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**For Immediate Release****First Academic Certificate Planned in Healthcare Environmental Services**

Hospitality and healthcare industries to benefit from undergraduate initiative to be created by Ohio State and the Association for the Healthcare Environment

Chicago, March 17, 2017 - The Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE) of the American Hospital Association (AHA) announces a groundbreaking partnership with The Ohio State University to create the first academic certificate in healthcare environmental services within a hospitality management program. Ohio State College of Education and Human Ecology undergraduate students studying hospitality management, as well as existing healthcare professionals, will soon have expanded management and leadership opportunities within environmental services.

“The collaborative venture with a major university will benefit both healthcare and hospitality professionals,” said Patti Costello, executive director of AHE, a professional membership group of the American Hospital Association (AHA). “Early participants will gain a competitive edge by choosing highly trained graduates who understand how to ensure health and wellness in both the healthcare environmental services and hospitality fields.”

“As I learned about the new certificate, I thought about the many parallels between a healthcare environment and a more traditional hotel or restaurant hospitality environment,” said Sue Bellan, an alumna of hospitality management and general manager of Columbus Hospitality Management. “This certificate elevates a candidate or employee’s knowledge base in several disciplines within the hotel and restaurant setting, including housekeeping, engineering, food service and even sales and marketing. I do encourage hospitality management students to consider obtaining this certificate.”

Ohio State students in the hospitality management program will be recruited first for the certificate initiative, as will students in other majors concerned with environmental health and safety. Next, a focus will be placed on the large, outside audience of existing healthcare and hospitality professionals.

Milos Bujisic, assistant professor of hospitality management, is creating the initial academic course — anticipated in spring 2018. It will include a discussion of the business of healthcare and analysis of its critical areas and challenges in relation to the hospitality business. Learners will develop the required critical-thinking skills needed to apply expertise in healthcare environmental services in either a healthcare or hospitality setting.

The next academic year, three additional courses will follow to form the undergraduate certificate program. They will cover microbiology, epidemiology and infection prevention, patient experience in healthcare, as well as a healthcare environmental services internship. The program will be delivered primarily online.

Ohio State and AHE will collaborate to provide the critically important internship in a hospital or other healthcare setting. It will provide students with hands-on practice to help direct them to the professional venue that most appeals to them.

About AHE

The Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE) is a personal membership group of the American Hospital Association. AHE is the professional organization of choice for professionals responsible for caring for the patient and resident care environment across all care settings; including hospitals, long-term care, continuing care retirement communities and ambulatory care. AHE shapes professional practice, advances and promotes the profession and promotes awareness for over 2,100 professionals working to ensure a clean and safe care environment and quality outcomes. www.ahe.org