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A NEW CHAPTER

OHHA Sets Solid Foundation For Healthcare Housekeepers and EVS Professionals

By **Wendy Boone**, Executive Director,
OHHA, A Division of ISSA

The Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers Association Inc. (OHHA) celebrated its 63rd year of operation in 2020. The organization was formed in 1957 at an Ontario Hospital Association Convention in Toronto, when a group of housekeeping / environmental services leaders united and established a professional body to represent the industry. It was the first of its kind in Canada.

Targeting the healthcare sector in Ontario, OHHA also provides membership and course enrollment in other provinces across Canada. The OHHA currently has an active membership base of 255 members and 25 affiliate partners.

I began my career in the hospitality industry as the executive housekeeper at the Ramada Inn in Kingston, and continued in this sector working at the Chateau Laurier,

Les Suite Hotel in Ottawa. Eventually, I made a move into the healthcare sector securing housekeeping positions at the Royal Ottawa Hospital, the Glebe Centre. I completed my front-line experience as the director of EVS at the Grace Hospital in Ottawa before it closed in 1999.

I was first introduced to the OHHA in the mid-1980s while employed as a housekeeping supervisor at Brockville Psychiatric Hospital. I soon completed the Ontario Hospital Association courses for Housekeeping Supervisors and Executive Housekeepers. Subsequently, I completed the Professional Development courses offered by the OHHA, earning my designation as a Professional Healthcare Housekeeper (PHH).

I became involved with the OHHA in 1988, when I was nominated to the position of regional chair, representing the Ottawa area (region nine), and later held

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The Benefits of OHHA Membership

*What membership has
meant to me*

By **Andy Hendriks**,
OHHA Lifetime Member

As a soon to be first-time father, supporting my future family is a major priority. I have enjoyed my seven years as a frontline worker in healthcare, especially the benefits and security the position provides. There are also multiple opportunities to advance and grow within the healthcare field, which also helps me achieve my goals.

On the recommendation of my housekeeping manager, I signed up for a Housekeeping Supervisor course, which at the time was shared

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OHHA Sets Solid Foundation For Healthcare Housekeepers and EVS Professionals

positions of treasurer, membership chair and president.

In 1999, when the Grace Hospital closed, I was pregnant with my second child. I was hired by the OHHA Board to the position of administrative secretary – a part-time position. Over the years, I took on more responsibility, and although still part-time, that role would eventually expand to the executive director position.

Providing peer support, education, and networking opportunities for supervisors, managers, directors of HSK/EVS, specifically in healthcare, OHHA also provides educational opportunities for frontline staff through its EVS Frontline Course, which is now available in a Mentored and Mentor-less version. Our EVS Leadership Program and Professional Development Programs support those looking to become supervisors and managers within the industry. Our Annual Conference, held in June each year, has become an industry standard and a “must attend” event for both members and affiliate partners.

OHHA has been the leader in Ontario since 1957, and with the recent merger with ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, we plan to move our organization to the next level. Our merger with ISSA is without a doubt a huge milestone for the OHHA. We can finally fulfill our forefathers’ goal of becoming the leader and national voice of the professional

healthcare housekeeper across Canada. Not only will we be able to elevate our members in Ontario with the highest quality educational resources to succeed, but we will also be capable of assisting healthcare housekeepers across Canada, by providing members with expanded resources and educational opportunities.

OHHA has had an active presence and voice in the industry for many years, working closely with our partners at Public Health Ontario, Provincial Infectious Disease Advisory Committee, Canadian Standards Association, ISSA Canada (formerly the Canadian Sanitation Supply Association), Ontario Hospital Association, Ontario Long Term Care Association, Centennial College and the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care.

The decision to merge with ISSA was unanimous. Our Board and members could see the value in the merger and the opportunity to grow the association, unite as one, with a bigger voice to represent the profession.

We are beyond excited for what lies ahead, and we thank the ISSA for this amazing opportunity.

This decision will ensure that OHHA remains strong and continues to grow membership and educational programs nationally and become the number one leader in the healthcare housekeeping/environmental Services Profession in Canada.

The Benefits of OHHA Membership



between the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA) and George Brown College. The course involved both online correspondence, as well as on-site training. Every week I drove into Toronto to complete the in-person portion. After eight weeks, I had completed the course and received certification.

