge program, and establishment of an improved credit tracker for recertification. Laura also participated as an ISMPP Annual Meeting speaker in support of education about the certification program and as a panelist for a TIPPA Midwest meeting. In addition, Laura leads publications policy and process training programs for Envision employees to ensure successful implementation of clients' policies. Laura has been working in the publication and medical communications field for 21 years providing strategic and tactical expertise across varied therapeutic areas, for large and small pharmaceutical and biotech companies in support of global pre-launch, launch, and post-launch publication planning and/or communications programs. Before entering this field, Laura was a practicing attorney. She earned her law degree from Villanova University School of Law after obtaining a Bachelor of Music in Vocal Performance from the Berklee College of Music. In 2012, Laura also completed an accredited training in massage therapy and is a licensed massage therapist in Connecticut.

### **Qualification Statement**

Clear, thoughtful and timely communication of meaningful medical evidence is critical to ensuring that members of the public and medical communities are well informed. Such communication contributes to the creation of an environment where patients and healthcare providers make beneficial healthcare decisions, thus optimizing patient well-being. Educated, experienced and effective medical publishing professionals are key to the success of this effort, and they therefore require a keen understanding of relevant publication, writing and ethical guidelines, and best practices. The CMPP designation represents a commitment to and superior expertise in the publications arena.

I seek to continue my role within the ISMPP Certification Board because of my interest in supporting the evolution of this credential to ensure we maintain timely, relevant, and robust expertise across our profession. Credentialing programs need to advance continually to guarantee that CMPPs have advanced skills that ensure their aptitude to evolve as industry and world trends in medical communication do. We need further outreach to industry and government leaders to enhance their understanding of the high-level of expertise that the CMPP credential



represents as well as the indispensable role CMPPs play in compliant publication development and communication.

Given my legal background and my enthusiasm and interest in training, mentoring, and development, coupled with my extensive experience working with diverse stakeholders to deploy effective solutions, I seek to serve and collaborate with the Board and industry to enhance certification activities and outreach.



**Faith DiBiasi**

**Otsuka Pharmaceutical Development & Commercialization, Inc.**

**Brief Bio**

Faith has more than 20 years of experience in the biotech and pharmaceutical industry, including 8 years at Roche leading the PCR technical support operations group and providing technical direction for strategic marketing. She spent 2 years at QIAGEN as Director of Global Marketing, and 7 years heading infectious disease & immunology publications and overseeing knowledge management at Human Genome Sciences Inc. Over the past 7+ years she has been the Director of Scientific Communications in the Medical Affairs department at Otsuka Pharmaceutical Development & Commercialization, Inc. leading the publication efforts for CNS, Digital Medicine and Oncology. Before going to industry, Faith was a clinical microbiologist, an infectious disease researcher, and she taught Biology, Microbiology, and Bacterial Genetics at the University of Pittsburgh. Faith has a BS in Microbiology and a paralegal certificate both from Penn State University, she is a board-certified Microbiologist, has an MBA in Marketing, and is an ISMPP CMPP. In the past she has chaired the abstract committee and has been a member of the credentialing committee since 2013 and served as co-chair for the last 3 years.

**Qualification Statement**

I have been a member of ISMPP and a CMPP for more than a decade. I am passionate about our profession and want to see us grow and thrive. I feel the CMPP designation is important to ISMPP and the membership. I hope to put my past experience to work to continue to improve this program.



**Dana Fox**  
**Caudex, McCann Health Medical Communications**

### **Brief Bio**

Dana has 12 years of medical communications and scientific publishing experience. She joined Caudex in 2008 as a medical writer, and is now Managing Client Service Director, based in the US. In this role, she provides high-level scientific, commercial, operational and financial insight combined with account leadership of client services and scientific services teams. She effectively manages and coaches her team to ensure excellence in project delivery across the communication mix. She is also responsible for promoting best practice across client accounts and ensuring operational effectiveness. Dana has led communication and publication planning activities in several therapy areas including cardiology, neurology, gastroenterology, pulmonology, immunology, oncology, virology, and metabolism. Dana obtained her PhD in Molecular and Cellular Biology from the University of Massachusetts and Virginia Tech. She has been a Certified Medical Publication Professional™ since 2010 and currently serves as Chair of the Recertification Committee.

