

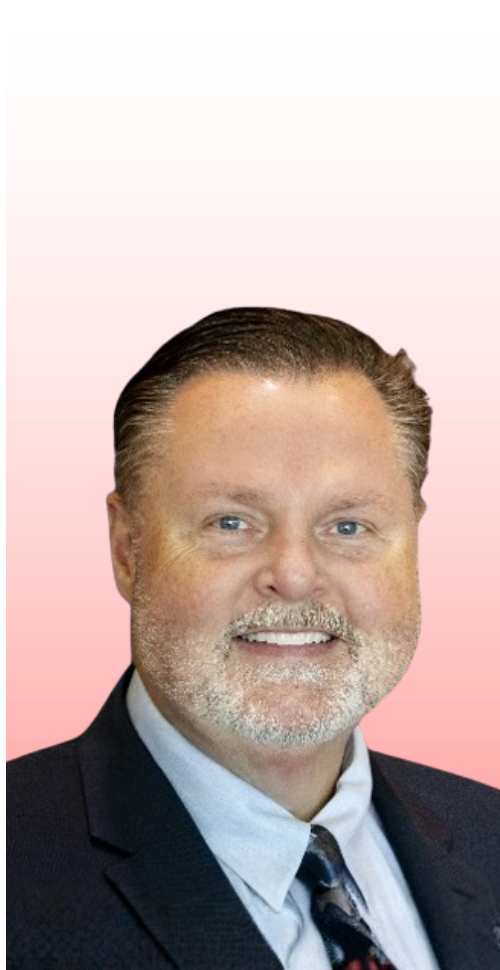
2026 ASHMPR

SUMMER CONFERENCE



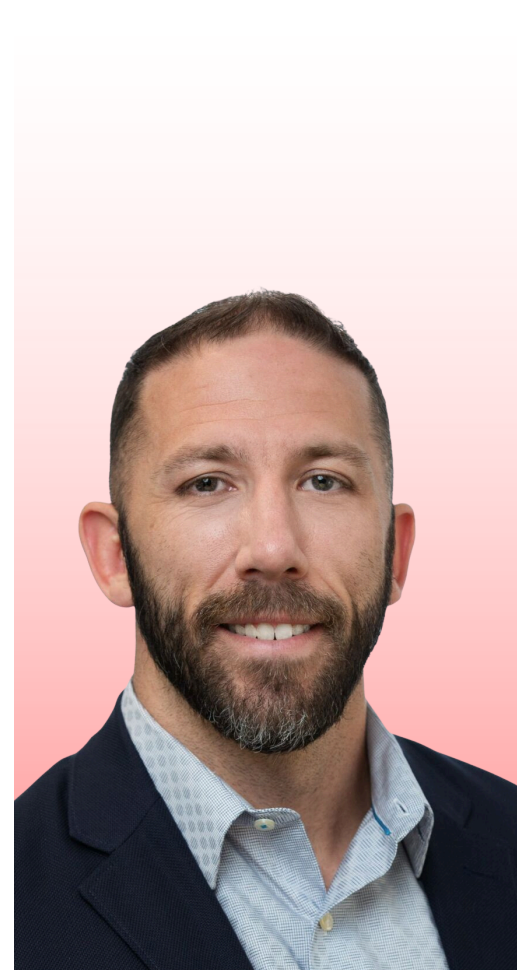
Katie Leath

Center for Health Literacy



Don Simpson

*Arkansas Colleges of
Health Education*



Zak Morris

Triton Ventures

Friday
July 24, 2026

Washington Regional Medical System
Fayetteville, AR

2026 ASHMPR SUMMER CONFERENCE

AGENDA

10:00 AM **REGISTRATION**
SIMULATION CENTER

10:25 AM **WELCOME & INTRODUCTIONS**

Tobias Pugsley, MBA, FACHE, ASHMPR President, V.P. of Marketing & Communications, Baxter Health

10:30 AM **DESIGNING HEALTHCARE MARKETING PEOPLE CAN USE:**
Social Determinants of Health, Plain Language, and Health Literacy

Katie Leath, MPH, MA, Director, Center for Health Literacy, UAMS and **Donald D. Simpson, PhD, MPH**, Dean, School of Population Health, Arkansas Colleges of Health Education

Healthcare marketing works best when people can quickly understand the message, see that it applies to them, and know what to do next. But many materials create avoidable friction through jargon, unclear next steps, too much information, or missing practical details. When audiences navigate illness, stress, competing responsibilities, or other barriers, that friction can keep them from taking action.

This session explores how Social Determinants of Health, plain language, and health literacy can help marketers design materials people can actually use. Together, we will examine common communication barriers in healthcare marketing and consider practical approaches for making messages clearer, more actionable, and better aligned with audience needs and marketing goals.

11:30 AM **LUNCH** (*provided*) **& NETWORKING**

12:15 PM **SIMULATION CENTER TOUR**

1:00 PM **AGENTS & AUTOMATION FOUNDATIONS:**
Understanding and Designing Autonomous Capability

Zak Morris, CISSP, GCCC, Co-Founder, Triton Ventures

Artificial intelligence is evolving rapidly, but what does that actually mean for healthcare marketing and communications professionals? This interactive, beginner-friendly session will explore the fundamentals of agentic AI, helping participants understand how autonomous AI systems work and how they can be applied to real-world healthcare communications. Through practical examples and hands-on demonstrations, attendees will learn core concepts, discover effective workflows, and explore ways to personalize the AI tools they already use. Participants will leave with a stronger understanding of today's AI landscape, actionable strategies for marketing and communications, and a custom set of AI assistants designed to support their work long after the session ends.

