



ALLEN E. RUDD, CHESP, ICE

General Manager, Aramark



EXPLORE spoke with Allen Rudd, CHESP, ICE, an experienced operations and support services management professional with over 30 years of EVS and related support services in health care settings. Rudd has particular expertise in quality assurance, inventory control, waste management, equipment/supply usage, training and development, infection control procedures, recycling and sustainability, and operations. He shared his experience in becoming CHESP certified and how it has affected his career over the years.

Q How long have you been a member of AHE, and when did you become CHESP certified?

I've been an AHE member since 1986 and became CHESP certified in 2000 when it was first rolled out. I am No. 14. Next year we celebrate 15 years of this program, and we've come a long way.

Q What prompted or interested you in pursuing certification?

I wanted to pursue certification after being in the industry for many years and having obtained other certifications created by local organizations. I like that CHESP certification was developed by an American Hospital Association (AHA) membership group and would command much respect and meaning as an industry leader in health care.

Q How did you prepare for certification? What was the hardest aspect in preparing to take the exam?

Since we were the first to take it, I was very nervous. Back then, there was no study guide as exists today. Being a baby boomer, I was a little intimidated about taking a test like that after all those years, but I also felt that it was an opportunity to test my knowledge and see what I learned over the years.

Q What was your experience like in taking the exam?

I went through several emotions—especially since we had to wait so long

for the results. Today we have progressed to an automated version that's available online in 50 states, and you find out real time after you complete the test whether you passed or not.

Q How did you feel after passing the exam and learning about your newly acquired certification?

I was relieved and also proud that my industry knowledge was validated. I also felt more confident when it came to sharing that knowledge with peers as it related to career development.

Q How has CHESP certification positively affected you and your role in your organization?

It brought respect as a health care professional among a group of medically trained professionals who had a certification in their respective fields. As CHESP started to become more recognized, many of the decision makers and administrators started to prefer CHESP-certified managers because they knew what you brought to the table.

Q How has CHESP certification affected your career and long-term career goals and path?

One of the things that makes CHESP so valuable career-wise is that you have to stay current/educated in the industry. In order to maintain your certification, you have to accumulate the credits

over a three-year period. Staying current means that you're able to offer the most accurate and innovative support to your organization.

Q What would you tell others who are considering perusing certification? How should they best prepare?

It is the best investment in yourself. Your peers will look up to you and acknowledge what you've accomplished. Now since resources are at your disposal, take advantage of the study guide and training sessions offered by AHE, and collaborate with the huge network of current CHESP certificants. So many have benefited from taking the practice exam, too, because it's a great measuring tool—letting you know what you need to focus on the most as you prepare for the exam.

Q What's the very best thing about being a certified CHESP?

The respect, acknowledgment, collaboration, and that you're asked to "sit at the table," where in the past perhaps you were excluded and had to live with the outcome and make it work. Now our advice and expertise is sought after and it makes for a much more effective and integrated environment for infection control. The clinical staff now looks at our operation as a partnership instead of just a service department—that's a huge accomplishment for our profession. ●