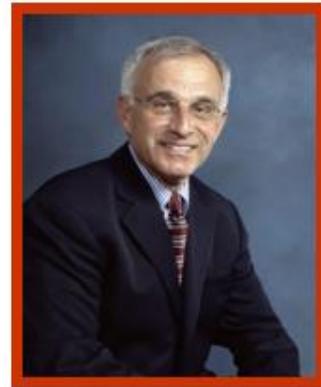




NEWS RELEASE

As He Nears Term's End As President, IAHTM's Myles Noel Reflects On 30 Years of Service

Powell, OH – December 21, 2020 – Myles Noel will be completing his term as president of the International Association of Healthcare Textile Management (IAHTM) at the end of this year. Noel (*photo, right*), who is CEO of Central Ohio Medical Textiles (COMTEX), Columbus, OH, has been connected with IAHTM and the healthcare laundry industry for 30 years. He will be retiring in March.



IAHTM is a nonprofit membership organization for healthcare laundry cooperatives that provides senior-level textile managers with resources and support to maximize their laundries' efficiencies and control costs without compromising quality or patient focus.

Reflecting on his years of service, Noel had these comments:

On the benefits of his membership in IAHTM

"I have said many times that 30 years ago, I thought I knew everything there was to know about running a laundry and now, when I look back, I wonder how I was able to keep a job because of all that I didn't know. IAHTM has been a huge part of filling in the gaps of what I didn't know and all of that has come with many long-lasting friendships and relationships.

"Shortly after I became a member, I hosted a visit from a group that was having a conference at that time in Vancouver. I asked of each visitor to offer me a suggestion of what I might do to improve my operation. I was pleasantly surprised by the lengths that some members went to provide helpful, useful feedback. Where else in business would such a thing happen? And it has been that way ever since.

"Another way to put it: When you find yourself in the C-suite with a seemingly insurmountable challenge, the question becomes, 'Who you gonna call?' With IAHTM, you call a member and help is on its way.

"The bottom line: my IAHTM membership has kept me out of some serious laundry misfortunes over the years. This fact has greatly benefited my career and the organizations that I have served.

On his 30 years of trips, conferences, events and memories

“I can easily say I have really enjoyed every conference, trip and event that I have shared with IAHTM. But the ones I have enjoyed the most include the four or five that I have hosted singularly or in collaboration with others.

“Two stories come to mind that I can look back and laugh at now, but that were disconcerting to me at the time.

“One conference found me hosting in the Okanagan Valley (Canadian wine Country) in the town of Kelowna, British Columbia. As part of the conference, we hosted a special 10-course meal prepared by a renowned chef at the Mission Hills winery overlooking the Lake Okanagan, during a full moon. Beforehand, I had spent hours with the chef, going over every last detail on the menu and the pairing of wines. Everything was going perfectly to my delight. There were about 45 of us seated at a long dinner table; I was seated near a couple from Cincinnati, an IAHTM member and his wife who preferred beer over wine – something I hadn’t really planned for but which we easily accommodated. Then the first course arrived – a beef consommé with a stylish decoration of sour cream atop the center. The wife looked at her serving, shook her head, looked up at me and said, ‘Oh, great! It’s Fear Factor Soup!’ I was crushed: All those hours of preparation only to have the first course of the evening remind one of our guests of the popular TV show’s infamous rat stew episode! Luckily, I found my sense of humor and I’m happy to say that our guest really enjoyed the consommé; ultimately a great evening was had by all. It’s always the things you don’t plan for.

“Another example that I can laugh about now happened during a Texcare International conference held in Germany, Belgium and the Netherlands. This trip provided attendees with an opportunity to visit key vendor factories and laundries in the all three countries and exposed them to the unique cultures and foods of each. The trip was wonderful, but our coach driver was very strict and grumpy and had many rules; for example, we were only allowed to use bus washroom to pass water, and that only in urgent circumstances. There were many instances like that, where I felt he was rude and not very accommodating; so on the final leg of the trip when the driver was outside I suggested to everyone that they use the bus washroom for “boom-boom” purposes – you know, as a parting gift. I was teasing, of course. (I think.) And I did get quite a laugh in response. And that’s all. (I hope!)

These pretty-silly-now stories aside, every conference I attended in my 30 years with IAHTM was exceptional and those who volunteered to host them did their best to make them memorable. I have fond memories of them all.”

On the state of the industry, his business, amidst current circumstances

“I have come to realize that laundry folks love routine, and in some closer-to-home circumstances, a CEO may believe that he has 30 years of experience when in actual fact he has one year of experience repeated 30 times!

“Of course, the current pandemic has changed that situation for everyone. These past 10 months have required everyone to “think outside the box,” invent solutions, take monumental risks with textile purchases and become experts in public health disease prevention.

“In many ways it has been the most challenging year for me. We had just commissioned our second laundry and were fine tuning operations when the pandemic

hit. Becoming a COVID-19 protocol policeman while trying to run productive operations is not a task for the weak at heart.

“I’ve never lost interest in industry. In North America we have some of the most sophisticated health systems in the world and yet it never ceases to amaze me that our member owners have so little understanding of what we in healthcare laundry actually do. Just think of it: Here is an industry where the customer controls both the supply and the demand. We can only process what is sent back to us soiled and little notice is ever provided for spikes in demand for many reasons. In addition, the relationships with physicians precludes hospitals from monitoring yet alone controlling and disciplining the misuse of some textiles like scrubs. I remember in one incident, a resident was taking our scrubs home and selling them on e-bay. When we tracked him down the hospital merely asked him to stop.

“Be that as it may, I am confident that the industry will continue to move forward in terms of professionalism and development. The steps that have been taken to legitimize what we do, for example like the efforts of the Healthcare Laundry Accreditation Council, have made enormous steps towards being viewed as an essential part of the healthcare system.

“When I worked in hospital administration my mentor was fond of saying, “You know, you can kill them in the operating room and the doctor will tell the family that they did everything they could, and the family will say it is a wonderful hospital; but serve marginal meals or poor linen quality, and they will tell everyone it is a terrible hospital.” Nothing will shut down a facility faster than no clean laundry.

“In the future, I would like to see IAHTM expand its membership and profile. This will entail wrestling with some long-held principles and needs clear minds to make the right decisions. IAHTM is just over 50 years in existence and may be ready for a reset to support its long-term benefits to the healthcare industry.”

About IAHTM

Founded in 1969, the International Association for Healthcare Textile Management (IAHTM) is a nonprofit organization serving healthcare laundry cooperatives. IAHTM membership comprises experienced laundry executives serving 7,000 healthcare facilities in the USA and Canada. IAHTM members have access to training and education programs, benchmarking resources, peer information sharing and networking, and group purchasing power on textiles and chemicals. www.iahtm.com