



A program of the Center for Health Humanities and Ethics
University of Virginia School of Medicine

Provided by the University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing

Wednesday, April 24, 2024

12:00-1:00 p.m. (EST)

In Person at Leonard Sandridge Auditorium (McKim Hall)

Zoom Webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/85229005887>

UVA Alpha Omega Alpha (AOA) Honor Medical Society

Saying What We Mean: How Medical Language Reveals and Conceals



Anna DeForest, MD, MFA

Neurologist & Supportive Care Physician, Memorial Sloan Kettering
Cancer Center, New York City

Benjamin J Martin, MD, Moderator

Assistant Director, Programs in Health Humanities

Assistant Professor, Internal Medicine Section Hospital Medicine, UVA

Problems in language create a gulf between medical providers and patients, affecting relationship-building, medical understanding, therapeutic adherence and health outcomes. Physicians pride themselves on scientific rigor, but tend to overlook the complex subjectivities that impact patient wellbeing as much as, or more so than, cell biology, biochemistry or pharmacology. By examining the relationship between language and other cognitive processes, we build a deeper respect for the impact of the words we use, not just when we are speaking to patients, but in our discourse with each other, and even in the reasoning we perform alone in our heads.

An examination of medical language including consideration of syntax, etymology and rhetorical forms provides a useful taxonomy for the strangeness of medical speech: from jargon to euphemism, passive voice to circumlocution, the commonalities of medical phrasing can reveal to us our weaknesses, biases and unmet needs. This will be an interactive session on the uses and harms of habitual medical language, and an invitation to self-examination through the lens of the words we use in practice every day.

Lunch will be provided for the first 40 in-person attendees

Resources:

1. DeForest, Anna. "Better Words for Better Deaths." *N Engl J Med* 2019;380:211-213.
2. DeForest, Anna. *A History of Present Illness*. Little, Brown. 2022.
3. DeForest, Anna. *Our Long Marvelous Dying*. Little, Brown. 2024. (forthcoming)

Accreditation & Designation Statements



In support of improving patient care, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing is jointly accredited by the Accreditation Council for Continuing Medical Education (ACCME), the Accreditation Council for Pharmacy Education (ACPE), and the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), to provide continuing education for the healthcare team.

The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing designates this live activity for a maximum of **1 AMA PRA Category 1 Credit™**. Physicians should claim only the credit commensurate with the extent of their participation in the activity. The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing awards **1 contact hour** for nurses who participate in this educational activity and complete the post activity evaluation.

The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing awards **1 hour of participation** (consistent with the designated number of *AMA PRA Category 1 Credit(s)™* or ANCC contact hours) to a participant who successfully completes this educational activity. The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing maintains a record of participation for six (6) years.

Disclosure(s):

The following speakers and planning committee have no personal or professional financial relationships with a commercial entity producing healthcare goods and/or services. Speakers Anna DeForest, MD, MFA, Benjamin J Martin, MD; Planning Committee: Jim Childress, PhD; Marcia Childress, PhD; R.J. Bonnie, LLB; R. Carpenter, DNP; Mary Faith Marshall, PhD; Justin Mutter, MD, MA; Kathryn Reid, PhD, APRN, FNP-BC, CNL; Lois Shepherd, JD.

Disclosure of faculty financial affiliations

The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing as a Joint Accreditation Provider adhere to the ACCME Standards for Integrity and Independence in Accredited Continuing Education, released in December 2020, as well as Commonwealth of Virginia statutes, University of Virginia policies and procedures, and associated federal and private regulations and guidelines. As the accredited provider for this CE/IPCE activity, we are responsible for ensuring that healthcare professionals have access to professional development activities that are based on best practices and scientific integrity that ultimately supports the care of patients and the public.

All individuals involved in the development and delivery of content for an accredited CE/IPCE activity are expected to disclose relevant financial relationships with ineligible companies occurring within the past 24 months (such as grants or research support, employee, consultant, stock holder, member of speakers bureau, etc.). The University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing employ appropriate mechanisms to resolve potential conflicts of interest and ensure the educational design reflects content validity, scientific rigor and balance for participants. Questions about specific strategies can be directed to the University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing of the University of Virginia, Charlottesville, Virginia.

The faculty, staff, CE Advisory Committee and planning committee engaged in the development and/or peer review of this CE/IPCE activity in the Joint Accreditation CE Office of the School of Medicine and School of Nursing have no financial affiliations to disclose.

Disclosure of discussion of non-FDA approved uses for pharmaceutical products and/or medical devices

As a Joint Accreditation provider, the University of Virginia School of Medicine and School of Nursing, requires that all faculty presenters identify and disclose any off-label or experimental uses for pharmaceutical and medical device products. It is recommended that each clinician fully review all the available data on new products or procedures prior to clinical use.

Anna DeForest is an assistant attending physician in the Supportive Care Service at Memorial Sloan Kettering Cancer Center in New York City. Dr. DeForest has an MD from Columbia University, completed residency training in neurology at Yale-New Haven Hospital, fellowship in palliative care at Mount Sinai, and has an MFA in Fiction Writing from Brooklyn College. Their first novel, *A History of Present Illness*, was a New York Times Editors' Choice and winner of the Rosenthal Family Foundation Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. Their second novel, *Our Long Marvelous Dying* is forthcoming from Little, Brown in July 2024.

Ben Martin is a hospitalist and core faculty at UVA's Center for Health Humanities and Ethics. He studied creative writing at Middlebury College and attended Tufts University School of Medicine. His writing has most recently been published on Literary Hub.



How to claim Continuing Education (CE) credit:

**At the end of the
conference!**

**Thank you for attending the
Medical Center Hour on April 24, 2024**

1. Go to www.cmevillage.com.
2. Click on the "Learning Portal" button and select "CE Certificate".
3. Sign in with your email and password or create an account if you are a new user.
4. Enter CE Activity Code **149774** and click "Submit" and "Continue".
5. Complete the evaluation and click "Done".
6. Certificate Preparation; indicate the number of credits you wish to claim for attending this activity. Click "Submit"
7. Click "Print Certificate" or you can access later by visiting our website, Click "Learning Portal", Sign in at the top of the page and click "Credit History & Past Certificate".
8. For problems, contact the CME office at uvacme@virginia.edu

PLEASE NOTE: The post activity evaluation will only be available for a 30 day period. Credit will not be issued after the evaluation period has closed.

Medical Center Hour is free of charge and open to the public. For more information, see Center for Health Humanities and Ethics: <https://med.virginia.edu/biomedical-ethics/medical-center-hour/>

Watch Medical Center Hour recordings at <https://www.youtube.com/user/UVAMCH>