

IEQ Global Alliance

For better indoor environment quality



IEQ-GA – Presidential Column (January 2023)

Happy New Year! I hope that 2023 will be a better year! It has been a long time (three years) since the COVID-19 pandemic started. I am hopeful that this coming year will see the reduction of infections, hospitalizations, and deaths due to the virus. Keep safe and be careful in your activities!

In November, 2022, IEQ-GA held an extraordinary General Assembly. The purpose of this General Assembly was to address a change in the by-laws to allow past Board members to be elected to be Officers of IEQ-GA. In addition, the General Assembly elected the Officers of IEQ-GA for the next three years. Jaap Hogeling was elected as Treasurer, Bill Bahnfleth as First Vice President, Vishal Kapur as Second Vice President and myself (Donald Weekes) as President. I congratulate the Officers for their elections!

Since my last column in October, 2022, IEQ-GA members that are in the occupational and environmental health fields are doing all they can to help those in need in Ukraine where the war continues. This work includes working with governmental entities such as WHO, the United Nations, and the EU, as well as volunteer organizations such as the Red Cross and Doctors Without Borders to ensure that the conditions in the refugee camps are sufficient for the families, seniors and children fleeing the conflict. In some cases, there has been assistance from professionals regarding power outages, transportation problems and food and water shortages. Overall, our technical and scientific assistance and expertise regarding the mental and physical stress of the Ukrainian people must be part of our response as health professionals, scientists, engineers and researchers to help those affected by the war.

Here in North America and other parts of the world, winter has begun with a bang with heavy snows and extreme cold temperatures throughout the continent. There have also been great difficulties with lower indoor temperatures in Europe due to the reduction of the use of Russian natural gas and oil, and its substantial price increases. A recent IEQ-GA/ISIAQ webcast on December 19th, 2022 focused on this issue and its impact on the population throughout Europe who in some cases must choose between heat and food. This problem will continue throughout the winter. If you are interested in this topic, please check on this webcast at: <https://global.healthyindoors.com/c/indoor-environments/12-19-22>

With many workers returning to work worldwide, COVID-19 cases have increased in many countries, including Canada, due to new variants of the virus. To mitigate this surge, there will be a need for new vaccines, new medicines, and other measures to protect ourselves and others. In the fall of 2022, many medical and health experts were indicating

that the pandemic was not over, that there would be more infections from variants of the virus. As predicted, there has indeed been an increased number of COVID-19 cases in the past few months when we in the northern hemispheres all spend more time inside. But, gradually, we are all working together, including the IEQ-GA member organizations, to further reduce the number of cases, hospitalizations, and deaths worldwide, particularly in poorer countries.

This year, there will be a number of worthwhile and interesting conferences including: the ASHRAE Winter (Atlanta, in February 2023) and Annual (Tampa, in June 2023) Conferences; the REHVA Annual Conference in Brussels, in May 2023; the Phoenix AIHce sponsored by AIHA, in May 2023; and the 42nd AIVC Conference in Copenhagen, in October 2023. I hope that you are able to attend many of these conferences to meet our colleagues, to present your research, and to listen to others who are presenting their data.

Please note that, all member organizations, as well as other organizations that are holding conferences in 2023 that are focused on IEQ issues, are invited to submit information about the conference to IEQ-GA's Secretariat. The IEQ-GA Board of Directors will review the info and then make a decision regarding IEQ-GA's endorsement of the conference.

Personally, I want to thank the IEQ-BOD members, all our full and affiliate members, and all of the individual members of the organizations that support the work of IEQ-GA. We are all looking forward to a bright future for IEQ-GA!

I would like to conclude with a reminder that IEQ-GA has set up a webpage specifically dedicated to addressing the ongoing concerns about COVID-19. This webpage includes a series of Questions & Answers (Q&A) that are intended to provide information to anyone that wants to know more about COVID-19 transmission in buildings. This webpage can be found here: <https://ieq-ga.net/covid-19/faqs/>

Please stay safe and healthy.

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