Ripple Effect Communications

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AWIS at the American Medical Women’s Association Networking Alliance Event

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AWIS at the American Medical Women’s Association Networking Alliance Event

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AWIS attended the American Medical Women’s Association (AMWA) 101st Annual Meeting held mid-March in Miami, FL, and was represented onstage along with other notable organizations on the opening day of the event. The AMWA Networking Alliance is a consortium of female leaders from diverse medical associations and healthcare organizations across the nation, such as the U.S. Navy and Army medical divisions, University of Miami Miller School of Medicine, Global Initiative Against HPV & Cervical Cancer, and Eli Lilly & Company. The purpose of the AMWA Networking Alliance is to facilitate collaboration on issues of mutual interest among women in medicine and healthcare which includes, but are not limited to:

- Lack of time/work-life satisfaction
- Lack proper mentorship
- Struggles against implicit bias in academia and the workplace
- Advancement into key leadership positions in medicine

Mutual Support
AMWA serves to promote facilitated discussions on the issues presented above that are faced not only by women in medicine, but also by women in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) across all career stages. Studies show that women and minorities in medicine, like women and minorities in STEM, experience barriers that could discourage them at multiple stages along their entire career continuums, and these hardships often manifest in the form of graduate school and/or workplace attrition (Adamo, 2013; Peter et al., 2013; Cochran et al., 2013). Cynthia L. Simpson, M.Ed., CGMP, CAE, chief business development officer of AWIS, states “We’ve noticed an increase in membership from women in medicine and/or those who are attending medical colleges as they are looking for resources that can help them in their career.” In response to this increase in medical student membership, a major question arises: How can AWIS work in concert with AMWA to support women in medicine seeking to obtain resources that will allow them to pursue and achieve successful careers?

The 2015-2018 AWIS strategic goals include increasing the percentage and visibility of women in STEM leadership roles across systems, and building strong relationships with corporate and institutional partners. Thus, in response to the increase in medical student membership, AWIS will engage in a concerted effort with AMWA and the Association of American Medical Colleges’ Group on Women in Medicine and Science (AAMC/GWIMS) to determine how the three organizations can work together to improve the recruitment and retention rate for women in medicine. Since many medical programs also serve the STEM community, such as MD/PhD programs that focus on improving human health through scientific inquiry, this concerted effort between AWIS, AMWA and AAMC/GWIMS serves as a stark acknowledgment of the undeniable linkage between STEM and medicine, and also exemplifies how organizations can work together to achieve gender equity across interdisciplinary fields.

Rachele Hendricks-Sturrup holds a BS in biology from Chicago State University, an MS in pharmacology and toxicology from Michigan State University and an MA in legal studies from the University of Illinois-Springfield. She is currently pursuing a DHS at Nova Southeastern University. Rachele’s work experience involves many years as a biomedical scientist, research administrator and legal/compliance/policy analyst. Her scientific areas of interest include neuro-degeneration, inflammation/oxidative stress and gynecological cancers in women.