Get In Depth and Advanced Training on JCAHO Standards April 24

Don’t miss the opportunity to get help with Environment of Care issues from a speaker of national renown for a minimal fee.

Fred Osborne, P.E., will lead In Depth and Advanced Training on the Joint Commission EC Standards at the annual all-day NEHES Spring Seminar Friday, April 24. Spring Seminar is one of two major Seminars NEHES plans every year to cover issues critical to members’ professional growth.

Osborne will discuss EC Benchmarking as well as Prioritization and Improving Requirements and Changes in the EC Standards. President of Osborne Engineering, Inc. of Birmingham, AL, he has been a clinical faculty member at JCAHO since 1992 and a member of its HealthCare Safety Committee since 1996.

He has also completed Mock JCAHO surveys, EC Reviews, and Statements of Condition all across the United States.

Jeff Thomas, representative to NEHES from the Maine Hospital Engineers Society, and other chapter members are working on plans for the seminar, to be held at the Sheraton Tara Hotel, Leominster, MA. Anyone who doesn’t receive a registration form should call Jeff, Manager of Plant and Engineering, Mercy Hospital (Portland), at (207) 879-3574.

Cost is $75 for NEHES members; $100 for non-members (with $25 applied to the total cost of a NEHES membership).

8:00 a.m. - Registration; 8:30 a.m. - Introduction / Survey Process; 8:45 a.m. - Overview of EC Standards, ORYX, and JCAHO/OSHA Relationship; 9:00 a.m. - Measurement, Prioritization, and Improvement Requirements - benchmarking (comparative data base for all seven EC program areas); Safety Committee measurement guidelines; performance improvement standards; and annual evaluations; 1:00 p.m. - Changes for 1998: EC 2.12 (Life Safety Inspection, Testing, and Maintenance), interim life safety measures, second go around on the Statement of Conditions, performance improvement standards, and social environment standards; 2:45 p.m. - Other problem areas: management plans, annual evaluations, fire drills, emergency generator testing, preventative maintenance requirements, no smoking requirements, training and education, and competencies; 4:15 p.m. - Questions, wrap-up.

Board, Committee Chair Call Retreat Productive

Although the holidays were fast approaching, several dedicated board members and committee chair spent a weekend December 4-6 planning NEHES activities and agenda for the new year.

The annual board retreat gives Society leaders the chance to work through a long agenda and discuss issues for a longer period of time than regular monthly board meetings allow.

Many leaders have participated in retreats since they were instituted three years ago. This retreat, held in North Conway, NH, attracted 19 attendees who discussed everything from Fall and Spring Seminars to member education, budget, newsletter, and membership.

“The work done there is incredible,” said Kurt Peterson, NEHES president and Project Manager, Cooley Dickinson Hospital (Northampton, MA). “To put in the amount of time it takes to go away for a weekend shows the extreme dedication of our members. We accomplished a lot.”

“I highly recommend them for board members. It gets everyone focused and it’s extremely worthwhile,” said Jack McCarthy, Project Manager and Engineering Consultant, Hospital for Special Care (New Britain, CT). It was the third retreat for Mark English, NEHES president-elect and Director of Engineering at Hartford (CT) Hospital. “The board retreat essentially produces the objectives, goals, and directions of the entire Society for the coming year, and it’s where all of the brainstorming takes place.”

Dick Harris, NEHES treasurer, said, “It was a fast-paced agenda, with a variety of pertinent issues and decisions required to run this organization.”

“Kurt did an excellent job of facilitating the retreat,” said Bob Loranger, Director of Facilities at New England Medical Center (Boston), ASHE president-elect, and NEHES secretary. “Everyone had their say. Nothing was cut short or tabled.”

Attending their first retreat were Richard Malnstrom, Plant Engineer, Boston Medical Center (Boston), Research Committee, who will study teleconferencing possibilities for some NEHES meetings; Robert Bunzick, East Harwich, MA, alternate Massachusetts representative to the board; and Joan Harrigan, executive secretary.

