



**Department of Health and Human Services
2019 Plain Writing Act Compliance Report
[Request for Information](#)**

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Background

On October 13, 2010, the Plain Writing Act (Act) was signed into law. The Act requires federal agencies to use “clear Government communication that the public can understand and use.” Communications in plain language are especially important in the context of healthcare and human services. The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) recognizes that using plain language can help address the needs of those with limited literacy skills, as well as those with limited health literacy skills. Plain language helps people understand health information because the writing style is clear, concise, organized, and jargon-free. Documents written in plain language are less complex and therefore easier for everyone to understand, including people who have limited literacy skills, limited health literacy skills, or both.

In ongoing application and implementation, the Act requires agencies to “[w]rite annual compliance reports and post these reports on its plain language web page.” You can find links to HHS’s previous seven compliance reports here: <http://www.hhs.gov/open/plain-writing/>

The Department is developing our 2019 compliance report to demonstrate our continued compliance with the requirements of the Act. The report includes sections on accomplishments, best practices, innovations, continuous improvements, and HHS contacts overseeing implementation of plain writing requirements. Please provide information from your division by responding to the questions under section on pages 2-4, and return the completed document through SPS by 5PM Friday, March 22, 2019. If you have any questions, please contact Dr. Ekaterini (Kat) Malliou at Ekaterini.Malliou@hhs.gov.

[FDA]

Accomplishments

HHS seeks to reach all Americans with useful health information they can easily understand. To accomplish this goal, HHS regularly reviews new and existing reports, documents, and web content for plain writing to ensure the largest impact on the public.

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

- a. The top three plain writing documents your agency published that had the largest impact on the public.*
- b. The types of documents, and how many of each (estimate is acceptable, please specify,) that your agency wrote in plain writing. Please also specify how many of each were new and how many were substantially revised.*
- c. Examples of documents your agency improved through plain writing.*
- d. How your agency updated its website devoted to plain writing, if applicable.*
- e. Other relevant accomplishments.*

*From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:
The top three plain writing documents your agency published that had the largest impact on the public.*

1. The Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER)
Vaccines for Children - A Guide for Parents and Caregivers:
<https://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/ResourcesforYou/Consumers/ucm345587.htm>
2. The FDA Office of Women's Health (OWH)
Caring for Others: Resources to Help You Fact Sheet (Available in English and Spanish)
3. The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM)
[The Opioid Epidemic: What Veterinarians Need to Know](#)
4. *MedWatch Voluntary Reporting Form:*
<https://www.accessdata.fda.gov/scripts/medwatch/index.cfm?action=reporting.home>

The types of documents, and how many of each (estimate is acceptable, please specify,) that your agency wrote in plain writing. Please also specify how many of each were new and how many were substantially revised.

FDA employees across nine centers and offices write a range of documents, letters, and web and social media content for diverse audiences, including consumers, patients, health professionals, industry, and scientists and researchers. Examples include, but are not limited to, guidance documents, regulations, consumer safety alerts and updates, recall notices, warning letters, press releases, fact sheets, articles, and policies and procedures. Due to the high volume and wide range of documents FDA employees write, it's difficult to quantify and determine overall figures for the whole agency.

Some specific data from centers and offices this period includes:

The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) writes a range of documents, including "Dear Veterinary Professional" letters, and animal health literacy articles. CVM posted nine new articles on the web written in plain language:

- [Galliprant—A Nonsteroidal Anti-Inflammatory Drug \(NSAID\) for Dogs with Osteoarthritis](#)
- [Helping Our Cats Live Healthier Lives—FDA Approves Two New Drugs for Cats](#)
- [Hyperthyroidism in Cats—There's an FDA-Approved Drug to Treat It](#)
- [Is Your Dog Afraid of Things that Go BOOM! in the Night? Two Animal Drugs are FDA-Approved to Help](#)
- [Vitamin D Toxicity in Dogs](#)
- [The Opioid Epidemic: What Veterinarians Need to Know](#)
- [Questions & Answers: Contaminants in Pet Food](#)
- [Fact Sheet for Pet Owners and Veterinarians about Potential Adverse Events Associated with Isoxazoline Flea and Tick Products](#)

