

## MEET A T-CHEST

# THE VALUE OF TRAINING

## AN INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK COVINGTON, T-CHEST



**Patrick Covington** is an environmental services operations manager at Hennepin County Medical Center in Minneapolis, Minnesota. He has a bachelor's degree in business administration and is currently working on his M.B.A. with a human resources concentration. He has been in the environmental services field for nine years. He became the first T-CHEST in Minnesota and is becoming a CHESP. Patrick also participates on the AHE education & knowledge management committee.

### Q. What made you sign up for the T-CHEST program?

I was actually looking for some kind of accreditation program for our operating room (OR) staff. Everybody who works in the OR has some type of certified education except environmental services. When I found the CHEST program on the AHE website, I knew the program was what I was looking for.

### Q. How did you get your facility to see the value and approve the cost?

I did not have trouble convincing my director that the training was needed.

We have 200+ employees, and maintaining an effective training program is difficult. The CHEST program standardizes the training into easy to follow and understand modules. I have almost finished training the management staff and will begin training employees within the next two months.

### Q. To you, what's the most important part of the training program?

I think the infection prevention section makes the largest impact on the learners. My management team really understands the importance of cleaning versus

disinfecting and why each is important. In addition, the focus on protecting patients and oneself is paramount to employee and patient health.

### Q. How do you think the training will help your staff and organization?

My plan is to train key employees in critical areas like OR, burn unit, labor and delivery, and discharges. After their CHEST certification, they will be designated new employee trainers in these critical areas. This helps the department and organization by ensuring new employees are receiving the right training from designated training staff; I am the only training manager for 200+ employees, and I cannot do it all! The CHEST certification will also inject a lot of pride into the staff and motivate them to keep cleaning standards high.

### Q. As a trainer, what's the most important thing to keep in mind when delivering the info to your trainees?

Take it slow and make sure the employees are understanding the message. In my hospital English is a second language for the majority of the environmental services department. I need to ensure what I am saying is being heard and successfully understood. That is why I think consistently asking the staff follow-up questions provided in the training keeps them engaged and allows the trainer to gauge how much information is being retained. ●

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