2:30 PM **ADJOURN**

2026 ASHMPR SUMMER CONFERENCE **SPEAKERS**

KATIE LEATH, MPH, MA

DIRECTOR, CENTER FOR HEALTH LITERACY, UAMS

Katie has spent more than a decade helping healthcare, research, and public health organizations communicate more clearly. As director of the Center for Health Literacy at the University of Arkansas for Medical Sciences, she leads a talented team that creates award-winning materials, trains health professionals and students, and consults with organizations on how to make health information easier to find, understand, and use.

Katie's work sits at the intersection of message strategy, audience trust, and real-world action. She helps organizations move beyond simply sharing information to creating messages people can understand, trust, and act on—whether they are promoting services, explaining complex topics, supporting public health campaigns, or communicating when the stakes are high.

Katie's background brings together marketing, graphic design, public health, and applied communication. She earned a bachelor's degree in marketing with a minor in graphic design and holds two master's degrees, one in public health and one in applied communication. She also serves on the board of the Center for Plain Language and as regional coordinator for the newly formed US Health Literacy Association, supporting national efforts to make information easier to understand and use.

ZAK MORRIS, CISSP, GCCC

CO-FOUNDER, TRITON VENTURES

Zak is the co-founder of Triton Ventures and an AI and cybersecurity engineer. He holds both Certified Information Systems Security Professional (CISSP) and GIAC Critical Controls Certification (GCCC) credentials. He specializes in designing and implementing AI-powered automation and agentic systems that help organizations improve efficiency, decision-making, and operational resilience across healthcare, finance, logistics, governance, and other highly regulated industries.

Zak has been architecting production-grade autonomous AI systems since before agentic AI became a recognized practice area. He focuses on translating complex technologies into practical solutions that organizations can adopt using the tools they already have, helping teams build secure, scalable workflows aligned with existing operations. His expertise includes AI strategy, context engineering, automation design, cybersecurity, and the integration of emerging technologies into business processes.

A frequent presenter and educator, Zak is passionate about helping professionals develop a deeper understanding of artificial intelligence beyond the hype. His engaging, hands-on approach equips participants with practical skills and durable frameworks they can apply immediately, regardless of the platforms their organizations use.

DONALD D. SIMPSON, PHD, MPH
DEAN, SCHOOL OF POPULATION HEALTH, ARKANSAS COLLEGES
OF HEALTH EDUCATION

Cytologist and higher education leader with more than 20 years of experience serving in academic administration. Throughout his career, Don has held leadership roles including Program Director, Department Chair, Dean, Director of Global Health, Director of Population Health, and Special Assistant to the Vice President for Academic Affairs across five academic institutions.

A first-generation college graduate, Don is passionate about improving access to education and healthcare for underserved populations. He has led and collaborated on numerous federally and state-funded research initiatives spanning public health, laboratory sciences, women's health, pediatrics, emergency medicine, and global health, including projects supporting international program development and healthcare workforce initiatives.

Don has served in numerous national leadership positions, including Past President of the American Society for Cytotechnology, and currently serves as President of both the Tulane University School of Public Health Alumni Association Board of Directors and the Arkansas Public Health Association. He and his wife, Shelley, reside in Fort Smith, Arkansas.

2026 ASHMPR SUMMER CONFERENCE

INFO

CONFERENCE INFORMATION

The conference will be held in the Simulation Center at Washington Regional Medical System which is located at 3215 N Northhills Blvd, Fayetteville, AR 72703.

CONFERENCE ATTENDANCE

To be eligible to attend a meeting of ASHMPR, an affiliate of AHA, you must be an ASHMPR member or eligible for membership. All attendees must be employed by an AHA member hospital or institution. If your facility is eligible for AHA membership, but chooses to not be a member, you may not attend this event.

CANCELTATION POLICY

If cancelatons are received after **July 22**, 50% of the registration fee is refundable. Registrants who cancel the day of the program, or fail to attend, must pay the entire fee. Registrants unable to attend may send an alternate. If the alternate is not a member, the non-member registration fee will be required.

QUESTIONS?

CONTACT: CASSANDRA VAN TASSEL | CVANTASSEL@ARKHOSPITALS.ORG | 501-224-7878 EXT. 134

2026 ASHMPR SUMMER CONFERENCE

REGISTRATION

July 24, 2026

Washington Regional Medical System
Fayetteville, AR

REGISTRATION FEE

- ☐ \$75 - ASHMPR MEMBERS
- ☐ \$130 - NON ASHMPR MEMBERS

ATTENDEE INFORMATION

NAME

TITLE

ORGANIZATION NAME

ADDRESS (CITY, STATE, & ZIP)

PHONE NUMBER

EMAIL ADDRESS

PAYMENT INFORMATION

☐ **CHECK ENCLOSED** (Payable to Arkansas Society for Healthcare Marketing & PR or ASHMPR)

CREDIT CARD

CARD NUMBER (VISA OR MASTERCARD ONLY)

EXP. DATE

CVV

PHONE

NAME ON CARD

SIGNATURE

CREDIT CARD BILLING ADDRESS (INCLUDING CITY & ZIP)

PLEASE SUBMIT REGISTRATIONS & PAYMENT BY MAIL OR FAX TO:

Mail: 419 Natural Resources Drive, Little Rock, AR 72205

Fax: (501) 224-0519

Emailed submissions will not be accepted.