

IEQ Global Alliance

For better indoor environment quality



IEQ-GA – Presidential Column (April 2023)

I am hopeful that the Spring in your location has begun with new opportunities and a bright future, especially with your weather. Here in Ottawa, the winter has been harsh with lots of snow and cold temperatures. Unfortunately, today has brought an ice storm that is threatening to take down our power lines. Perhaps it will soon be over, and we will begin to enjoy spring-like weather.

Since my last column in February 2023, some of IEQ-GA member organizations have been 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. I have been asked to conduct a virtual webinar for Workplace Without Borders regarding the likely building materials where asbestos has been found in the past. In other cases, there has been assistance from IEQ-GA 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 is part of our response as health professionals, scientists, engineers and researchers to help those affected by the war.

As many workers returning to work worldwide, COVID-19 cases have generally decreased in many countries, including Canada and the United States. However, in other places, the new variants of the virus have resulted in localized increases. According to the latest data from WHO, worldwide there have been 762 million confirmed cases of COVID-19, including 69 million deaths. Also, as of 2 April 2023, 13.3 billion vaccine doses have been administered. 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 Annual Conference in Tampa in June; the REHVA Annual Conference in Brussels in May; the Phoenix AIHce sponsored by AIHA in May; and the 42nd AIVC Conference in Copenhagen in October. I hope that you are able to attend these conferences to meet our colleagues, to present your research and case studies, 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.

There are also new efforts on behalf of many of the IEQ-GA members to review the info gathered during the pandemic, and to begin to plan for a future similar event such as a pandemic. One effort that is being 'fast tracked' is a new ASHRAE Standard 241P, Control of Infectious Aerosols. The Working Groups (WG's) for the Standard have been meeting weekly, and the public review draft of the new Standard is expected to be issued in May 2023. There have been many individuals from the IEQ-GA member organizations, including myself, that have been involved in the development of this standard.

If there are other efforts being undertaken by IEQ-GA's member organizations, please post an update on IEQ-GA's website under the heading 'News' so that all members can benefit from the current research, data collection, and information about Standards and Guidelines.

Personally, I want to thank the IEQ-BOD members, all of 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 has been in existence since very early in the pandemic, and it is updated to reflect the latest data. The webpage also 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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