- [Questions & Answers: FDA Center for Veterinary Medicine’s Investigation into a Possible Connection Between Diet and Canine Heart Disease](#)

CVM also posted a new video on YouTube about parasite management using refugia in cattle, sheep, goats, and horses: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yRK1qLzXm2s&feature=youtu.be>

The Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) follows plain language principles with all communication. Guidance documents are written to reflect the needs of the intended audience. Press releases, web content, and all consumer information is written in lay language to capture the widest audience possible, as are all its consumer direct replies.

Here are three examples of new CBER documents:

- *Impact of Severe Weather Conditions on Biological Products:*
<https://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/SafetyAvailability/ProductSecurity/ucm147243.htm>
- *Potential Risk of Variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease (vCJD) From Plasma-Derived Products:*
<https://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/SafetyAvailability/BloodSafety/ucm095062.htm>
- *Innovation and Regulatory Science:*
<https://www.fda.gov/BiologicsBloodVaccines/ScienceResearch/ucm234680.htm>

Since March 2018, the Office of Women’s Health (OWH) has made a concerted effort to ensure that all print and electronic communications comply with the *Plain Writing Act*. For example, OWH developed the following fact sheets and social media toolkit on various health topics for women:

- *Caring for Others: Resources to Help You Fact Sheet (Available in English and Spanish)*
- *Caring for Others: Resources to Help You – Social Media Toolkit*
- *Women and Pain Medicines Fact Sheet (Available in English and Spanish)*

OWH received an Office of the Commissioner (OC) Honor Award in Group Recognition for the Caregiving Initiative. This initiative includes two recent plain language documents: *Caring for Others: Resources to Help You* fact sheet and the *Caring for Others: Resources to Help You – Social Media Toolkit*.

As a world-renowned research institution, the National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR’s) primary audience is the scientific community, therefore, its top accomplishments are its research publications. For their non-scientific audience, the most impactful and significant plain language documents include:

1. NCTR Science Insights Newsletter, with approximately 42,500 subscribers (below);



FDANCTR Newslet
Science Insights m

2. NCTR division one-pagers that describe the research and accomplishments for seven research divisions/office that follow plain language guidelines;

3. annual budget narratives; and
4. congressional documents, such as issue papers, responses to various data calls, Senate and House report language, hearing prep write-ups, and initiative write-ups.

The Office of Information Management and Technology (OIMT) Privacy Office provides guidelines requesting authors to submit Privacy Impact Assessments to the Office for review/approval in plain language avoiding jargon, and clearly defining technical terms and references.

The Center for Tobacco Products (CTP) public education campaigns aim to help educate youth and young adults about the dangers of tobacco use and to encourage addicted adult smokers to quit. These campaigns do so by using tobacco-related facts translated into plain writing for lay audiences and vetted by CTP's Office of Science to ensure that they are scientifically accurate. An evaluation of *The Real Cost* Smoking Prevention Campaign found that exposure to *The Real Cost* campaign was associated with preventing an estimated 348,398 U.S. youths aged 11–18 years from initiating smoking during 2014–2016, showing that youth not only understood the campaign's message, but it also resonated with them. A cost-effectiveness study determined that the plain writing campaign resulted in over \$31 billion in cost-savings by reducing smoking-related costs like early loss of life, costly medical care, lost wages, lower productivity, and increased disability.

Examples of documents your agency improved through plain writing.