Mark English is Appointed President-Elect

Mark English, Director of Engineering at Hartford (CT) Hospital, has been appointed NEHES president-elect. The office of president-elect was vacant due to former Treasurer Tom Waittaker’s job relocation. NEHES bylaws provide that the president can appoint someone to the position.

Mark joined NEHES in 1995 and the Connecticut Healthcare Engineers Society in 1994. He is its treasurer, and has been president, the 1996 NEHES Fall Seminar Chair, and Scholarship Chair. He has worked in healthcare engineering for more than 25 years, as Supervising Biomedical Engineer, Operating Room Engineer, and Clinical Engineering Director.

“I am deeply honored by this appointment, and recognize the significance of the obligations to the Society,” he said. “I’m interested in serving my profession, in this region, in whatever capacity NEHES needs me.”
President's Comments

Kurt Peterson, NEHES' new president, is the Construction Project Manager at Cooley Dickinson Hospital (Northampton, MA).

I would like to start this column by wishing all our NEHES members and friends a happy new year. This will be a very exciting year for our Society. There are many changes on the horizon within our realms again for 1998, and we will try our best to continue to supply the educational programming you need to perform your duties properly at an affordable price. We also believe this newsletter to be one of the best benefits of membership. I know you'll agree the quality has been increasing consistently over the last few years. I am very enthusiastic about the members sitting on the board and the energy level shown.

President-Elect Appointed

Due to a job relocation outside of New England, Tom Whittaker stepped down from his position of president-elect on the board just before the end of the year. The bylaws state that the president will make an appointment for any vacant board positions.

The executive board met to discuss an appointment and, as Don Garrison's last official duty as president, Mark English was asked to fill the vacancy and accepted. I hope you will all join me in

thanking Tom for all his dedicated years of service to NEHES and to Mark for stepping up to the plate to fill this very important position.

Mark's appointment will last until the 1998 annual meeting at which time a vote will be needed from the membership for the presidency. My hope is that to keep good continuity in the Society, Mark will be voted to the presidency.

Get Ready for Spring Seminar

The Spring Seminar will not be held in Boston this year. We voted to hold this program at a location much more reasonably priced and central to New England. You will be receiving your registration package very soon. Jeff Thomas from Maine is the chairman and will be providing us with some wonderful information on the changes affecting us from the Joint Commission, including ORYX.

We will continue to hold the pricing as low as possible, making this a great value for your institutions.

We'll See You in Bermuda!

I'm sure you are all aware of the location of the 1998 Fall Seminar by now. I'm not sure if you are aware of just how much effort the New Hampshire chapter has been putting into this program to make it all work. The idea came to them nearly two years ago. The members of the board were a little nervous about logistics, to say the least.

But after much research by New Hampshire, including a visit to the hosting hotel and numerous presentations to the board with many different scenarios, we were all very enthusiastic about the program and the future possibilities. We are part of ASHE Region One and, as such, have Canada, Europe, Bermuda, and, as of this year, New York in our region. No matter where you live, if you are in healthcare, you have similar problems to solve and issues to address.

With the information available to us all now at the touch of a button, this has become a very small world. Many of our members have told me they are going to take a few extra days at the extraordinary low rates that New Hampshire has secured to be used as a vacation. They realize this deal would not be available without the group buying power. Please make your plans early so all will go smoothly.

We Need Your Feedback

Your board and I will be working hard this year to bring you the programming you want to see. Please open all correspondence you receive from NEHES promptly and answer any questionnaires so we know your wants.

Liaison Update

Jack McCarthy is a Long-Time NFPA Watcher

Jack McCarthy has been closely following NFPA activities and the impact of its codes on health care ever since 1976, when Ralph Nader declared that 1,200 people were accidentally electrocuted in hospitals each year.

"We were hearing these things that just weren't true," Jack said. "AHA had a big push on for hospitals to get someone from the staff to get involved with NFPA, and I was the one appointed by my facility."

Located in Quincy, MA, the NFPA was formed in 1896. The international nonprofit organization has more than 68,000 members. Its sole mission is to "reduce the burden of fire on the quality of life by advocating

scientifically-based consensus codes and standards."

