APIC '97 PRESIDENTIAL ADDRESS

Milestones Toward the Millennium: APIC's 25th Anniversary

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APIC President

ON APRIL 18, 1972, A GROUP OF visionary individuals created our organization. This group originally met each other in January 1969, while attending the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention course on Surveillance, Prevention and Control of Hospital-Acquired Infections—also known as 1200-G. This course was created, organized, and nurtured by Claire Coppage, Assistant to the Chief for Infection Control Training, Health Agencies Branch, CDC. It was through Claire Coppage’s urging that an organization of ICPs was formed. She identified a nucleus of enthusiastic individuals from the course attendees to meet and form what was to become APIC.

Milestone 1: Forming the Organization

Burroughs-Wellcome supported a steering committee meeting at their facilities in Research Triangle Park, Raleigh, North Carolina. After four days of intense work, the Association for Practitioners in Infection Control was born! Shirley Chewick called it a multidisciplinary organization of people concerned with the problems and issues in infection control—people committed to seeking solutions through providing information, enhancing communication, and planning programs—all with the singular purpose of improving patient care.

Our first officers were Pat Lynch, President; Kay Wenzel, President-elect; Carolyn Langewisch, Corresponding Secretary; Ruth Groeneveld, Treasurer; Shirley Chewick, Vice President; and Leilani Kicklighter, Recording Secretary. Board members were Claire Coppage, Chair; Karen Axnick; Julie Garner; Marcella Pete; and Jean Vandevoorde.

In November 1972, APIC became incorporated, providing the organization the security of legal status.

Milestone 2: Journal

Our first newsletter was printed in March 1973. The editor of the APIC Newsletter was Julie Garner. It started as a 5x7 publication; in 1976, it went to full size (8½ x 11) and its name was changed from APIC Newsletter to APIC. In 1977, Mary Castle White assumed the role of editor and in 1978 the publication became APIC Journal. Finally, in 1980, it became the American Journal of Infection Control. In 1996, Dr. Elaine Larson was appointed AJIC editor. Its look has changed dramatically over the years and so has its copy; however, the dedication of the individuals involved in its development remains and is a tribute to its success.

Milestone 3: Education

In October 1973, APIC held its first national conference in Toronto. Co-chairs were Carole De Mille and Shirley Chewick. The 1977 conference was the first to have industry participate with exhibits. Our annual conferences have grown significantly and have helped shape APIC’s image over the years.

The CDC program, 1200-G, that helped start APIC was discontinued in the '80s due to restructuring at CDC. In 1989, APIC assumed the responsibility for this training and currently offers a Fundamentals of Surveillance, Prevention, and Control of Health Care Acquired Infections course three times a year. Our educational efforts have grown to include the Advanced Practice Course: Applied Health Care Epidemiology, a Certification Preparation Review course and additional 1-3 day courses, videos, learner-directed study packages, and computer-aided instructional materials.

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Milestone 4: Chapters

APIC’s first Chapter was formed on March 13, 1975. It was APIC—New England serving Connecticut, Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont. There are currently more than 110 Chapters across the U.S. as well as several international Chapters.

Milestone 5: Certification

Early in 1977, the APIC Board approved a request from APIC-New England to form an ad hoc committee to investigate the issue of certification for APIC members. The APIC Certification Association (APICCA) was established in 1981 to oversee the certification program—it eventually became the Certification Board of Infection Control (CBIC). The first exam was administered in the fall of 1983. Pat Lynch was CBIC’s first President. CBIC added the words “and Epidemiology” to its name this year.

Milestone 6: Newsletter

In November 1982, APIC President Jean Parrett announced the beginning of APIC News. It was published “several times a year.” It is now published six times per year and provides members a wealth of information on their organization’s activities.

Milestone 7: Guidelines

In May 1982, APIC appointed a Standards Committee to address the issue of standards of practice for infection control. Booklets outlining standards from other organizations were published yearly. This committee became the Guidelines Committee. In 1988, the first guideline was printed—“APIC Guideline for Use of Topical Antimicrobial Agents.”

Milestone 8: Publications

In 1983, Volumes I and II of the APIC Curriculum for Infection Control Practice were printed—Barbara Soule was the editor. The third volume was printed in 1988 with Rosemary Berg as editor. In 1996, the APIC text, APIC Infection Control and Applied Epidemiology: Principles and Practice replaced the APIC Cur-riculum—Russ Olmsted was editor. Additional APIC publications include Chemical Germicides in Health Care, the new Handbook of Infection Control, and educational pamphlets.

Milestone 9: Positions/Governmental Affairs/Regulatory Compliance

In 1978, our first position statement was printed—“Statement on Infection Control Programs.” It was updated in 1985 and later discontinued. In 1989 our first Legislative Reference Manual and Legislative and Regulatory Initiatives were printed. The Governmental Affairs Committee now routinely publishes information on regulatory issues and provides testimony before Congress.

In 1976, the then-Joint Commission on Accreditation of Hospitals (now Joint Commission on Accreditation of Healthcare Organizations or JCAHO) published their first standard that dealt specifically with infection control. APIC developed a committee in 1980 to pursue participation in the writing of these standards. Surveillance, prevention, and control of infections is currently one of 11 functions addressed in the JCAHO manual, and it is considered to be equally important as the other ten. This fact is a direct result of President Vicky Zelenka’s leadership and communication with the JCAHO in 1992.

Milestone 10: Research

The APIC Research Foundation began in 1993 based on an idea from President Linda McDonald. The Foundation facilitates the funding of priority-driven research projects. It is based on our belief that a solid research base leads to cost-effective, efficient, and high-quality patient care.

Milestone 11: Information Technology

In 1996, APIC plunged into the world of information technology. Our Home Page debuted; the Information Technology Advisory Committee was formed; and APIC’s listserv was introduced.

Milestone 12: Name/Office

In 1994, we changed the organization’s name to the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology, Inc. while we retained the acronym, APIC. This change reflects
the role of infection control professionals in the epidemiologic process.
APIC also established its national office in Washington, DC, in 1994. In late 1995, a new Executive Director was named—Christopher Laxton. He is the guiding force behind the incredible work you see today from all of APIC’s wonderful staff.

When the original Steering Committee was meeting in North Carolina, I was making arrangements to attend graduate school. During that time I attended the first conference of the Michigan Society for Infection Control which was founded in 1973. Its Board wanted to have someone coordinate a basic training program in Detroit and one of them, Diana Short, found me—an impressionable and excited attendee. That one act started me on my organizational career.

I’ve learned that it takes a lot of effort to make these organizations work. We are celebrating all APIC members during this anniversary, especially those who volunteer their time for us. These individuals will help APIC move into the next century.

Infection Control Week '98 Products are Now Available!

For a black and white flyer on IC Week products, call APIC toll-free 888-278-2742, and request Document #115. A color catalog was mailed to all APIC members and should reach member mailboxes within the first week of August. All promotional items will feature the theme and logo. The following Infection Control Week promotional items will be available for purchase: t-shirts (long and short sleeve), magnets, posters, balloons, tote bags, pens, insulated travel mugs, highlighters, pencils, buttons, calculators, banners, jar grippers, keylight keychains, stickers, stress balls, Post-It Notes®, emergency magnets, and stadium cups. Orders take 3–5 weeks to fill, however, rush service is available for an additional charge. Custom imprinting is available. Orders will be fulfilled by Health Specialties, Inc. To order by phone or request additional catalogs, call 800-822-1923.