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ST★R Report

Partnering for Health in the Indoor Environment

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Partnering for Health in the Indoor Environment

A new, unique educational partnership between GBAC and Allergy Standards Limited (ASL) will benefit both organizations, their members and, most importantly, the communities they serve. This exciting collaboration was publicized in November at the ISSA Show North America 2021.

"Allergy Standards Limited are delighted to announce our partnership with the ISSA's Global Biorisk Advisory Council," Dr. John McKeon, Chief Executive Officer, ASL, said. "This is a unique collaboration to empower and educate people across the globe on the urgent issue of health in the indoor environment and how it impacts on well-being."

"The partnership is really exciting because ASL sees that the GBAC facility accreditation is very important for them, as well," Patty Olinger, Executive Director, GBAC, said. "We're both trying to create healthy environments and

recognize the importance of indoor air quality. We're taking separate paths, but we're coming together at the same spot in that we want healthy indoor air environments for our homes, organizations and businesses."

ASL Brings Significant Skills to the Partnership

Allergy Standards Limited, based in Dublin, is an independent, international certification company that creates meaningful scientific standards for testing a wide range of products and services to determine their impact on improving indoor air quality, with a particular focus on those with asthma and allergic sensitivities. Products undergo laboratory testing to ensure they reduce allergen exposure and limit pollutants in the air. Only those products that meet the efficacy and safety performance criteria are awarded the certification mark.

“By partnering with GBAC, we are able to bring our education programs to professionals who have ultimate control over how our offices, schools, restaurants and hotels are maintained.”

— Dr. John McKeon, Chief Executive Officer, ASL



Dr. John McKeon, CEO, ASL, addresses team members.

Over the past 20 years, ASL has been testing and certifying best-in-class products and services for every room in the home, office, hotel or school to enable people to create healthier indoor environments. The organization's medical and scientific knowledge and expertise is unique and has been made accessible through online educational courses. ASL, through the ASL Academy, run a variety of learning and development programs, providing education and actionable solutions to optimize the indoor environment and improve health and wellness.

“By partnering with GBAC, we are able to bring our education programs to professionals who have ultimate control over how our offices, schools, restaurants and hotels are maintained,” McKeon added. “The GBAC STAR Facility Accreditation is the gold standard of prepared facilities.”

According to McKeon, the collaboration will address the knowledge gap that exists around the concept of a healthy indoor environment by empowering and educating the GBAC STAR family across the globe. Healthier indoor air is vital to the well-being of our communities. This educational opportunity will endow the GBAC community with the knowledge it needs to maintain buildings to the highest standards.

“Our mission is to empower people to create the healthiest possible indoor environment, so when looking for a partner to educate facilities managers and cleaning professionals around this topic, ISSA was first on our wish list,” McKeon said. “GBAC's program relies on comprehensive training, which teaches the proper protocols, correct disinfection techniques and cleaning best practices for biohazard situations like the novel coronavirus. Our missions are aligned and we are uniquely positioned to

deliver education that directly impacts the health of building occupants. The principles of best practice cleaning apply to all pathogens in the indoor environment, whether they are infectious, like the coronavirus or non-infectious pathogens such as allergens. Universal principles such as controlling at source, reducing exposure and removal and elimination all apply.”

What Lies Ahead in the Coming Months

Plans for the partnership are focused on developing this distinctive educational program to share with other organizations such as facilities management and cleaning service providers, who may not have the necessary skillset and knowledge to employ the correct guidelines and equipment. Olinger said creating the educational program is under way and that courses could be offered in early 2022.

“Creating a healthier indoor environment is key to the health outcomes of the building occupant. The main ways to achieve this are through source control, cleaning our air, cleaning our surfaces and maintaining proper ventilation,” McKeon said. “Cleaning for health rather than just cleaning for appearance was a core message at the recent ISSA Show in Las Vegas. This mantra aligns with our own mission: Improve lives by empowering people to create the healthiest possible indoor environment through science (ASL Standards), education (ASL Academy) and innovation (ASL Institute).”

“These partnerships deliver incredible value to our communities,” Olinger said. “With ASL and the other organizations we're working with, we see the incredible benefits of bringing together strong partnerships to better public health.” ★



ISSA Show Reports Impressive Results

For the first time in two years, ISSA Show North America was held November 15-18, 2021, with more than 10,000 attendees and 521 exhibitors spanning 185,000 square feet of exhibit space throughout the expo floor. The Global Biorisk Advisory Council™ (GBAC), a Division of ISSA, was spotlighted with a huge educational role at the show which offered an impressive conference program featuring over 100 education sessions, workshops, panels, training and certification courses over four days.

ISSA Show North America is the one week when the entire professional cleaning industry comes together to learn and do business. The event was hosted at the Las Vegas Convention Center, a GBAC STAR™-accredited facility.