Here are some examples of documents FDA centers and offices improved through plain writing from March 2018 to March 2019:

The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) continually updates various web pages (i.e. warning letters, recalls and alerts, etc.):

- *Recalls & Alerts:*
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ComplianceEnforcement/RecallsAlerts/ucm2005156.htm>
- *What's New in Cosmetics:*
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/NewsEvents/ucm203298.htm>
- *Voluntary Cosmetic Registration Program (VCRP):*
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/RegistrationProgram/default.htm>
- *Lead in Cosmetics:*
 - <https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/PotentialContaminants/ucm388820.htm>
 - <https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/Products/ucm143075.htm>
 - <https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/PotentialContaminants/ucm452836.htm>
- *1,4-Dioxane in Cosmetics: A Manufacturing Byproduct:*
<https://www.fda.gov/Cosmetics/ProductsIngredients/PotentialContaminants/ucm101566.htm>

This past year, CVM specifically revised the format of its safety alerts to improve consumer understanding of problems described and steps to take to solve them.

How your agency updated its website devoted to plain writing, if applicable.

FDA.gov:

- Plain Writing: It's the Law!
 - Added *2018 Annual Plain Writing Act Compliance Report*
 - Added 2018 Plain Language Award Recipients
 - Updated examples in *Plain Writing at Work* section
- CVM posted an article on *FDA.gov* on plain writing: [In Plain English, Please](#)

FDA intranet:

- *Plain Language Resource Center:* Added *Plain Language Summit 2018* and *DigitalGov* webinars, *Infographics: Plain Language Considerations* and *Plainspoken Science*
- *NCTR Plain Language Tips* web page at (<http://inside.fda.gov:9003/NCTR/ucm525124.htm>) was enhanced on NCTR's intranet section and includes a link to *FDA's Plain Language Resource Center*

Other relevant accomplishments.

Best Practices

HHS reinforces the plain writing requirements through best practices, such as senior officials promoting plain writing and programs for tracking and measuring plain writing effectiveness.

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

- a. How senior officials in your agency reinforced the plain writing requirements through Plain Writing Act-related directives.*
- b. How you tracked the conversion of existing documents into plain writing.*
- c. How you measured whether covered documents used plain writing.*
- d. How you measured (i) the effectiveness of the plain writing program for your office; and (ii) the effectiveness of your plain writing documents (i.e., whether the public can easily understand and use them.)*
- e. The obstacles to measuring these aspects of your plain writing program.*
- f. Other relevant best practices.*

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

How senior officials in your agency reinforced the plain writing requirements through Plain Writing Act-related directives.

Senior officials reinforced the plain writing requirements through the [Strategic Plan for Risk Communication and Health Literacy](#) (SPRCHL) posted on *FDA.gov* emphasizing the importance of clear communications best practices, including plain writing, use of helpful tools such as the CDC Clear Communication Index (CCI), and constructing communications for the needs of the target audience. Expected outcomes include increased use of plain language and documents written so that they are understood by audiences with limited proficiency in English

or limited health literacy.

The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) senior officials support and reinforce plain writing through center employee representation on two plain language groups:

- The government-wide *Plain Language Action and Information Network (PLAIN)* – Attends monthly meetings, participates in other *PLAIN* activities, and is a member of the group’s listserv.
- The agency-wide *Risk Communication and Health Literacy Work Group* that is focused on communicating important risk and health information to consumers concisely.

CVM has also increased its communications staff size and holds frequent discussions at center executive board meetings on how to best communicate their work so that all their divergent audiences can understand their information and use it to meet their individual needs.

How you tracked the conversion of existing documents into plain writing.

Though a global measurement was not in place during this period, we are planning to develop metrics for tracking conversion of our numerous existing documents into plain writing through the *Risk Communication Staff and Risk Communication and Health Literacy Workgroup* in 2019. Many centers and offices across FDA use the CDC Clear Communications Index (CCI) when reviewing existing documents as part of their conversion process into plain writing.

The National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) management encourages its researchers to have their PowerPoint presentations reviewed and edited by members of its Communications Branch before presenting. Additionally, the NCTR Communications Branch has made a concerted effort to make edits and improvements to all written communications they are aware of and have access to.

