President’s Message
Meet IAHCSMM’s New President

Anthony (Tony) Thurmond, CRCST, CIS, CHL, officially became IAHCSMM’s President during the 2019 IAHCSMM Annual Conference in May, but he’s played an active role within the Association and the profession for many years.

Throughout his term as President-Elect, Thurmond diligently worked alongside Damien S. Berg, BA, BS, CRCST, and IAHCSMM’s Board of Directors to ensure key goals in the strategic plan were met and well executed, and to help tap new opportunities to promote IAHCSMM, its members and the profession – all with the primary purpose of advancing professionalism, education and strategic partnerships to improve customer service and quality patient outcomes.

Thurmond served as a surgical technician and Sterile Processing technician in the US Air Force from 1984 to 1994 and then spent four years as a sales manager for an orthopedic equipment manufacturer before entering the civilian healthcare setting in SPD supervisory and managerial roles. He currently serves as Manager of Sterile Processing at The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio. He became an IAHCSMM member in 2005 and has held numerous roles within the Association, including Awards Committee Chairperson, Executive Board representative, Board of Directors member, and author of the Technician’s Exchange column for PROCESS magazine. For years, he has also been actively involved in the Buckeye Central Service Association and served as the chapter’s Communications Officer and President.

Thurmond is passionate about continuing IAHCSMM’s drive to remain the leading force for education, certification and support of Central Service/Sterile Processing (CS/SP) professionals worldwide; strengthening IAHCSMM chapters through improved member participation and visibility; and maintaining and developing greater relationships with allied partners and professional organizations, among other endeavors.

In the following Q&A, Thurmond shares some insights into the primary pursuits he aims to tackle as IAHCSMM President, and outlines the improvements he’d most like to see for the betterment of the profession and the Association.

Q: What excites you most in your new role as IAHCSMM President?
A: First, I would like to say I am honored and excited for my new role as President of IAHCSMM. I did not reach this achievement without the encouragement and guidance of many leaders, co-workers, family and friends. I am truly humbled to be able to serve in this role and I understand this is not an individual effort, but rather a great team effort. It takes not only the involvement of the President, but also of the Board of Directors, committees and the entire IAHCSMM family to make this “machine” work optimally.

It is exciting to be part of an organization that continues to grow and expand in support of its members and CS/SP professionals throughout the world. The growth is a result of individuals out there wanting to progress, wanting to succeed and wanting to do their best for the patients they serve. With IAHCSMM’s additional Education Department staff members and a new Marketing Manager in place, IAHCSMM is in a strengthened position to reach even more professionals and offer them education and other support services that will prepare them for success. It is both exciting and rewarding to see the profession gain attention for being so critical to patient safety.

Q: What keeps you up at night regarding the profession and what changes would you most like to see to improve the profession and patient safety?
A: For CS/SP professionals to become the best they can be, they must be open to change and have an open mind to the ever-evolving technology, instrumentation, standards, best practices and more. It is also important that their hospitals’ leadership teams and executives understand and support that need. At The Christ Hospital in Cincinnati, Ohio, I am fortunate to have a great leadership team that...
understands our challenges and our needs. Our department is always included in decisions and we can look at new technology and trends knowing that, if needed, our leadership will support us. I feel for those CS/SP professionals who do not have that support for their departments. I also feel for those departments that do not have the ability to educate their technicians properly. To be successful, technicians need the support to build them up and help them feel a strong sense of pride for the work they do.

For that to happen, we need more technicians to step out of their comfort zone and strive to bring a sense of importance to their jobs. Instead of waiting for others to act, we need people to step up and speak up. We need to understand that we can't always count on others, so we need to be that driving force for positive change. Having the same people stepping up to do the work is a challenge faced by many chapters. We need to mentor and develop more involvement within our chapters. As I often say, CS/SP will never get recognition in a Press Ganey patient evaluation because they don't know about our role; however, each patient is affected by our efforts. That is a huge responsibility when you step back and look at it.

Q: What are your top goals as you assume the IAHCSMM Presidency?
A: This will be the first year of an expanded Board of Directors for IAHCSMM and it will be critical to bring them up to speed and get them involved. We are also restructuring the IAHCSMM chapters, so there will be a need to develop committees to help start them off correctly and strongly under this new structure. I hope to be part of the continued growth of the organization and keep the Association on an upward trend.

I understand that decisions made will not always be popular with each member; there always will be individuals or groups who are not ready for changes or improvement that we hope to bring. We will strive to look at all sides before deciding on changes that affect the Association and the profession it represents. We have done that for the three years I have served on the IAHCSMM Board and will continue that moving forward. Each of us on the Board of Directors understands we represent each member of the organization and that is who we speak for as we serve in our respective roles.

I don't step into this role with any promises of grandeur or with any inflated campaign slogans; I will leave that to the professional politicians. I do, however, step in with the promise of delivering my best efforts and never taking anyone or anything for granted. I promise to be professional and forthright in my efforts. I am honored to be in this role. Thank you again for this opportunity to serve IAHCSMM and all of you!

Tony Thurmond