INAUGURAL 2014 INNOVATION AWARD

By Brian Williams, MBA

The Association for the Healthcare Environment (AHE) announced on September 22, 2014, that Ecolab became the first environmental services industry leader to be presented AHE's prestigious new Innovation Award. The award was developed by the AHE Industry Advisory Council to recognize and increase awareness of improved products, processes, and technology advancements that empower individuals to improve measured outcomes in the health care environment.

Nationwide, environmental services departments face tremendous operational pressures to improve quality and patient satisfaction scores, assist with decreasing hospital acquired infections (HAIs), and dramatically reduce costs wherever possible. Department managers must utilize every tool available to improve HCAHPS scores, prevent employee injuries, and accomplish these tough operational objectives on a daily basis. Industry manufacturers and suppliers must innovate and continuously improve products and services to meet these demands, while also helping to protect the environment.

Ecolab submitted their EPA-approved and innovative OxyCide™ Daily Disinfecting Cleaner, which is a non-bleach sporicidal solution developed for daily use in health care settings. OxyCide is effective in killing a broad spectrum of harmful bacteria and viruses, including *Clostridium difficile* (*C. diff*) spores in three minutes and multi-drug resistant organisms and viruses in five minutes or less. Preventing the spread of *C. diff* is particularly difficult because its spores are resistant to standard disinfectants and can live on hard surfaces for months. According to a recent study in *Journal of the American Medical Association*, *C. diff* infections cost the health care industry $1.5 billion each year, or approximately $11,285 per case.

Hospital administrators, environmental services, and other disciplines—both clinical and non-clinical—have to work together

The Ecolab team presents their Innovation Award at EXCHANGE 2014.

toward the reduction of HAIs for a number of reasons that include potential reimbursement reductions. Medicare is set to focus on surgical site infections and infection rates from germs that are resistant to antibiotic treatments. Ecolab may have created the needed innovative solution with Oxycide.

A panel of environmental services professionals from the AHE Recognition Committee evaluated the 11 Innovation Award submissions. The winner was selected based on criteria that included process improvement, disruptive technologies, and environmentally friendly attributes. Honorable mentions were awarded to Orbio's os3 on-site cleaning and germicidal generator and Xenex's germ-zapping robot that uses pulsed xenon UV for total room disinfection. Submissions were

not limited to just industry suppliers—they also included a medical center.

AHE would also like to thank and congratulate all of the innovators: Daniels Healthcare, Filmop USA, LLC, Cintas, Cleanint, LLC, Compaction Technologies, Inc., Daylight Medical, Bassett Medical Center, and Sealed Air Diversey Care for their participation and submissions. AHE looks forward to the next Innovation Award series and encourages health care organizations and the industry to participate by sharing their innovations with all of the AHE membership. ●

Brian Williams is with Absolute Graphic Technologies, Inc., in Corona, California, and is a member of the AHE Industry Advisory Council.

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