

MSL Certification

► *Christine Megalla, Pharm.D., Associate Director of Educational Programs at the Accreditation Council for Medical Affairs, talks about the organization's certification process.*

PV: What is the ACMA doing to ensure standards around the role of medical affairs, and why is this important?

MEGALLA: The Accreditation Council for Medical Affairs (ACMA) is meeting the daily challenge of expanding and level-setting the knowledge base of medical affairs professionals throughout the industry. The Board Certified Medical Affairs Specialist is quickly becoming the industry standard for medical affairs professionals to attain.

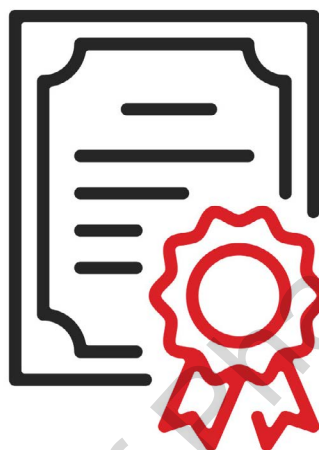
In its nearly four years, the ACMA has laid many in-roads into the industry and continues to do so. But the trend has unmistakably been a steady increase in moving the Board Certified Medical Affairs Specialist (BCMAS) toward the industry standard. With increased scrutiny on pharmaceutical industry practices, ensuring that pharmaceutical companies are validating the knowledge of their field teams in medical affairs and sales is imperative.

More and more medical affairs professionals sign up to undergo the certification process each month. And as that trend continues, medical affairs professionals throughout the life-sciences industry will no doubt be better prepared, more confident and, most importantly, more knowledgeable as they approach their roles.

PV: What advantage does having certification give to medical affairs professionals?

MEGALLA: As medical affairs' strategic value continues to increase, executives need to be conversant about other vital aspects of the life-sciences industry, such as pharmacovigilance, digital technology, or compliance and regulatory implications.

Beyond internal training within their companies, medical affairs executives simply don't have structured options for learning how the different functions within the life-sciences industry interact with each other. This is becoming more difficult to do as medical affairs becomes increasingly strategic, increasingly larger as a function within the industry, and increasingly more competitive. A survey of more than 1,000 key opinion leaders (KOLs) found that more than 90% preferred medical affairs professionals had a BCMAS designation.



Dr. Christine Megalla

Some who have received certification are looking to add to their personal understanding of the medical affairs role in the life-sciences industry. Others seek to differentiate themselves from their peers. Still others are looking for a challenge to learn what they don't know.

The BCMAS program appeals to younger professionals for very concrete reasons. They feel that having the board certification attached to their names gives them a leg up in both hiring and career development. Studies have shown that individuals who are certified in their field have higher salaries and better promotion opportunities.

Additionally, several pharmaceutical companies also look at certification as a way to assess whether an individual possesses the skills and knowledge required for successful performance in a medical affairs role.

PV: What is involved in certification?

MEGALLA: The BCMAS Program is a self-paced, online program for medical affairs professionals, including medical science liaisons (MSLs).

The BCMAS curriculum is comprehensive, spanning 20 modules covering all areas of medical affairs. The BCMAS program is the most comprehensive educational program for medical affairs professionals and unlike other training programs that may be available, it is the only one that is accredited.

With a curriculum that includes best prac-

About the ACMA

The Accreditation Council for Medical Affairs (ACMA) is a global organization of medical affairs/medical science liaison professionals across several functions such as medical communications, medical information, medical affairs strategy, HEOR, publications, pharmacovigilance and more. ACMA reinvests back into the community, which ensures its ability to create valuable educational programs, resources, and events that support the medical affairs community.

tics across the organization, the ACMA's aim is to reinforce an integrated approach to medical affairs that leads medical affairs to be viewed as a true partner by other departments. The program aims to provide a better understanding of the cross-functional areas that relate to medical affairs, such as regulatory affairs, clinical development, marketing, compliance, and drug development.

In addition, the program helps those who participate understand health economics outcomes research as it relates to medical affairs; learn about clinical trial design, evidence-based medicine, and become an expert at interpreting medical literature; and broaden their knowledge in diagnostics and medical devices, as well as a better understanding of publication planning and regulations. **PV**



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EVENT HIGHLIGHTS



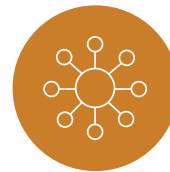
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