

MEET A CHESP



BOB PAINE, CHESP

Director of Operations, Acuity Concepts, Inc.



By Heather Williams

With nearly 20 years in the industry, Bob Paine, CHESP, began his career as an in-house EVS manager/director, not knowing at the time that he'd end up working as a specialty consultant in the industry.

Paine knew quickly after joining AHE that he wanted to become CHESP certified. After joining in 2003 and becoming CHESP certified just a year later, he wanted to set himself apart from the crowd and establish true value in his position. "There are precious few in the country who have this distinction," Paine said. "Based on the numbers of professionals in the field and how many of those are certified, CHESP certification puts you in a special position to really be at the top of the pack," he said.

With the exam consisting of 110 multiple-choice questions, demonstrating

proficiency via a right-or-wrong-answer exam can seem like a daunting task. "The hardest part for me was getting past the idea that I was a bad test-taker," Paine said. After having a rough go at the practice test, Paine questioned whether he was ready to take the actual exam. "Taking the pretest was a great way to get over the anxieties of test-taking and better prepare myself for the actual exam," Paine said.

Speaking to those of us who have yet to take the exam: "If you're a seasoned, skilled professional, you should be ready now, so get past the anxiety of test taking if that's what's holding you back," he said.

Paine attributes certification to higher career satisfaction, confidence sitting 'at the table' with colleagues, and knowing that he's truly a part of a small elite group of professionals. "The initial goal was to make myself more valuable in terms of potential earnings with my salary," Paine said. "It seemed like a great investment – to spend a couple hundred dollars to get certified then turn that around to eventually earn more."

Certification definitely pays off. According to a 2012 salary survey conducted by *Health Facilities Management* magazine, certification contributes upwards of \$14,000 in annual salary earnings.

"Increasing my salary was the primary goal at the time, but it became very evident when I went out on my own doing consulting work that obtaining certification had some less tangible benefits," Paine said. "It put me in front of those whom I otherwise

may have not had the chance to get in front of."

In a field filled with credential after credential, Paine knew certification would lead to greater confidence when sitting down with colleagues. "Realistically when you're sitting at the table with infection control, practitioners, physicians and all those who have the credentials, it levels the playing field a bit."

Regarding the future of certification for the EVS profession, Paine would like a second-tier option offered. "What I would like to see beyond CHESP is another level or step in terms of demonstrating expertise – I think the next logical step would be a fellow program to further elevate our position and credibility in the field," Paine said.

Having mentored and actively promoted certification for many years, Paine has worked with nearly 200-300 potential certificants, so he's heard a lot about roadblocks from taking the leap towards becoming certified. "Realistically, if you're in the director's position and you can't sit for the exam tomorrow, you may need to rethink your training and your career path," he said. "That's truly how I feel. If you're in a manager's position and you can't pass the test, maybe it's time to back up a little bit to get certified to justify what you do in your day-to-day existence," he added.

Paine's question to answer if you're on the fence about pursuing CHESP certification: "What are you waiting for?" ●

CHESP: The Value of Professional Certification

Bob Paine, CHESP, will be presenting at EXCHANGE 2014, Wednesday, September 24, in sunny Tampa, Florida.

Come out to learn first-hand the value of pursuing and obtaining CHESP certification. We'll see you there!

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