### **Qualification Statement**

My time working with ISMPP™ has involved being a passionate advocate for the Certification Program and the CMPP™ community. I have supported the strategic initiatives of the Certification Board in implementing and refining the Recertification program for the past 6 years by volunteering on the Recertification Committee, serving 4 years as committee chair. During my tenure, we have accomplished much in partnership with the Board. The recent incorporation of self-study activities and upgrades to the credit tracker were highlights for me and the CMPP™ community alike. We have qualified countless courses and activities for recertification credit while maintaining high standards according to Certification Board policy. I have been a strong partner to two Credentialing Directors, and have contributed to several Certification Board meetings and initiatives. I have developed and delivered several presentations at the ISMPP™ annual meetings, an ISMPP™-U, and conducted training at Caudex. I am known by my colleagues, clients, and the broader ISMPP™ community as an expert on all things CMPP™. These qualifications and my dedication and commitment to the ethical and effective publication of medical and scientific research with the highest standards will make me a valuable asset to the Certification Board and Program.



**Kristen Gerhardt**  
**PRECISIONscientia**

### **Brief Bio**

Kristen Gerhardt's current role is Director, Program Management at PRECISIONscientia (formerly ETHOS Health Communications). In this role, Kristen leads the department overseeing 45 staff responsible for the successful execution of a wide variety of medical communication projects, including publications. Over the last 15 years, Kristen has worked in various client service roles partnering with small and large pharmaceutical clients. Her work covers multiple therapeutic areas such as oncology, diabetes, men's health, rare diseases, and more. Partnering with her colleagues and clients, Kristen has driven both strategic tactics such as gap analyses, scientific platforms, and publication plans, as well as numerous publications. Kristen earned her CMPP in 2009 and holds BS and MA degrees in professional communications.

### **Qualification Statement**

I earned my CMPP in 2009, the first year the certification was offered. Since then, I have maintained my certification and have attended multiple ISMPP meetings to stay apprised of current advances in good publication practice. My entire professional career, which started 15 years ago, has been dedicated to the ethical development of medical publications. I have been fortunate enough to be able to marry my passion for mentoring, with my knowledge of good publication practice, to train my colleagues and advise our pharmaceutical clients. My work in publications spans multiple therapy areas for both large and small pharmaceutical companies. I hope to bring my extensive background in publications, my leadership skills, and my passion for training, to the ISMPP Certification Board to serve the organization which I am proud to have been involved with since 2009.



**Sam Mathew**  
**Glaxo SmithKline**

### **Brief Bio**

I am an experienced and certified scientific communications specialist with people, project, operations, client and business management expertise. Over the last 18 years (academic as well as commercial research), I gained hands-on experience in broad spectrum of medical writing deliverables, especially in scholarly publications (policy documents, scholarly publications, medicomarketing, HEOR and competitive intelligence documents). I currently head the global team of Clinical ePublishing and Technical Compliance Delivery team of Glaxo SmithKline (GSK) Vaccines based in the Europe and India. My work experience spans across pharmaceutical companies (Novartis, Biocon, GSK), contract research organizations (Viziphar Biosciences), business process outsourcing (Accenture Services), freelance settings (Elsevier Journals, Marcel Dekker Publishers, Sage Publications, Wiley's Publishers, Bentham Science Publishers etc), medical journals and academic institutions (Indian Council for Medical Research, New Delhi, India; Rajiv Gandhi University of Health Sciences, Bangalore, India). As a service provider or as a partner, I worked with Bristol-Myers Squibb (BMS), Johnson & Johnson, Mylan, Pfizer, and UCB. I also hold responsible honorary editorial positions in reputed medical/pharmaceutical journals (Associate editor, Current drug delivery; Editor, Science editing; Editor-in-chief, Indian journal of novel drug delivery systems; Managing editor, SciWrite Global).

### **Qualification Statement**

My objective is to support efficient dissemination of scientific information and expertise across the globe to protect the mankind, and help patients live life better. To achieve this, I get involved in all facets of scholarly publications including researching, writing, editing, reviewing, publishing and training. Being a member of ISMPP for 5 years, I realized the potential of ISMPP and understood that my aspirations are also in line with the organization's. Being an international organization with memberships spread across the globe, focusing special needs of specific geographical regions may require working expertise in such geographical regions. During my 18 years of experience in working with medical writers, scholars and journal editors from APAC and Middle East regions, I understood that they lack the awareness of quality scholarly publishing. This is obvious from the relevant ethical concerns that are being raised from these regions. I strongly feel that it is ISMPP's responsibility to effectively intervene and raise the bar to prevent further adulteration of the scholarly content and publishing activities. If I get an opportunity to use the ISMPP Certification Board platform as one of the directors, I should be able to address this issue effectively along with other responsibilities.