Until 1976, NFPA "sections," or committees, were composed solely of fire marshalls, firefighters, architects, and other professionals, often called "enforcers." As a result of AHA efforts, NFPA formed a healthcare section which develops codes for healthcare equipment and activities.

Jack's responsibility as NEHES liaison to NFPA is to report on any topics - "hot" or otherwise - that come before the NFPA with importance to NEHES members.

"Advocacy has really become the byword" between healthcare professionals and "enforcers," said Jack, a member of the Connecticut Hospital Engineers Society and NEHES, and Project Manager and Engineering Consultant for the Hospital of Special Care (New Britain). "If we all work together, we come up with better products. This is pretty much the way it's been going for seven years."

Jack reports on the activities of two committees - NFPA 99 (healthcare facilities) and the Life Safety Code NFPA 101. Knowing what proposals are in front of the NFPA can give NEHES members advance notice of codes and regulations that might be changed, he said. Codes are subject to interpretation by state health departments and local and state officials, with resulting ramifications for healthcare facilities.
JCAHO Update

Read These JCAHO Tips Before Your Next Survey
By Robert J. Thompson, P.E.
NEHES/JCAHO Liaison Safety and Fire Protection Engineer Lynnfield, MA

Late in 1997, JCAHO surveyed a number of New England hospitals belonging to a multi-site healthcare organization. This writer “sat in on” six of those surveys. The following is a summary of the issues that seemed to receive emphasis by that particular surveyor.

You must realize that there is a variability among the surveyors, so emphasis is a personal matter to a degree. Please call me at (617) 687-3050 for more information.

Fire and Safety
-Doors received a great deal of attention and constituted most Type I citations (space between/under doors, self-latching, self-closing, fire rating, etc.) Typically, coins are used to measure gaps.

-Every exit access, exit, and exit discharge door must be unlocked unless clinically authorized. Assure your locked-door policy is current and met.

-Doors opening with both a full width leaf and a narrow “fixed” leaf (two leaves) can be troublesome. Assure fixed leaf is dead-bolted top and bottom.

-Penetrations need to be sealed OR (this surveyor) wanted there to be an ongoing program to keep them sealed.

-Construction-area dust and fire barriers were evaluated.

-Cooking system protection was inspected. The surveyor expected a portable extinguisher within the immediate area as well as in nourishment kitchens.

General Safety and Health
-The inspection typically began in penthouse, or surveyor otherwise visited mechanical equipment rooms, looking for evidence of smoking and security from access.

-Evidence of “illegal” smoking was generally sought.

-Smoking area separation, particularly regarding smoke migration into building spaces, was a concern.

-The elevator communication system was checked.

-Dietetics coolers were checked for cleanliness and emergency latch release.

-A need for breakaway shower heads and curtains in psych areas was raised by nurse surveyors.

-Cylinder storage was explored. Securing of cylinders, proper room fire separation, and locking from unauthorized access were at issue. (Don’t let them gig you for non-fire-rated exterior doors.)

-Remote dead-man switch feature on trash compactors was evaluated.

Coming in Next Newsletter
We will present the major program review issues actually discussed during the surveys.

How Union Relations Hurt a JCAHO Survey
Inside the Joint Commission (November 3, 1997) advises that your relationship with your hospital workers union may prove very relevant to your accreditation status.

JIC reported that union complaints to the JCAHO toppled Columbia HCA’s largest hospital (Columbia Sunrise, Las Vegas) from Accreditation with Commendation to Accreditation with four Type I Recommendations.

The October, 1997 action was based on two surprise visits arising from “stories of ‘hallway healthcare’ and chronic understaffing,” the report said. It would be reasonable to suggest that such actions could extend to Environment of Care standards as well.

Submitted by,
Robert J. Thompson, P.E.

Most Read NEHES Newsletter Cover to Cover and Rate Content High
By Dan Ayres
Vice President for Facilities Services
Fletcher Allen Health Care, Burlington, VT

During the Fall Seminar, a survey of members in attendance was conducted.

Overall, the newsletter was highly rated by those who responded — 92% read the newsletter cover to cover and gave it an average rating of 8.8 on a scale of 1 to 10. Of those responding, 80% rated the overall value of the newsletter as high, and 20%, of medium value.