Shortly thereafter a position for an executive housekeeper at a small community hospital became available. Much to my surprise, I was the successful candidate. Although, I had only spent two years in foodservice, and five years as a “heavy-duty cleaner,” I had limited management experience. Fortunately, the incumbent at the hospital was there for the first two weeks and was a tremendous help. He suggested that I join the Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers Association (OHHA). This was probably one of the best pieces of advice I had ever received.

Although I had good support from the management team at the hospital, I was struggling. I had no laundry experience and the hospital had its own laundry department, which was under my portfolio. After about three months into my tenure, I received a call that there was a regional meeting of the OHHA and would I be able to attend? I jumped at the opportunity, and set-off to meet some of my peers. The structure, at the time, followed the regional structure utilized by OHA. We were in region seven, and members within our territory would try and meet four-times per year.

The initial meeting was fantastic. The varying levels of experience and knowledge was both welcomed and extremely helpful to me. The other members

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Leading the Educational Evolution of the Healthcare Cleaning Profession

By **Roger Gobbo**

The Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers Association (OHHA) has a long history of providing and initiating supportive education to the healthcare housekeeping field. The support derived from the OHHA originates from the organization’s goal of establishing healthcare housekeeping as a recognized profession, and an allied healthcare partner in providing a safe, healthful and healing environment for patients, residents and staff within healthcare



facilities. The OHHA has not only provided educational programs, but also many professional development

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The Benefits of OHHA Membership

were very supportive, and when I left the meeting, I was excited to return to work with renewed confidence. Being able to pick up the phone and receive some input from people facing similar situations was amazing. My confidence grew exponentially over the next few years, and I have my OHHA family to thank for that.

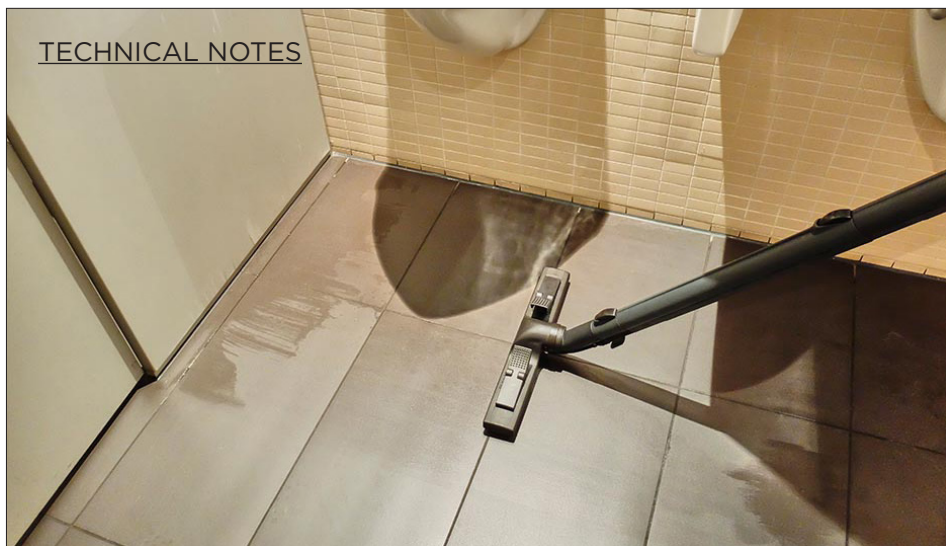
Soon I became chair of our region which meant I now had a seat on the board of OHHA. This brought me a whole new level of insight into the importance of the association. Many changes have taken place since the late 80s and early 90s. As I moved to a new position at a larger facility, OHHA was making major changes as well. The OHA gained control of the course as George Brown stepped back, and OHHA soon became the educational advisor of these courses. The board was often approached by OHA for input on matters concerning the service departments. All this experience and awareness of the opportunities available to me, as member of OHHA, enabled me to advance in my chosen field.

I am now fortunate to be able to assist new supervisors and managers while continuing to learn from my peers. The OHA name changed to the Ontario Healthcare Housekeeper's Association, which was more reflective of our membership. New courses and standards were developed through a collaborative effort of all members within the OHHA. I believe this collaboration was yet another stepping-stone in making our association and our membership more recognized within the healthcare profession. With the board's continued efforts to promote the importance of the environmental service teams within our healthcare facilities, we began to hear more and more success stories from our members within their own facilities. They were now being asked to increase their roles, sit on committees, and become more active partners within their facilities.

