



## LIZBETH WHITE, CHESP

ES Manager, Vidant Health



**E**XPLORE spoke with Lizbeth White, CHESP, an Environmental Services (EVS) Manager for two Vidant Health hospitals in eastern North Carolina with over 25 years management experience in public service, industry and healthcare. She is currently responsible for budgeting, planning, performance improvement, infection control, training, hazardous materials and waste stream management and the hospitals' sustainability program. Under her direction, Vidant Chowan Hospital was recognized as one of America's 50 Greenest Hospitals by *Becker's Hospital Review*.

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

I have been an AHE member since 2004 and CHESP certified since December 2013.

### Q What prompted or interested you in pursuing certification?

I pursued certification for professional recognition, self-motivation, financial benefits and increased opportunities. The AHE 2012 Salary Survey was a great motivator, but primarily it was to earn recognition as a professional in this discipline. I've noticed that "CHESP-preferred" is showing up in many of the job postings, and our facility is considering adding it as a job requirement for EVS managers and supervisors.

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

I participated in the AHE CHESP study group and used the materials provided

in the course. It is important to note that successful group study requires an investment of time and full participation. I also invested in the Self-Assessment Examination offered through the AHA certification store. I took advantage of many learning opportunities provided through AHE but also APIC, Practice Greenhealth and many others. I regularly read *EXPLORE*, *Health Facilities Management*, *Infection Control Today* and other EVS-related trade magazines.

### Q What was your experience like in taking the exam?

For me, taking the exam was easy because I was well-prepared.

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

I felt proud to earn certification from our AHA/AHE professional organization and the recognition of my peers.

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

I was rewarded with a bonus and recognized by our administration team, which places a high value on continuing education. Our Infection Control and Quality Department recognizes that being CHESP-certified is confirmation of a knowledge base for a qualified partner for infection control and quality improvement programs and initiatives. My director and facilities department rely on me to provide expertise in the areas of hazardous materials, sustainability, and design recommendations for renovation and new construction,

in addition to EVS and laundry/linen management.

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

First, I intend to help build respect for my environmental services manager/colleagues throughout our health system by encouraging them to also become certified. I will enlist the support of our infection control practitioners to encourage their counterparts throughout our system to promote CHESP certification. If I ever find myself in the job market, I feel CHESP certification will distinguish me from other non-certified applicants. It is certainly something I would consider in the hiring process.

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

Earning the certification without being mandated by an employer shows self-motivation and drive. It is information any EVS manager (or manager-hopeful) needs to know.

### Q What do you see in the future regarding certification for environmental services leaders?

Moving into the future, I see a growing respect for the profession of EVS management in healthcare and a corresponding increase in compensation and opportunities.

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

I have a strong sense of personal accomplishment and the respect of my peers. ●