

IEQ Global Alliance

For better indoor environment quality



IEQ-GA – Presidential Column (March, 2021)

Spring is coming to the northern hemisphere, and it is looking much brighter than the spring last year. The advent of multiple vaccines has changed the outlook for many parts of the world regarding COVID-19 related illnesses, and deaths. The scientists, researchers, practitioners and medical personnel that have worked tirelessly this past year should be extremely proud of their work, and they deserve the gratitude of the world. As a scientist, I am particularly proud of the work that has been undertaken and completed in rapid fashion by all of the members of IEQ-GA's member organizations.

There is of course a considerable amount of work still to be done. The research needed to determine what was the origin of the coronavirus has just begun, and it will continue for many years to come. There is also a need to come to an evidence-based conclusion about the airborne transmission of the virus. It is gratifying to hear that the World Health Organization (WHO) and the US Center of Disease Control (CDC) are willing to review the research being conducted throughout the world. These governmental agencies (e.g. [WHO](#)) also have updated their technical advice on the appropriate use of ventilation in building during the pandemic. These changes are due in no small part to the individual scientists and researchers who are members of professional organizations that make up IEQ-GA.

In 2021, the Indoor Environmental Quality – Global Alliance (IEQ-GA) will continue to work to create a bigger worldwide alliance of scientists, indoor environmental practitioners, and researchers. In addition, we plan to work with other professional organizations on collaborative efforts, such as webinars, podcasts and publications, in order to provide to all of the world's population effective and pertinent scientific information about indoor environmental quality (IEQ).

As President of IEQ-GA, I was hopeful that the good news in certain nations and areas of the world concerning vaccines for the SARS CoV-19 virus will continue in 2021, with more vaccinations taking place worldwide. However even with the accelerated pace of manufacturing of the vaccines, it is likely to be many months before the full effect of the vaccinations will be felt in many countries.

The distribution of the vaccine to the billions in the world that are susceptible to contacting the disease will take many months and possibly years. This is why it is important for all of IEQ-GA's member organizations to support COVAX. COVAX is the WHO's project to accelerate the development, production, and equitable access to COVID-19 tests, treatments, and vaccines. COVAX is co-led by Gavi (The Global Alliance for Vaccines and Immunizations), the Coalition for Epidemic Preparedness Innovations (CEPI) and

WHO. Its aim is to accelerate the development and manufacture of COVID-19 vaccines, and to guarantee fair and equitable access for every country in the world. This effort is already under way, and it is receiving financial support from many governments throughout the world. Their slogan is: “With a fast-moving pandemic, no one is safe, unless everyone is safe.” Their website: <https://www.who.int/initiatives/act-accelerator/covax>

In addition, there appear to be a number of new variants of COVID-19 that are more transmissible and more likely to cause severe illness and death. The effectiveness of the current vaccines to counter act these variants is not completely known at this time.

Also, there are many individuals who are listed as ‘long haulers’ with this pandemic. Tens of thousands of people have lingering illness following COVID-19. In the US, we call them post-COVID “long haulers.” Currently, the condition they are suffering from is known as “long COVID,” although other names are being proposed. These matters will require that there continue to be vigilance regarding public health restrictions such as physical distancing, masks, and hand washing.

A reminder that there is a webpage specifically dedicated to addressing concerns about COVID-19. This webpage includes a series of Questions & Answers (Q&A) that are intended to help anyone who has concerns about COVID-19. This webpage can be found here: <https://ieq-ga.net/covid-19/information-center/>

IEQ-GA continues to lead the way on all matters related to indoor environmental quality, including IAQ, acoustics, lighting, vibrations and other environmental factors. We are often contacted by professional organizations in these fields regarding full and affiliate membership. For information on membership, please click on this webpage: <https://ieq-ga.net/contact/how-to-join-us/>

IEQ-GA expects to proceed with new and innovative means to communicate to workers and building occupants throughout the world that have issues with indoor environmental quality in their workplaces as well as their dwellings. IEQ-GA is considering sponsoring webinars, podcasts and publications in 2021 that will enable the IEQ-GA to reach even more people interested in indoor environmental quality. Please continue your support in the coming year, and IEQ-GA will thrive even in these difficult times.

Please stay safe and healthy.

Donald Weekes, CIH, CSP, FAIHA
President, IEQ-GA