The board was now able to develop its own courses, seminars, and educational programs, all the while growing

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TECHNICAL NOTES



Embracing Heat for Effective Cleaning and Disinfection

By **Elle Robillard**,
Intersteam Technologies

Heat is a powerful cleaning agent. It melts grease, sterilizes surgical tools and kills bacteria in food when we cook it. This means heat provides a highly-effective method to improve cleaning processes.

Heat is broad spectrum, which means it is ideal for healthcare settings. Instead of having to select the right detergent for a certain job (i.e., cleaning, degreasing, sanitizing, disinfecting), you can use one product and do all of these jobs at once, being confident that you have selected the right product for the specific task at hand.

The best way to harness and maximize the power of heat is steam. Through steam cleaning systems and accessories, you can transfer heat safely, quickly and effectively to clean most surfaces. You can even partner current cleaning products – such as microfibre and even soaps or disinfectants* – with a steam cleaning system to maximize productivity and results.

Ideal steam should be high heat and low moisture delivered through a portable, CSA approved and serviceable steam system. A variety of accessories – drain cleaning and disinfection tools, extension tubes, floor mop heads, even aromatherapy – as well as carts designed for ergonomic and efficient use, will all be a part of the ideal system.

Some models have vacuum capability, as well as the addition of UV-C light, while also allowing the use of a current preferred cleaning detergent with the steam. The addition of a brushless motor vacuum to new

technology steam systems allows for dirt, heavy soil and bacteria to be removed from the surface being cleaned while remaining completely hands-off – no wiping or mopping up the amazing amount of debris loosened when you steam a surface.

Steam will reach cracks and crevices to remove built-up dirt and residue, but it can also clean large floor and wall areas. The versatility of steam makes it a favourite for wheelchair cleaning, washroom cleaning, terminal cleaning and much more.

By completely cleaning all surfaces, you not only remove build-up which can cause damage to surfaces over time, but you also eliminate any sources for odor or growth of new bacteria.

Using only tap water to generate steam makes it safe, and there is no need for the same precautions required with strong detergents that may have skin or eye contact, or other health warnings. You can achieve amazing results while staff stay safe and feel rewarded by the results achieved when cleaning with steam.

Some systems even include non-chemical, water modification-based disinfection modules, which are well-studied and referenced in the PIDAC Best Practices Document Environmental Cleaning for Prevention and Control of Infections.

Using this patented system, you can achieve verified Log 7 reductions in *C.difficile* spore, MRSA and VRE in under five seconds of contact time. This is without any pre-cleaning or rinsing after. You can save time and ensure the best results.

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Leading the Educational Evolution of the Healthcare Cleaning Profession

seminars, workshops and forums geared towards providing the latest news, practices and information on regulations governing healthcare.

The OHHA has now merged with ISSA and joins ISSA's Canadian Division – ISSA Canada. The association will now be known as OHHA, a Division of ISSA. OHHA brings with it a credible, professional and well-recognized educational and professional development process dedicated to the healthcare housekeeping profession.

The following is a brief review of the educational and professional development resources initiated by OHHA:

Promoting Recognition and Professionalism

In November 1957, over 100 housekeepers attended a "Housekeeping Institute" in Toronto. They determined the "need to form an organized housekeeping body to provide and promote opportunities for professional development."

The first elected officers set out to determine how to achieve a recognized body for the healthcare housekeeping field. After several meetings, and with the assistance of the OHA (Ontario Hospital Association), the Housekeeping section of the OHA was established.

In 1962 this Housekeeping section was renamed the Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers' Association, but still remained an affiliate of the OHA. According to the association forefathers, "It was felt that the association, with its autonomy, would provide greater scope for developing the association in the direction it should go to accomplish its objectives."

In 1965, the association received approval of its constitution, and made provisions of membership to accomplish its objectives.

By 1968, the association had developed its first system of certification through a credit system. During this period, the OHHA also held many seminars throughout the province with recognized leaders within the housekeeping field as keynote speakers.

Education and Professionalism

OHHA partnered with the OHA and

George Brown College in 1971 to establish two college level courses – the Housekeeping Supervisors Course and the Advanced Housekeepers Course.

In 1975, OHHA added the qualifier that any OHHA member successfully completing 660 hours related management courses at the college level would be entitled to the Housekeeping Services Administration Certificate (HSAC). Ten years later, OHHA collaborated with the OHA to revise and replace the HSAC with the Executive Housekeepers' Certificate. The goal of this certification was to consolidate and extend the management skills and technical knowledge required by those persons charged with the total responsibility of administering all aspects of housekeeping services within a healthcare facility.

