President’s Message

Thanks for the Memories

It's hard to believe we're just weeks away from our 2020 IAHCSMM Annual Conference & Expo in Chicago where I will officially end my term as the Association’s President. This year has produced so many wonderful memories and experiences – each of which would not have been possible had you not put your faith in me and our Board of Directors. These memories and experiences will follow me forever, and I hope they will continue to guide and serve me in this career, which I believe is one of the most important disciplines in healthcare today.

This year saw some beneficial new developments, not the least of which includes adding two additional Directors to the Board of Directors. As you will remember, there were three one-year Directors and three two-year Directors voted in for the Board (five of whom had never previously served). It has been exciting to see these Board members' commitment to serving this Association and its members. Each has given their focus, time and dedication to continue the forward momentum initiated by those who came before them – and to share their own good ideas and insights for the greater good of IAHCSMM and the profession.

From my view at the head of the table, I have no doubt the future of this great organization will remain bright, and its members and certificants will remain in the most capable hands.

At the conclusion of this year’s conference, I will have the honor of passing the gavel to your next President, Brian Reynolds. Brian has served on the IAHCSMM Board of Directors for one year as a Board member, and one as President-Elect, and he’s also given his time, money, heart and perseverance to lead the very successful Central Florida Association of Central Sterile Personnel chapter. Put simply, he is dedicated to the field of Sterile Processing, and I look forward to guiding and supporting him, as needed, in my role as Immediate Past-President, just as others did before me.

Positivity breeds progress
It is always a pleasure to see technicians progress and continue to build upon their certifications and other professional achievements. On social media, many post about their newly-acquired certifications and it’s a joy to see the pride these individuals convey (and the subsequent congratulatory posts shared by others). I hope we continue to use social media to build up and encourage our technicians rather than as a sounding board for negativity.

Often, we read on social media about facilities that had a failure that resulted in public scrutiny and, possibly, even patient harm. When this happens, the conversation in our departments often turns to the fact that we don’t want to be in their shoes, and the conversation on social media often takes a harsh tone of judgment, criticism, speculation and outright questioning (“How could this happen?”). Many times, it's assumed lack of education, inadequate equipment or insufficient staffing are to blame, even when no facts are present to draw such conclusions. It’s often easier to comment and point out others' shortcomings rather than explore how a similar occurrence might occur in our own facilities, or how positive suggestions might be shared to help ensure a similar occurrence doesn’t happen elsewhere. As we all know, we face challenges and obstacles each day that may make us feel unappreciated or even vulnerable in our roles; however, we must never lose sight that we do what we do (and should take pride in our efforts) because a patient is the recipient of our instrumentation and service.

I challenge us all to engage in positive conversations and exchanges that will move us toward a place of assistance and guidance instead of judgment and criticism. Let’s learn from one another and share our own experiences, successes and struggles. There are many other professionals out there (from consulting groups to vendor experts) who are more than willing to lend a hand and assist us in this important quest. We must be more than just Monday Morning Quarterbacks.
In our daily roles, we are faced with an ever-changing world of surgical instrumentation and the many intricate details and steps involved with effective cleaning and sterilization. This is why it’s so essential that we continue to help our professionals/teams grow and advance and put the right tools in their hands to help them succeed in this dynamic, challenging environment. I know and trust IAHCSMM will continue building upon its education and certification programs to help build strong, competent, quality- and safety-focused technicians. Our Education and Certification departments are stronger than ever and the demand for education and certification is as great as it has ever been. It’s been rewarding to see the level of growth on all these fronts.

As my IAHCSMM Presidency draws to a close, I want to take a moment to recognize some of the individuals who have supported and guided me on this journey. Past-Presidents Sharon Green-Golden and David Jagrosse advised me early on to get experience on the Board and to contribute to and learn the needs of the organization. Past-Presidents Steven Adams and Damien Berg also provided valuable guidance and direction, often helping me to see situations in a different way and to develop myself as an effective leader. There’s also IAHCSMM’s Executive Director, Susan Adams, who supports our organization with her knowledge and expertise, and who shares with us the history and the background of previous Boards, and how decisions were made. Many members have also sent words of wisdom and encouragement, which I have appreciated, cherished and taken to heart. I’m in awe of all of you Sterile Processing professionals for what you do each day, and I thank you for all you do to keep our patients safe.

Continue to grow yourselves and contribute to the profession and to IAHCSMM – and be sure to support your local chapters and the great work they are doing. I assure you, I will do the same.

Sincerely,

Tony Thurmond