Though all centers may not actively track conversion of documents to plain language, many, such as CBER, incorporate plain writing principles in reviews or re-writes due to new information.

How you measured whether covered documents used plain writing.

FDA centers and offices currently test communications for inclusion of plain writing principles through various methods such as:

1. CDC Clear Communications Index (CCI)

FDA’s [Strategic Plan for Risk Communication and Health Literacy](#) (SPRCHL) recommends using the CCI for communications development. The CCI is widely recognized across HHS as a validated instrument to develop and score communications. The 20 items in the Index build on and expand plain language techniques described in the [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#). The tool is posted on FDA’s intranet *Plain Language Resource Center* for FDA-wide use. We plan to conduct an audit of covered documents across the centers in the next year using the

CCI to determine the extent that our covered documents use plain writing.

The Center for Food Safety and Applied Nutrition (CFSAN) Office of Analytics and Outreach uses the CCI when developing all their external communications. Their *FDA CFSAN Clear Information Tool* is adapted from the CCI Score Sheet.

The Office of Regulatory Affairs (ORA) style guide promotes using plain language and contains the *Clear Communication Tool*, a modified CCI, specific to ORA requirements. ORA is training senior leaders, communication staff, and regular staff on clear communication and good writing based on the style guide.

The Office of Women's Health (OWH) uses the CCI research-based tool to develop and assess whether covered documents use plain writing.

2. FDA's Internal and External Message Testing Network

Since 2010, the Network, led by the Risk Communication Staff, has enabled FDA communicators to test their content and documents for clear communication with FDA employees who have characteristics in common with target audiences, as well as with external public audiences.

OWH has worked with the FDA Risk Communication Rapid Message Testing with Consumer Panels for select consumer communications. During this specific timeframe, OWH used the FDA Risk Communications Rapid Message Testing with Consumer Panels to test its *OWH Caring for Others: Resources to Help You* fact sheet messages and content with external consumer focus group panels.

3. *DigitalGov* Usability and Message Testing

4. Editing software tools such as *StyleWriter* that check plain writing principles

CVM's Office of Research purchased over 40 copies of *StyleWriter* to help their Principal Investigators improve their writing, including their use of plain language.

How you measured (i) the effectiveness of the plain writing program for your office; and

We regularly survey *FDAU Plain Language* class attendees to obtain feedback on class content, the instructor's delivery and teaching methods, and the instructional exercises.

Comments from 2018 evaluations include:

This course will definitely help me conveying a precise message to my audience; exercises are very helpful; very comprehensive with useful resonant examples; good communication, of the "so what"; very informative and practical in the allotted time frame; engaging; the handout on common grammatical/language mistakes was helpful; perfect length and great content; very useful for day-to-day writing; clear and concise; [exercises are] great way to keep training interactive and thought-provoking; very informative and relevant.

Suggestions for improvement include:

Additional time for questions; provide slide summaries for future reference; moved too fast; going over options in exercises would have been helpful for complete understanding; longer length-full day; add section on “proofing” e-mails; longer training to incorporate additional exercises; handouts on key topics; and more FDA-specific examples/real FDA content (before and after).

Center-specific feedback:

As a high-performing organization, CVM evaluates its courses to ensure that it offers high-quality training to all its staff. The *Technical Writing, Practical Grammar* and *Plain Language* courses received very strong positive feedback from CVM staff. Respondents indicated favorability with the content, and overall organization of the courses. The top driver of attendance was a belief that this training would help participants become more effective in their jobs. Participants also indicated that the communication courses meet their needs.

(ii) the effectiveness of your plain writing documents (i.e., whether the public can easily understand and use them.)

We request feedback about FDA letters, reports, and information on the *FDA.gov* Plain Language web page through a feedback form or e-mail to FDAUniversity@fda.hhs.gov asking:

1. *Could you understand what you read?*
2. *Could you quickly find what you needed within the information you read?*
3. *Did you know what action to take or how to use the information after reading it?*

Some centers, such as, CVM, typically use Web metrics (such as the number of page visits, and average time on page), to measure the effectiveness of documents.