I find this to be a very encouraging response based on an input by nearly 13% of the total NEHES membership. This could be a skewed pattern of response because those attending the Seminar are strong supporters of the Society in general.

Highest-rated regular features were the President’s Comments and Chapter in the Spotlight. Lowest rated were Liaison Update and New Members in the Spotlight. The New Member feature was the least highly rated with 13 high and 19 medium responses. No regular feature, however, received less than a medium score.

Those surveyed were asked if they would support means to subsidize the annual newsletter budget, which is approximately $10,000. The two methods would be to sell advertisements or to sell subscriptions, principally to vendors.

The response was generally positive for augmenting the newsletter budget. Vendors interviewed during the Seminar unanimously supported the concept of subscriptions.

Members also offered story ideas for future issues, including JCAHO/code updates and changes with 5 requests; competing with outsourcing; government/legislative impacts on health care; technical, design, and engineering advancements; safety and security issues, development of “best practices,” and a calendar of NEHES chapters’ educational seminars. All of these are excellent suggestions, and I, as editor, will attempt to work these into future editions.

If you have any suggestions or observations about the newsletter, please call or e-mail me at (802) 651-8434, or dan.ayres@vtmednet.org.

Jerry Ilaria to Discuss 1998 JCAHO Standards
The New Hampshire Healthcare Engineers Society will sponsor a free discussion Thursday, March 12, on this year’s new JCAHO standards at the New Hampshire Hospital Association building in Concord, NH.

Well-known consultant Jerry Ilaria will lead a group discussion regarding the JCAHO accreditation process from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. The meeting is free and open to all NEHES members throughout New England, but reservations must be made with Steve Cutter, Director of Engineering Services at Cheshire Medical Center (Keene).
Reach Steve by phone, (603) 355-2040, fax, (603) 357-2905, or by email, scutter@cheshire-med.com.
New Hampshire Engineers Want to Meet You in Bermuda!

The 40 members of the New Hampshire Society of Healthcare Engineers share a common goal - organizing the first NEHES Fall Seminar ever held in a different country.

Planning for the event started last year. Members have divided into several committees to cover all bases, according to NHSH President John Wright. "My main goals as president are to support the efforts of the Fall '98 Seminar Committee - also the chapter's primary goal this year - and to coordinate, along with our vice president, an educational seminar related to JCAHO," John said. "Many NHSH members will be preparing for their surveys this spring." (See Education story on Page 3 for information about this seminar.)

New Hampshire members represent Plant Operations and Maintenance Engineering supervisory positions.

John is Director of Safety and Security at Cheshire Medical Center (Keene). He has previously held the offices of chapter vice president and secretary/treasurer. David Fitch, vice president, is the Facilities Manager at Memorial Hospital (North Conway). Michael Buxton, secretary/treasurer, is the Director of Environmental Services at Healthsouth Rehabilitation (Concord).

Members meet monthly at the New Hampshire Hospital Association building in Concord. Several are NEHES members as well.

Ray Dixon of New London helped found NHSH in 1971. Now retired from Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center (Hanover), he attended many NEHES meetings throughout New England.

"I thought we ought to have one here in New Hampshire," he said. "Three of us got it going. We sent out letters to other hospitals and held meetings at each other's facilities. We all had the same problems. The group grew steadily."

Julien Bellavance of East Plainfield, another charter member, said the chapter was especially helpful for smaller hospitals.

"We could call on each other and solve our problems."

NEHES Welcomes New Members From Diverse Backgrounds

Debby Burgess is the Director of Arrange Care/Environmental Services, Exeter Health Resources, 10 Buzell Ave., Exeter, NH 03833 (603-778-6790). In health care for 22 years, she oversees Centralized Scheduling, Admitting and Registration, Emergency Support Services (Transportation and Security), Environment of Care, Facilities and Engineering, Housekeeping, and Laundry.

Allen Croteau is the HVAC Foreman at Dana Farber Cancer Institute, 44 Binney St., Boston, MA 02115 (617-632-3185). He previously worked in HVAC at a computer company. "There were some critical areas there, but nothing like this," he said. His supervisors recommended that he join NEHES. He and his staff have been busy with the construction of an 18-story building.