The Housekeeping Supervisors' Course underwent a major revision in 1988, and was continually updated to reflect the changes and challenges in healthcare – RE: MRSA, VRSA, *C. difficile*, etc.

In 1994, the OHHA collaborated with the University of Windsor to develop and produce its professional development courses – Housekeeping Methodology, Infection Control, and Laundry Linen Technology. These courses were set-up for the following purpose:

- To develop managers' or supervisors' ability to implement housekeeping methodology in a healthcare facility, fusing labour resources, financial resources, cleaning standards, work time standards, and continuing quality control into providing services to healthcare facilities in the most cost effective practice;
- Focus on the role of the manager or supervisor in infection prevention and control, the chain of transmission, cleaning the environment, audits/feedback, and specialty areas;
- Examine how laundries operate in a healthcare setting, management of in-house laundries, as well as regional and central laundries which support multiple healthcare institutions.

In June 2000, during the Can Clean trade show, OHHA publicly released the Cleaning Standards for Healthcare Facilities (CSFHF). The members of the Ontario

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Embracing Heat for Effective Cleaning and Disinfection



Using an advanced steam system is the most proactive way to clean. Nothing – no dirt, no germs, no bacteria – has been able to survive heat, delivered safely and effectively through steam.

When it comes to cleaning you should never run out of steam!

**Not all systems have the capability of using soap or detergent. Please confirm before introducing anything other than water into your current or proposed steam cleaning system.*

SOURCE: Intersteam Technologies

OHHA Ninth Annual Conference & Trade Show

OHHA will be hosting its ninth annual conference and trade show – "Dirty Work" – from June 1 to 3, 2021, at the Fern Resort in Orillia, ON.

Over the three days, participants will have the opportunity to sit in on a variety of education sessions, discuss new products and practices with peers and industry experts, strengthen team dynamics, and of course, have a little fun.

Register now to be part of this 80s Dirty Dancing themed educational event.

Leading the Educational Evolution

(OHHA) have long sought some form of cleaning standards to use as guidelines in adequately cleaning and providing a safe facility for patients, residents, staff and visitors in terms of a microbial environment. There were no existing standardized cleaning standards for health facilities in Ontario to use other than the standards established by the facilities themselves for their own governance.

The CSFHF were later implemented by the Ontario Provincial Infection Control Advisory Committee (PIDAC) as an indexed resource for their *Best Practices for Environmental Cleaning for the Prevention and Control of Infections in All Healthcare Settings* (2009, 2012, 2018).

In 2005, members in Southern Ontario developed the Frontline Course to address the increased need to provide education for front line workers in healthcare facilities. This course addresses all aspects of the healthcare cleaning profession, in particular, the importance of proper techniques and practices to reduce the risk of infection. The course includes recommendations by the Provincial Infection Control Advisory Committee (PIDAC) pertaining to the *Best Practice Cleaning Document for Environmental Cleaning for the Prevention and Control of Infections in All Healthcare Settings*.

The most recent program, Environmental Services Leadership, was again developed by the OHHA in partnership with the OHA. This certification program is designed to allow students to “acquire all the practical, technical management and leadership skills necessary to manage the overall operation of a housekeeping / environmental services department within a hospital or long-term care facility.”

Certification

In 1997, the OHHA revised and upgraded its Housekeeping Services Administration Certificate, to become the O.H.H.A. Professional Healthcare Housekeepers' Inc. Certificate Program

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THANK YOU!

To all the Environmental Services Frontline Workers and the Supervisors and Managers Who Support Them

By **Julie Hoeflaak**, Education Chair, on behalf of the OHHA Board

The year 2020 will forever be known as the year of COVID. It will also be the year that brought the significant and critical importance of Environmental Services to the forefront like never before.

As the world turned their eyes to healthcare, EVS frontline staff become frontline heroes... and, as Batman has Commissioner Gordon, EVS frontline heroes have EVS supervisors and managers.

The Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers Association (OHHA) would like to take this opportunity to applaud and recognize the silent hard work and dedication of all EVS supervisors and managers.

Thank you for the hours you have spent reading and understanding the directives that need to be followed. The hours spent delivering that information to your frontline teams, only to have new or revised directives the next day.