The obstacles to measuring these aspects of your plain writing program.

- The size of the agency; the distribution of employees throughout the United States in field offices and laboratories, and in other countries;
- The volume and variety of content written by FDA employees;
- Lack of a budget allocated to plain language and health literacy;
- Lack of staff assigned to implement plain language, plain writing, and health literacy;
- The need for HHS-level support on issues such as compliance related to position descriptions, performance evaluations, and budget allocation; and
- Message testing is not always feasible, especially with emerging public health threat situations, where rapid communication is key.

Other relevant best practices.

- Develop a *Plain Writing Act* implementation plan;
- Build awareness by posting plain language events in employee-wide e-mails, web banner features, and digital displays;

- Develop a plain language/health literacy workgroup including members from across the agency;
- Develop an e-mail inbox for plain language feedback;
- Include plain language tips in internal center/office newsletters, employee announcements, etc.;
- Use the [Federal Plain Language Guidelines](#) as a resource for best practices related to plain writing;
- Establish agency-wide representatives to attend the monthly meetings of the [Plain Language Action and Information Network \(PLAIN\)](#), participate in other *PLAIN* activities, and become members of the group's listserv;
- Use the *Clear Communication Index* tool to rate communications and provide advice on improvement;
- Maintain a list of plain writing training, resources, and examples on agency's intranet, shared network drives, SharePoint sites, etc.; and
- Develop a training program.

Innovations

In the past year, agencies across HHS implemented innovative strategies to promote plain writing, including web banners, webinars, external social media messages, awards, and plain writing skills in position descriptions.

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

- a. Any innovative activities you implemented to promote plain writing.*
- b. Incentives or rewards you provided to employees to encourage the use of plain writing.*
- c. Whether you included plain writing skills in relevant job descriptions (i.e., employees who draft, edit, or clear any document.) Please provide examples.*
- d. The documents your agency nominated for recognition as recipients of ClearMark Awards by the Center for Plain Language.*

FDA celebrated the *Plain Writing Act* anniversary annually in October with a communications campaign that included: FDA intranet homepage web banner promoting plain language and health literacy awareness and training resources; Office of Operations (OO) blog *10 Ways to Celebrate Plain Writing Act Anniversary in October*, digital posters, and daily *FDA Notice* announcements with plain language and health literacy tips and training resources.

We publicized plain writing events throughout the year on FDA's intranet and in *FDA Notices* to all employees, such as the government-wide *Plain Language Summit 2018* and *DigitalGov* webinars *Infographics: Plain Language Considerations* and *Plainspoken Science*.

The National Center for Toxicological Research (NCTR) posted Plain Language Tips on its local TV monitors and on the NCTR intranet homepage web banner.

The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) publishes monthly tips on Effective Communication internally in *CVM News*, a weekly newsletter sent out to all CVM employees.

Incentives or rewards you provided to employees to encourage the use of plain writing.

The Plain Language Award is presented at the Office of the Commissioner (OC) Honor Awards Ceremony to formally recognize FDA writers who succeed in making our documents easier to read, i.e. communicating clearly by using the tools and techniques of plain language.

2018 Plain Language Award Recipient: *Office of the Commissioner, Immediate Office, Rapid Message Testing and Public Panel Group, for outstanding effort in enabling Agency-wide rapid testing with a public panel.*

The Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) presents an annual Plain Language Award for significant contribution toward improving administrative, technical, or scientific communications. The award is based on the development of documents that provide complete and helpful information; and meet the needs of its reader in a user-friendly design and layout, including headings, readable type, and white space.

CVM also has a Plain Language Annual Award, though it did not receive any nominations for that category this past year.

