

# IEQ Global Alliance

*For better indoor environment quality*



## **IEQ-GA – Presidential Column (June 2023)**

June is an important month for IEQ-GA with a General Assembly and a Board of Directors meeting in Tampa, Florida, USA on Tuesday, June 27<sup>th</sup>. These meetings are conducted during the ASHRAE Annual Meeting, and the member organizations and other interested parties are invited to attend and participate in these events. I hope to meet all of the attendees during these meetings.

As more workers are 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. 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.

In North America in June, there was an additional airborne hazard; wildfires, that have affected the air quality for millions of people. The smoke, soot and debris that was emitting from the massive wildfires in Quebec resulted in huge clouds that spread from the northeast and southern United States, and it was found in the air as far away as Norway. Individuals with pre-existing respiratory conditions such as asthma were most likely to be affected by the smoke and particulates. Also, there were many other hazardous substances in the particulates generated by the fires. Wildfires are also an issue in other parts of the world, such as bushfires in Australia, and field burning in India and elsewhere. It is likely to become an important airborne issue for the foreseeable time period.

This year, there will be several worthwhile and interesting indoor air quality conferences including: the ASHRAE Annual Conference in Tampa in June; the 42<sup>nd</sup> AIVC Conference in Copenhagen in October. I hope that you can 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 was 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. It is expected to be issued following the ASHRAE Annual Conference at the end of June or early July.

If there are other efforts being undertaken by IEQ-GA's member organizations regarding the pandemic, 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 regarding the pandemic.

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!

Please stay safe and healthy.

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