Thank you for putting in the 12 to 16 hour days to ensure staff had personal

protective equipment (PPE) and cleaning supplies to do their job safely and properly.

Thank you for rounding with staff and boosting morale, when yours was low.

Thank you for inspiring confidence in your staff for the work they are doing, so they could remain calm, and safe to do their job effectively and precisely.

Thank you for reassuring and consoling staff when they were contact traced, when they and co-workers became ill, when staff were lost to COVID.

AND...

Then going home to self-isolate from your family, the very thing that could help you cope with all the stress.

As we continue to face COVID and these unprecedented times, know that all of the hard work you have been doing not only during COVID, but the many years before, has prepared your staff to become the frontline heroes they are. And YOU, the heroes behind them.

Also know that the OHHA is here to support you!

Leading the Educational Evolution of the Healthcare Cleaning Profession

(PHH). This certification not only incorporates recognized OHHA and OHA courses and programs, but also some post-secondary courses as part of the qualifiers for certification in addition to employment experience recognition in healthcare and non-healthcare settings.

For the first time, this certification process required an annual “renewal” process through proof of attendance of continuing education, and/or proof of educational conference and/or seminars geared toward the advancement of professional development in healthcare housekeeping. The PHH was set-up to be continually reviewed and updated to reflect the needs of healthcare practices.

Moving Forward

I thought the ISSA news release on October 8, 2020, best surmises the future of the OHHA as a Division of ISSA Canada: “We are so pleased to have OHHA

and its members join our growing ISSA family,” said ISSA Executive Director John Barrett. “It is without question a union of immense strategic importance not only to the healthcare industry in Canada, but in North America as well. This merger further demonstrates our commitment to all sectors of the cleaning industry worldwide.”

According to Wendy Boone, OHHA Executive Director, “It has always been the goal of our forefathers to become a national organization, and we can now see this goal coming to fruition.”

“This is such an exciting opportunity to ensure the OHHA remains strong and continues to be the leader in the health care housekeeping and environmental services profession,” Boone said. “Not only will we be able to elevate our members in Ontario with the highest-quality educational resources to succeed, but we will be capable of servicing health care housekeepers across Canada.”



EVS LEADERSHIP COURSE

Practical, technical and management skills necessary to manage the overall operation of an Environmental Services Department within a hospital or long-term care facility.



ABOUT THE COURSE

The Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers' Association Inc. (OHHA), a Division of ISSA, in partnership with the Ontario Hospital Association (OHA), developed the Environmental Services Leadership program. Formerly offered for enrollment by the OHA, the OHHA now has the right to this program. The program is a combination of Level I and Level II Environmental Services Courses, previously known as the Housekeeping Supervisors Course and the Executive Housekeepers Course.

OHHA has put together the most current and up to date information surrounding Environmental Cleaning in any and all Health-Care settings and anticipate that you will find this course relevant, important and significant to you and all of the stakeholders you have influence with.

OHHA's goal in providing this educational program is to provide the industry with the knowledge, skill and tool sets to over-achieve and deliver the highest quality results in whatever department or facility participants represent.

Program Duration: Eight Months **Cost Per Person:** \$1,500 +HST (group rates available)



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The Benefits of OHHA Membership

its membership. We have also seen many changes in technology resulting in new online programs, e-newsletters and video conferences playing a larger role in our careers. The regional structure also changed, and the new regions made it more difficult to “get together” on a regular basis. However, through the efforts of our board, there are still many opportunities to connect through online correspondence, the annual meeting, educational programs, and conferences.

Although, I have been retired for seven years, I am immensely proud to say I had a wonderful career in the healthcare housekeeping sector. I can honestly say that one of my best decisions was joining the OHHA. Not only did I get great support from the members, but I also gained many friends in both the members and affiliate members groups. I still cherish these friendships today.

As you now go through this COVID-19 pandemic, the amount of information and support we can share has become more important than ever before. And, now through our new merger with ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association, we can gain even more satisfaction in the knowledge, expertise, and professionalism that we can now share across our great country.



Housekeeping Professional Today

Housekeeping Professional Today is produced for the Ontario Healthcare Housekeepers Association (OHHA), a Division of ISSA, the worldwide cleaning industry association. The e-newsletter provides news and views, information on current trends as well as educational opportunities relevant to the healthcare housekeeping or environmental services professional. For more information, please contact:

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