GBAC Executive Director Patricia Olinger presented a two-hour workshop on Audits and Inspections, and it was well attended with people from a wide variety of backgrounds. Attendees participated in an interactive hands-on activity of conducting an on-site audit of the Las Vegas Convention Center. During her workshop, Olinger reviewed the fundamentals of developing an audit and inspection program to strengthen a company through a continuous improvement cycle.

GBAC hosted a Scavenger Hunt at the show with over 100 participants. Prizes included an iPad Pro and Air-Pods. Some lucky winners received bio-pullovers from g95.com. The Scavenger Hunt was designed to promote GBAC Registered Technologies and



GBAC team members attending the ISSA Show North America 2021.



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Registered Programs. Each participant was required to visit every participating booth to gather a different-colored stamp on their passport.

ISSA Show North America called upon the most effective protocols and procedures in place to protect the health and safety of exhibitors, attendees, vendors and others. In addition to GBAC STAR accreditations from the venue, ISSA Show North America was organized in accordance with Informa's AllSecure health and safety standards, a detailed set of enhanced measures to provide the highest levels of hygiene and safety. Additionally, the cleaning contractor for ISSA Show North America, United Service Companies, is a GBAC STAR-accredited service provider.

Mark your calendars for ISSA Show North America 2022, October 10-13, at Chicago's McCormick Place Convention Center, which has been GBAC STAR accredited since August 2020. For more information, visit www.issashow.com. ★



Representatives from United Service Companies, Resorts World Las Vegas and the Las Vegas Convention and Visitors Authority receive their GBAC STAR plaque from Executive Director Patty Olinger.

Omicron – Let's Be Resilient

As we head into the holiday season, the world is hit with a new coronavirus variant, Omicron. Since Omicron was announced I have been asked, "What should we do? Do we need to change anything? How concerned should we be?" I've also heard about the apprehension from many that we do not want to be shut down again.

Make no mistake: There will be more COVID variants, and there will be other viruses in the future. Omicron is not the last and, as we already know, is not the first. It is a COVID variant, that scientists and the medical professionals are noticing. We are still researching it on all points. To learn more about Omicron, watch the latest GBACTv BioTalk at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_l18z61q2Q.

What we can say is that GBAC STAR Facilities and Service Providers have worked hard to show your employees, customers and communities that you are prepared. Display your STAR proudly; you have earned it.

The Virus Doesn't Care

A month ago, I wrote the article "The Virus Doesn't Care and It Never Will." You can review it at <https://www.issa.com/articles/the-virus-doesnt-care>. The article features seven key points to keep us safe. As individuals and businesses, these are items we can control.

The seven points are:

- **Get vaccinated**
- **Wear your mask**
- **Keep your distance**
- **Assess and address your facility's ventilation**
- **Wash your hands**
- **Clean and disinfect high-touch surfaces**
- **Get educated** – Check out the new Infectious Disease Awareness Module (30 minutes) appropriate for all



Patricia (Patty) Olinger
Executive Director, GBAC

your employees at <https://gbacacademy.issa.com/product/infectious-disease-awareness-in-the-workplace>

And let's add an eighth point:

- **Get tested.** Consider testing for COVID-19 as you plan your family get-togethers or holiday party. Remember, protect the vulnerable.

As we have said all along, we are in this together. We are safer when we work together to...Be Resilient.

Have a safe and wonderful holiday season. ★

Where Do We Stand

GBAC STAR Facility Reaccreditation

As of November 15, 2021

GBAC STAR Facility Reaccreditation is an annual process that builds on an initial accreditation to ensure facilities continue to evolve, improve and advance with the performance-based GBAC STAR program elements. More than 4,000 facilities make up the GBAC STAR family and many are in the process of reaccreditation, while others earn initially accreditation.

83% of facilities committed to reaccreditation

294 facilities reaccredited

To learn more about this process, contact GBAC Sales at <https://gbac.issa.com/contact>.



Omicron is in the News

BioTalk, a production of GBACTv, features a new video discussion, "Omicron Puts World on Edge, Amplifies Cleaning Industry Concerns." Omicron is still SARS-CoV-2 but a variant of it such as Delta, Alpha and others. However, data is still coming in Omicron's transmissibility, severity and other factors. The panel discusses the latest information and how our communities continue to build resilience to this virus. The featured speaker is Dr. John Lowe, a member of the GBAC Scientific Advisory Board and faculty member at the University of Nebraska Medical Center. To learn more about Dr. Lowe and his involvement with pandemic preparedness and response, visit his faculty page at



UNMC, <https://www.unmc.edu/publichealth/departments/environmental/facultyandstaff/john-low.html>. Also featured is Patty Olinger, executive director of GBAC; and Dr. Gavin Macgregor-Skinner, senior director of GBAC and moderator Jeff Cross, ISSA editorial director. This panel discussion concentrates on what the variant is doing, how it is known to be transmissible, how the cleaning industry can respond and much more.

Visit https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=u_l18z61q2Q for this latest BioTalk. ★



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