**Daniel McGowan**  
**Edanz Group Japan Inc**

### **Brief Bio**

As a biochemist and molecular biologist by training, I applied these tools to neuroscience questions in my PhD research (Auckland, NZ) and post-docs (Cambridge, UK). Midway through my second post-doc I accepted a position as an Associate Editor on the journal Nature Reviews Neuroscience to better pursue my passion for reading and writing about science. In 12 years as Science Director at Edanz, which until 2008 was solely a language editing company, I have: launched and grown a successful med comms division with global reach; conducted author and editor training workshops all over the world (primarily as a partner to Springer and BMC); added a variety of author services, educational content and tools to Edanz's suite of offerings; and been part of an M&A process that led to us becoming part of the M3 group, with a focus on improving evidence-based healthcare. We work with pharma, biotechs and consumer product (FMCG) companies to identify knowledge gaps, recommend evidence-building activities to fill these, develop publication plans, conduct research, and disseminate findings, all within GPP and other relevant guidelines. I have sat the CMPP exam twice (and have trained and put five of my staff through it).

### **Qualification Statement**

I think ISMPP is doing an excellent job of setting standards for our industry and, simply put, I want to be a part of it. Medical writing was very much a grey area when I started in this industry, and we (as an industry) have made massive strides toward open and transparent communication of science. Most of our clients have taken steps in the right direction also (e.g., through the development and expansion of Medical Affairs departments). I have taught our staff, clients, writers, and many researchers/authors about best practice, and am constantly adding to my knowledge through reading and discussion with colleagues at COPE, or within ISMPP and AMWA (Australasian). It was an honour to mediate a table discussion at the ISMPP APAC meeting last year. I think my many years of experience in the industry, working with a variety of client types, on a variety of content types, means that I could offer some valuable insights and suggestions on the CMPP Certification Board if elected.





**Joseph Naggar**  
**Merck and Co.**

**Brief Bio**

Joe is currently an Associate Director of Publication Management at Merck and has been leading the Women's Cancers indications within the oncology franchise for the past 2 years. Joe is a trained and licensed pharmacist and prior to arriving at Merck, Joe spent time at Biogen working on publications and medical communications within the Multiple Sclerosis therapeutic area. Joe's innovative and collaborative nature will provide him the necessary skills to provide value in continuing to further grow the CMPP exam.

**Qualification Statement**

Learning the successes and shortcomings of the CMPP exam has been a major focus of mine over the past year while contributing to the credentialing committee. I have worked on various initiatives in identifying and improving aspects of the exam as well as improving the recertification process. While working on the committee, I authored an article outlining ISMPP member concerns regarding the CMPP exam while addressing other inaccuracies that members unfortunately believe. Additionally, I am co-leading the CMPP social media initiative with the goal of increasing awareness of the CMPP exam, continuing education activities and recertification. I believe my understanding of the current CMPP exam's strengths and limitations will compliment other board members and enable us to continuously improve the exam while expanding the number of certified medical publication professionals world-wide.



**Stephen Towers**  
**Chameleon Communications**

**Brief Bio**

I am a medical publications professional with over a decade of experience in publication planning. After receiving my PhD in neuroscience in the UK, I completed a 5-year long postdoctoral research fellowship at Stanford University School of Medicine in Palo Alto, California. For the past 10 years, I have worked almost exclusively in strategic publication planning for several New York City based medical communications agencies on behalf of diverse authors and clients in the pharmaceutical and biotechnology industries. I currently lead a large team of medical writers and editors who are dedicated to the development of high-quality, timely, and compliant publications.

**Qualification Statement**

The CMPP program is truly the jewel of ISMPP, and its ongoing success is integral to our mission to advance the medical publication and communication professions globally. I would be honored and humbled to sit on the Certification Board, and I believe the following experience equips me to serve:

- >20 years' experience authoring or providing publication support across diverse settings (academia, freelancer, agency)
- >10 years' experience in strategic publication planning and development
- Expertise in developing training initiatives obtained from leading many company-wide learning and development programs, including "lunch & learns" and training workshops
- Considerable experience in finance and business development as VP at a leading medical communications agency
- I have the time, the energy, and the passion to dedicate to this position. I will throw my full self into it!