President’s Message

Remembering the Shoulders on Which We’ve Stood—and Lending Our Own to Others

It has been a year of firsts for the entire world; we have had to do and see things that we have never before done in our lifetimes. Tragically, we lost some influential members within our own profession this past year and they will truly be missed, respected and revered for their contribution to IAHCSMM and the profession.

This has also proven to be a time where we as Sterile Processing (SP) professionals have been able to talk about what makes us unique and how we as a profession have always contributed to the wellbeing of our patients through the essential services we provide. There has been a great push toward learning, seeing, listening and understanding what sterile processing means and what we professionals within the discipline do. It has led to broader and healthier conversations that helped spotlight our many contributions and what we need to be (and remain) successful. We often look back at the previous year and reflect on what we did right and what we can improve, with the goal of facing the obstacles that challenged us and striving to do what we can to overcome those obstacles in the future. Last year, for all its challenges, helped position us for a stronger future.

IAHCSMM had to adapt to some firsts as well over the past year and I am proud to have been a part of that history. We as a Board had the opportunity to come together as a team to make suggestions and changes, and outline IAHCSMM’s next strategic plan that will have a positive and lasting effect for the Association and its members. We had three new members join the Board of Directors—all of whom have been very energetic and eager to contribute and bring some valuable experience-based insight to the organization. The Association also had to adapt to ensure, first and foremost, that all employees were able to stay safe and healthy amid the pandemic, all while still ensuring the needs of IAHCSMM members and certification holders were met. This, of course, involved making certain all employees working remotely had the tools and resources they needed to keep up with certification renewals and address questions with minimal delay or interference.

We really are all in this together

IAHCSMM has continued working hard to ensure its relationships with professional allies, including those from the Infection Prevention side, remain strong and fortified. These interdisciplinary relationships are essential for lending support to one another, staying on the same page and helping other disciplines better understand SP’s role and contributions to healthcare delivery, patient safety and infection prevention. The Education and Communications teams also have reliably created and disseminated a wide range of resources [including webinars, podcasts, articles for PROCESS and Insights, and Q&As and toolkits posted to our website (www.iahcsmm.org)] – all aimed at not only helping us to navigate the ever-changing developments related to the COVID-19 pandemic, but also to stay sharp, focused and prepared in our day-to-day roles within our facilities.

IAHCSMM, like other associations and organizations throughout the country and world, has also had to adapt in the way it delivered education and networking opportunities with its conferences. When in-person conferences were canceled in 2020, IAHCSMM remained steadfast in its commitment to delivering outstanding education to SP professionals; the team swiftly pulled together and transitioned to a fully virtual Conference & Expo that was offered free of charge to IAHCSMM members in an effort to make education and vendor connections more accessible during an especially difficult year. I am so excited that IAHCSMM will be offering an in-person conference in Columbus, Ohio, this October, while still including...
a virtual offering for those who are unable to attend in person. Our in-person program will keep attendee safety at the forefront, with an innovative scheduling approach that has the Conference & Expo split into two back-to-back conferences (either Saturday, Oct. 9 to Monday, Oct. 11 or Tuesday, Oct. 12 to Thursday, Oct. 14) with repeating session and expo offerings (see more on P. 130). All the things you’ve come to love about our conference will be in place, including educational sessions delivered by leading experts in the SP field and the ability to network with peers and industry experts, and vendor representatives who will have their latest products and services on display.

We have a new year ahead of us and terrific opportunities to set new goals and set our sights on new ways to help propel ourselves and our profession forward. Many of our veteran SP soldiers are retiring and preparing for their next steps in their life journey and, at the same time, we’ll continue to see new SP professionals coming into our departments who are eager to learn and contribute. In whichever stage we find ourselves professionally, we must never forget the individuals whose shoulders we stood on to get to that pivotal point in our careers. It’s my hope that all of us working in this profession will offer our own shoulders for our peers and colleagues who may need us. It’s this support that helps make our departments, teams and collective profession even stronger.

It’s also important to remind everyone that IAHCSMM offers an annual award program that allows us to nominate those (others or even ourselves) who have gone above and beyond for the profession and their healthcare organizations in the name of quality, safety and professionalism. Although every year has its challenges, we all have the power to make this year a great one by striving to be our own personal best and lending support to our fellow professionals to help them reach new heights.

It has been an honor to serve as your President this past year and it’s a joy and privilege I’ll carry with me always. Thanks for lifting me on your shoulders; I promise to do the same!

Sincerely,

Brian Reynolds


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Matt
Central Sterile Processing Manager

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