

Joint Statement

Adapting and thriving, the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) partnership

Ann Marie Pettis RN, BSN, CIC, FSHEA, FIDSA, FAPIC¹ and Mary K. Hayden MD²

¹University of Rochester Medicine, Rochester, New York and ²Rush University Medical Center, Chicago, Illinois

To adapt means “to become adjusted to new conditions.” Nothing could summarize infection prevention more succinctly since the start of the coronavirus disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. The emerging science around the novel severe acute respiratory coronavirus virus 2 (SARS-CoV-2) required constant adaptation of infection prevention practices. Inventive methods extended supplies of single-use personal protective equipment (PPE) during critical shortages. The infection prevention community adapted HAI reporting to include COVID-19. Hospitals altered e-mail systems, schedules, and more to achieve mass vaccination of healthcare personnel with the new mRNA vaccines and the delicate storage conditions these vaccines require. The list goes on.

The Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) adapted, too. Plans and programs that had been longstanding were adjusted or cancelled, and efforts were refocused on what mattered most to our members during the pandemic. COVID renewed our organizations’ appreciation of the importance of social determinants of health in infection prevention, and our commitment to promote diversity, equity, and inclusion within our societies. Through it all, APIC and SHEA worked together to support the fields of infection prevention and healthcare epidemiology with a united organizational front. We participated in regular calls with the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) to give reports of how guidance was being received and implemented as well as information and resources that were needed for the response. We collaborated on advocacy efforts and brought expert voices in infection prevention and outbreak response to the press.

SHEA and APIC also hosted a joint educational session at each of our 2021 virtual conferences entitled, “Anticipating the Post-COVID-19 World of Infection Prevention: A SHEA/APIC Leadership Town Hall,” featuring Ann Marie Pettis, RN, BSN, CIC, FAPIC, and David Henderson, MD, FSHEA, FIDSA, who discussed lessons learned from the COVID-19 pandemic and what the future might hold. These sessions presented a shared vision and further strengthened the partnership between our organizations.

To keep the membership informed, we hosted an annual SHEA/APIC Presidents’ Webinar in December to highlight our

collaborative efforts and to provide an opportunity for members to ask questions and contribute ideas for future collaborations. We are excited to plan another for 2021.

The APIC and SHEA organizational partnership facilitates committee-level collaboration. Since 2018, APIC has been represented on SHEA’s Guidelines Committee and SHEA has been represented on APIC’s Practice Guidance Committee to ensure that each organization is informed of the other’s work and that our efforts are complementary.

In 2019, both boards approved a new joint award to recognize those who have made significant lifetime contributions to the fields of infection prevention and epidemiology. This award honors people outside our organizations’ typical awards criteria who both organizations recognize as having contributed significantly to the infection prevention mission. In the inaugural year of this award, we recognized Dr. Anthony Fauci, a voice for action through the science of infection prevention and epidemiology during the COVID-19 pandemic. This award will continue to honor active contributors to both organizations who have transcended their roles to advance the field. We can think of no better way to launch this award than by honoring Dr. Fauci.

Our partnership goes beyond our members. APIC welcomed a new CEO in 2021, Devin Jopp, who hit the ground running full speed. He was able to quickly connect with Kristy Weinschel, SHEA’s executive director. Together, they are working on ideas to strengthen the partnership and future opportunities through combined efforts.

We must continue to work together to improve the continuum of care for all communities through infection prevention. The missions of SHEA and APIC to keep patients safe from infections and to champion effective and efficient care that preserves antibiotics for future generations are served best through collaboration. Together, we amplify the message that science-based practice is *essential* for safe health care. The allocation of resources to public health, infection prevention, and antimicrobial stewardship are critical to meeting today’s needs and future demands. Together, we look forward to our partnership as our organizations work together toward continued improvements in health care.

Cite this article: Pettis AM and Hayden MK. (2021). Adapting and thriving, the Association for Professionals in Infection Control and Epidemiology (APIC) and the Society for Healthcare Epidemiology of America (SHEA) partnership. *Infection Control & Hospital Epidemiology*, 42: 1421, <https://doi.org/10.1017/ice.2021.406>