Donald Croteau is the Assistant Director of Facilities Management at Landmark Medical Center, 115 Cass Ave., Woonsocket, RI 02895 (401-769-4100 ext. 2287). He was hired at Landmark to wash floors while in high school, and has been promoted to general maintenance person, electrician, and supervisor. He is also a member of the Rhode Island chapter.

Peter Duffy is the Director of Plant Facilities and Biomedical Engineering at the Hospital of Saint Raphael, 1450 Chapel St., New Haven, CT 06511 (203-789-3968). He came to the hospital's construction management department six years ago after a career in construction and engineering. He joined NEHES and the Connecticut chapter to supplement his knowledge of facilities design and code compliance.

Charles Hoffman, PE, directs Plant Operations at Frisbie Memorial Hospital, 11 Whitehall Road, Rochester, NH 03867 (603-335-8427). Also a member of the New Hampshire chapter, he is an engineer by trade and worked in nuclear facilities for the past eight years. This is his first job in health care.

George Hultgren is the Director of Plant Operations and Safety at Clinton Hospital, 201 Highland St., Clinton, MA 01510 (508-368-3000). In health care since 1984, his first position was at Rutland (MA) Hospital after working as a factory representative for machine companies. Clinton Hospital has been purchased by the University of Massachusetts and is undergoing renovations and new construction. George is also a member of the Boston Engineers Club.

Daniel McIntyre is Executive Vice President of the Johnson Health Network, 201 Chestnut Hill Road, Stafford Springs, CT 06076 (860-684-8163). First a civil engineer, he received a graduate degree in hospital administration and joined Yale-New Haven Hospital as an associate administrator. He was hired by the Johnson Health Network to build a health network, an approximately $90 million organization.

"I joined NEHES because it's important to have some ongoing education in the technical areas," he said.

Maine Elects New Officers

By Jeff Thomas, Mgr., Plant & Engineering Mercy Hospital, Portland, ME

Ron Vachon, Department of Veterans Affairs, is the new president of the Maine Hospital Engineers Society. Other new officers are Milt Dudley, Maine General Medical Center, vice president; Gary Gerow, Bangor Mental Health Institute, treasurer; Don Thompson, Eastern Maine Medical Center, secretary; Mike Bradstreet, Aetna Hospital, scholarship chairman; and Jeff Thomas, Mercy Hospital, bylaws and Maine NEHES representative.

Outgoing officers completing two-year terms include Jeff Thomas, president, and Jerry Bacon, Penobscot Bay Medical Center, vice president. Jeff thanks his officers for their help over the past two years, and the Maine engineers for their regular attendance at monthly meetings, and extends a best of luck to the new officers.
Six Excellent Reasons Why You Should Attend Fall Seminar ’98 in Bermuda

NEHES’ first “off-shore” Fall Seminar, complete with vendors, educational presenters, members, and spouses, will travel to Bermuda Nov. 9-12.

Being planned by the New Hampshire Society of Healthcare Engineers, Fall Seminar has already attracted several Gold vendors who will pay $2,000 each to have prominent exposure to attendees.

1. The Program
Steve Cutter, the Society’s Education Committee chair, is pulling together a full, meaningful program with several distinguished speakers. So far, these include Ode Kiel, Safety Management Services, Inc.; Dean Samet, JCAHO; and Robert Solomon, NFPA. The last two speakers will participate in a panel discussion which may also include an AIA representative. Some Gold sponsors will present educational programs related to their products and services. Watch the NEHES web site, www.nehes.org, for program updates as speakers and activities are lined up, and your mail for more information.

2. The Location
All activities will take place at the Marriott Castle Harbour Resort, a five-star resort with gourmet indoor and outdoor restaurants, three pools, two ocean beaches (one is the island’s largest), all water sports, complete health club, oceanfront guest rooms, tennis courts, and 18-hole championship golf course, par 71, designed by Charles Banks. The resort is a 90-minute flight from Boston.