Whether you included plain writing skills in relevant job descriptions (i.e., employees who draft, edit, or clear any document.) Please provide examples.

The language included in position descriptions for writing/written communication varies based on the position and duties to be performed. While the term *plain writing ability* may not be mentioned specifically, certain components of plain writing are included:

- *Skill developing or preparing a variety of documents [examples are typically given] in a clear, concise manner to [enter what the skill will be used to accomplish.]*

NCTR included plain writing and editing in the job descriptions of three Communication Branch employees and in the job announcements for two details in the Communications Branch. As part of the interview process for any positions in the Communications Branch or Budget Formulation (which requires extensive writing), the applicant is required to complete a writing assignment translating highly scientific content into plain language.

Many CBER employee PMAPs include plain writing skill requirements:

- *“....correspondence is logical, clear, follows plain language guidelines....”*
- *“Work products are written at the level of the intended audience (plain language, readability, education level).”*

The Office of Women’s Health (OWH) staff are requested to ensure that all correspondence developed is aligned with plain language guidelines and policies of DHHS and FDA. This standard language is included in the OWH website, social media outreach, as well as in communications staff PMAPs.

The documents your agency nominated for recognition as recipients of ClearMark Awards by the Center for Plain Language.

Since nominating documents for the *ClearMark Awards* also requires the nomination fee, we've submitted a budget request, so we may nominate one of FDA's Plain Language Award winners next year. We can also share the *Center for Plain Language's ClearMark Awards* call for nominations with FDA centers and offices through *FDA Notices* announcements, FDA's intranet *Plain Language Resource Center*, and the *Risk Communication and Health Literacy Working Group*, so centers and offices may self-nominate.

Continuous Improvement

HHS carries out a wide array of training activities to ensure that our employees fully understand the importance of plain writing and how to do it effectively. While agencies are given the necessary flexibility to tailor their particular training programs for their individual needs, HHS does offer a Department-wide training—the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training*—that agencies can use. This basic plain writing training is accessed on the HHS Learning Management System (LMS) learning portal and the HHS intranet.

Most HHS divisions require employees to complete the LMS online training, but many agencies supplement this training with agency specific trainings. In addition to online plain language trainings, some agencies offer a variety of in-person classes and training documents.

Many agencies encourage the use of plain language for both internal and external communication. Such agencies also developed trainings and materials to educate stakeholders and the general public on plain writing.

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

- a. The number of your employees completing plain writing training.*
- b. The feedback you received from those who already completed the training.*
- c. The plain writing training programs you used.*
- d. Examples of trainings and materials you developed to educate stakeholders and the general public on plain writing.*
- e. Ways in which you improved or focused your plain writing efforts.*

From March 2018 to March 2019, please describe:

The number of your employees completing plain writing training.

- *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training-18; 122 total since its release.*
- *FDAU Plain Language (in-person and webinars)-253*
FDA University (FDAU) has trained over 2,589 FDA employees (580 in 2013; 764 in 2014; 315 in 2015; 442 in 2016; 235 in 2017; and 253 in 2018) in plain language.
- *FDA Basic Plain Language Skills and Clear Communication Index Training-25*

- Center-specific plain writing training-total unknown

The feedback you received from those who already completed the training.

We have received feedback that the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training* is very helpful and useful information that provides a good foundation on plain language principles.

The plain writing training programs you used.

- *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training*
- *FDAU Plain Language* (in-person and webinars)
- *FDA Basic Plain Language Skills and Clear Communication Index Training*
- Other agency and private training listed on FDA's *Plain Language Resource Center*:
 - *NIH- Plain Language: Getting Started or Brushing Up*
 - *USDA Plain Language Training Course*
 - *FAA Plain Language Course: The Basics*
 - *DigitalGov Plain Language Video Playlist*
 - *Simon Fraser University Plain Language Certificate (Fee)*
- Center-specific training (see examples below)

Center-specific training:

