

# Indoor Environmental Quality – Global Alliance (IEQ-GA): Working Together for Improvements in the Indoor Environment

For the past two years, it has been my great honour to be the President of the Indoor Environmental Quality – Global Alliance (IEQ-GA). It has been a great start to the IEQ-GA, and I firmly believe that it will get even better as more professional organizations join us to help improve IEQ worldwide.

The vision of the Indoor Environmental Quality – Global Alliance (IEQ-GA) is to be the world's primary source for information, guidelines and knowledge on the indoor environmental quality in buildings and places of work around the world. The mission of IEQ-GA is to provide an acceptable indoor environmental quality (thermal environment-indoor air quality-lighting-acoustic) to occupants in buildings and places of work around the world and to make sure that the knowledge from research on IEQ is implemented in practice. One example of IEQ-GA's leadership role in the IEQ field was our Position Statement on 'The Airborne Transmission of COVID-19', which was issued in April, 2020. IEQ-GA lead the way on this critical issue, and it (and its member organizations) continues to monitor the pandemic in a science-based and evidence-based approach.

The objective of IEQ-GA is to collaborate with the professional societies organizations to think together, work together and speak with the same voice. The alliance is formed as an interdisciplinary, international working group of societies interested in indoor air quality, thermal comfort, lighting and acoustic science, and technology. IEQ-GA is also interested in applications to simulate indoor activities that will help in a significant way to improve the actual, delivered indoor environmental quality in buildings. The members of IEQ-GA's membership organizations work every day to enhance the IEQ of the built environment, IEQ-GA



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stands ready to work with the members in distributing this work and research to the world.

Prior to the formation of IEQ-GA, a few national and international societies or professional organizations were dealing fully or partly with the indoor environment, but their voice was often neglected or not heard at the policy making stage. It should be noted that the indoor environmental quality field is a multidisciplinary issue involving architects, engineers, health specialists, occupational health specialists, and other professionals. With the advent of the pandemic, it was soon apparent that there was a need for one professional organization to speak for all of these IEQ professionals when talking to policy makers, other IEQ scientists and researchers, and those in the medical field. The creation of the IEQ-GA ensured that there was one society or professional organization (IEQ-GA) which in a significant way can make sure that all interested parties can be a part of the value chain to improve the indoor environment in all buildings.

It has been a long nineteen months since the advent of the Age of COVID in March, 2020 in North America, Europe, Asia, and elsewhere. Many of us are finally able to enjoy a 'new normal' life with vaccine passports, booster shots, the continuation of mask wearing, and social distancing. However, the pandemic is certainly not over in many parts of the world, and it is quite possible that there will be more waves or surges of COVID in areas that are starting to recover. We all

# Interviews

must remain vigilant and careful, especially as international travel begins again. As IEQ scientists and engineers, we must continue to offer science-based and evidence-based papers, recommendations and interviews. The amount of misinformation and non-scientific posts and tweets can be overwhelming, but this must be countered by the scientists and engineers who have carefully reviewed (and peer-reviewed) the data and information about the pandemic.

In the last few months, IEQ-GA has been in touch with representatives of the World Health Organization (WHO). It has been an excellent dialogue, primarily about COVID-19, and related subjects. As a result of this dialogue, IEQ-GA has been invited to submit the names and credentials of qualified representatives to participate in the WHO's Environment and Engineering Control Expert Advisory Panel (ECAP) for COVID-19. In response to this invitation, IEQ-GA's Board of Directors have submitted four candidates to date, and these individuals have been accepted by WHO to serve on the ECAP for COVID-19. We are hopeful that this will be the start of a favourable long-term relationship between WHO and IEQ-GA.

In coordination with ISIAQ and our MOU, we are now completed program #4 of the Indoor Environments webcasts. Indoor Environments is a new online program that includes a video show and audio podcast series coordinated by Healthy Indoors, a webcast company based in Syracuse, NY. The fifth program will be streamed on Friday, November 19th, 2021 at 11 am EST. The topic will be Indoor exposure to chemicals and microbes via dust and resuspension. This topic will be discussed with Doctors Karen Dannemiller and Brandon Boor. They were selected by ISIAQ as guest

speakers on this jointly owned and managed webcast. I am sure that it will be a lively and insightful discussion with the professors and the co-hosts, Bob Krell from Healthy Indoors and myself. The steaming of the webcast will be available at: <https://global.healthyindoors.com/c/indoor-environments/episode-5>

Please note that a sixth webcast is planned for December, 2021. It is hoped, since the webcasts have been successful to date, that there will be additional programs in the future. For the future, it is also hoped that the two organizations (IEQ-GA and ISIAQ) will look for other opportunities to collaborate under the terms of the MOU.

Throughout the pandemic, the Indoor Environmental Quality – Global Alliance (IEQ-GA), its member organizations, and the professional members of these organizations will continue to work together as a worldwide alliance of scientists, indoor environmental practitioners and researchers. In addition, as shown by our MOU with ISIAQ, 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).

I would like to conclude with a reminder that IEQ-GA has set up a webpage specifically dedicated to addressing 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/> ■

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