Temperatures are expected to be 75-79 (air) and 70-75 (water).

3. The Vendors
Organizers expect a record number of vendors/sponsors to attend. Gold sponsors to date include Simplex, Wrems Associates, Garland Co., Technology in Medicine, Inc., and Landis & Staefa.

The all-day vendor show, with many contests and give-aways, is Nov. 10.

4. The Cost
Expect costs to be reasonable - plane fare, about $325; room and two great meals per day, $175 per day; seminar registration fee, $195; golf, $125 per person with cart; spouse program, $100 for two meals per day and three-day program including cruise. There is no extra room charge for spouses.

5. The Activities
The Golf Tournament will be held Nov. 9. Other activities will include NEHES board and annual meetings, past presidents breakfast, vendor appreciation and vendor/engineer social hours, and group dinner and dancing.

6. Vacation at Group Rates
Any attendee arriving up to three days prior to or departing up to seven days following Fall Seminar can take advantage of the reduced room rate given to NEHES members.

Key Personnel for Fall Seminar ’98
Chair: Tom Humphrey
Educational Program: Steve Cutter
Finance: Steve Shaw
Golf Tournament: Dick Vargo
Member Registration: Mike Buxton and Derek Seeley. Call Mike if you don’t receive information by late March/early April: (603) 226-9800.
Please return registrations promptly so that planning can continue.
Planning and Logistics: Steve Cutter, Steve Shaw
Publicity: John Wright and David Fitch
Vendor Registration and Shipping: Call Rick Bowen, (603) 742-5252, and Jim Woods, (603) 225-2711, if you’d like certain vendors to be invited.

Member in the Spotlight

Tom O’Sullivan of the Western Mass Chapter

Officers of the Western Mass Society of Healthcare Engineers say Tom O’Sullivan is the committee member they can always count on no matter what has to be done.

Although he has never held a NEHES or chapter office, Tom has helped leaders of both groups with all kinds of projects for the past 12 years.

“He’s had such great involvement with Western Mass and NEHES,” said Western Mass chapter president Don Spear, also the Plant Operations Supervisor at Cooley Dickinson Hospital (Northampton, MA). “He has had broad business accomplishments and was our unanimous choice among the officers for this honor.”

Tom plays down his achievements, saying only that “committee workers get the work done. I feel honored that I was chosen by the group. I have put a lot into it, and I appreciate the thought.”

He has served NEHES as Public Relations Chair and Western Mass as a member of the Recruitment Committee.

He found chapter membership extremely valuable during his years at Baystate Medical Center (Springfield).

“Everyone shares ideas and problem solving. We talk about which contractors and subcontractors to hire and not to hire, and reliable sources for materials. Members can see what other members are doing in installations of systems.”

He joined NEHES in 1990 to “interact with engineers throughout the Northeast. It’s been very rewarding. There are a great many things happening and so many bright people in NEHES.”

Tom trained in construction and carpentry in his native Ireland. In 1961, he immigrated and later studied business at Holyoke (MA) Community College. He joined Baystate in 1965 as a staff carpenter, rising to Manager of Maintenance.

Last year, Tom was laid off. “At 8 a.m. I was in my boss’s office, at 8:10 a.m. I was walking out the door with my briefcase. This is the policy no matter who is laid off.”

He decided to take the “decent retirement” Baystate offered, and start a home inspection service, to which his former employer has given considerable marketing assistance. A mailing to 350 realtors has brought Tom his first customers and referrals.

“You can manage your own life without politics,” he said.

“Tom and his wife, Darlyne, live in Westfield. Tom has a pilot’s license and they enjoy flying."
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Scheduling Seminars?
Steve Cutter invites NEHES members to send him information about educational seminars their chapters are planning. Please send information as far ahead as possible and in as much detail as possible. Phone (603) 357-2905 or scutter@cheshire-med.com.

Job Vacancies
President Kurt Peterson reminds NEHES members that, as president, he maintains a file of job openings submitted by other Society members. To inquire about current openings, call Kurt at (413) 582-2311. His fax number is (413) 582-2959.

Meet Your New Officers and Committee Chair

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