The Center for Biologics Evaluation and Research (CBER) continues to have a robust writing program for its employees. Besides the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training*, CBER offered the following courses to its employees during this period:

- *How to Write Effective Comments to Sponsors*
- *Individual Writing Coaching*
- *Clear and Concise Email Writing*
- *Communicating with Clarity*
- *Practical Grammar and Proofreading Skills*
- *Technical Writing for Reviewers*
- *Introduction to Risk Communications for Biologics*
- *Dynamic Interactions* (for SES employees and equivalents)

The Center for Veterinary Medicine (CVM) added a Plain Language Writing training to its FY 2018 communications curriculum. A total of 99 staff from various offices across the center participated in the communication training provided at CVM in 2018. As part of this training participants review the *Plain Writing Act of 2010*. In these trainings, participants also discuss the reader-centered-question technique for writing under the FDA Language Guidelines of 2011. Participants also practice the reader-centered-question technique in sample documents. CVM also offers several related trainings such as *Technical Writing* and *Practical Grammar*.

To promote clear communication, NCTR reserved an auditorium for any NCTR staff to attend the *FDAU Plain Language* virtual sessions. These virtual sessions were well advertised across the center through a center-wide e-mail, postings on TV monitors, featured slides on their intranet web banner, and were included on the NCTR Training and Events.

NCTR also awarded a contract to provide two Technical Writing training sessions to its researchers. Dr. Karen Kuralt, Associate Professor and Graduate Coordinator for the Dept. of Rhetoric and Writing at the University of Arkansas (Little Rock) will provide the training with the goal of improving written communication documents.

The Office of Women's Health (OWH) encourages all employees who author, edit, or clear FDA documents to receive FDA internal and external plain writing and health literacy training. OWH has used both the *U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Plain Language Training* and the *CDC Clear Communication Index* for employees to develop print and electronic materials.

Two OWH staff members that develop and communicate content to target audiences completed the 2018 *FDAU Plain Language* course that includes a comprehensive overview of plain language guidelines and best practices for communicating.

Examples of trainings and materials you developed to educate stakeholders and the general public on plain writing.

- CVM posted an article for its stakeholders and the general public on plain writing: [In Plain English, Please](#) at *FDA.gov*.
- *Plain Language: The CVM VFD Regulation:* <https://www.fda.gov/AnimalVeterinary/DevelopmentApprovalProcess/ucm078511.htm>
This web page describes the development and approval process of CVM becoming the first center within FDA to publish a regulation using a plain language question and answer format in the codified section.

This past year, CVM changed how it promoted their mission and work to Congress and congressional staffers. They held a congressional tour at its Office of Research where CVM employees presented directly to the staffers the work they are doing. This allowed the staffers to view CVM's passion for its work and how it directly impacts our day-to-day lives in language they could understand. Beforehand, they held a dry run with multiple people from varying backgrounds and age groups giving critical feedback to ensure the message was conveyed in the most impactful way. This translated to both the written and orally presented materials.

Ways in which you improved or focused your plain writing efforts.

- Continuation of virtual delivery of *FDAU Plain Language* training to field staff with six new webinars in spring 2019.
- Releasing new *FDA Plain Language an Introduction* online training in HHS Learning Portal (LMS) in Spring 2019. This 2-hour course teaches the learner the tools to clearly communicate their message using the seven principles of plain language, including examples and job aids.
- Plans to develop FDA-wide pool of in-house plain language trainers.

Contacts

The Act requires each department to designate one or more senior officials to oversee implementation of plain writing requirements. A list of such HHS agency officials can be found on the HHS website here: <https://www.hhs.gov/open/plain-writing/>

Please confirm the senior official in your Operating or Staff Division responsible for plain writing.

Name: LaKeisha M. McClendon
Title: Chief Learning Officer
Email: LaKeisha.McClendon@fda.hhs.gov
Phone: 240-402-0105

Note: We will include the name and e-mail address of this person on the Department's plain writing webpage.