



History of the American Academy of Sanitarians

Beginnings

The American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS) had its beginning in November 1956, when the Sanitarians Joint Council (SJC) held an organizational meeting at the American Public Health Association (APHA) Convention in Atlantic City, New Jersey. The professionals who made up the SJC were representatives from three associations whose membership embraced the majority of sanitarians in the country. These organizations were: American Public Health Association (APHA), the International Association of Milk, Food and Environmental Sanitarians (IAMFES); later called the International Association for Food Protection (IAFP), and, the National Association of Sanitarians (NAS); that became the National Environmental Health Association (NEHA).

The SJC Charter dated November 14, 1954, had five basic objectives:

1. To develop a uniform definition for “sanitarian”;
2. To promote the professional status of the sanitarian;
3. To develop a Sanitarian Specialty Board:
4. To draft a recommended uniform law for the registration of sanitarians, and,
5. The development and promotion for the educational and other qualifications for the sanitarian profession.

These five objectives formed the basis for the organization which later became the American Academy of Sanitarians.

In July 1961 the SJC completed a recommended plan for the certification of sanitarians, which was subsequently accepted by all three SJC organizational members. A copy of the original publication of the “Proposed Model Act” is available on this Web site. On

October 5, 1964, the council embraced the first four objectives in the SJC Charter and created the American Inter-Society Board for the Certification of Sanitarians. At the October 20, 1965 meeting of the Board, it was decided to change the name of the organization to the American Intersociety Academy for the Certification of Sanitarians (AIACS). The Academy was formally incorporated in the State of Indiana on March 14, 1966.



The AIACS logo and member lapel pin

Financial assistance for the newly-formed Academy came from the three organizations that made up the original SJC. Each organization gave the Academy a \$1,000 interest-free loan that was paid back in little over two years.

The twelve founding members of the newly formed Academy Board were: Harold S. Adams, A. Harry Bliss, Emil T. Chanlett, E.E. Diddams, B. Russell Franklin, Larry J. Gordon, William V. Hickey, William C. Miller, Jr., A. Faegin Parrish, Verne C. Reiersen, Edwin L. Ruppert and Darold W. Taylor.

The designation of “Founder Diplomate” was incorporated into the bylaws for those professionals who had at least 12 years experience as a sanitarian; five of which were in an administrative or supervisory position, and, who met all the other membership requirements. In addition, their application had to be received before December 30, 1968. In 1975 the AIACS underwent a name change for simplicity and for ease of

recognition as a professional group. The new name is the American Academy of Sanitarians (AAS).

Purpose of the Academy

The primary purpose of the Academy is to enhance professional recognition. Its aim is to improve the environmental health within public health through certification. The Academy recognizes those professionals who excel in their chosen profession and who demonstrate outstanding knowledge, skills and attributes as sanitarians. The Academy actively promotes education through its long-standing commitment to scholarship and mentoring through its professional advancement initiatives.

The Academy invites and encourages sanitarians with qualities of outstanding competence and leadership to become certified as Diplomates. Certification as a Diplomat is awarded only after careful scrutiny of the applicant by a Board of his or her peers. The certification process is in itself unique. It differentiates a professional sanitarian who is registered by examination and one who is qualified under demanding standards such as academic achievement, publication, credentialing and the demonstration of leadership. Becoming a Diplomat in the Academy denotes achievement of a high standard of professionalism with marked distinction, and testifies to a record of accomplishment in the field of environmental health. It bestows professional status and gives prestige to the holders of the Diplomat certification. Since its inception, over 580 professional sanitarians were awarded Diplomat status in the Academy.

The Board issues a suitable diploma of certification to all applicants who have satisfactorily passed the prescribed examinations; who have met the prescribed standards and who have demonstrated to the satisfaction of the Board their good moral character and high ethical and professional standing.

Honors

In 1999, the Academy created the certification of a Diplomate Laureate to recognize Diplomates who have demonstrated exceptional professional growth, accomplishment and leadership in the sanitarian profession. The Laureate must demonstrate longevity in the profession, in addition to meeting six additional criteria that include extraordinary accomplishments in the field of environmental health and the professional practice as a sanitarian.

The Academy also awards Diplomate Emeritus certification to those Diplomates who have retired after an exceptional career and the title of Honorary Diplomate is conferred upon those individuals who have advanced the sanitarian profession and the field of public health, but are not sanitarians themselves. There are seven Laureate, eleven Emeritus and five Honorary members.

Awards

In 1981 the Academy initiated its **Davis Calvin Wagner Sanitarian Award**. This is an annual award to recognize a Diplomate sanitarian who has attained a status of distinction as a professional. The Award is made possible through the devotion and generosity of Assistant Surgeon General (Ret.), Carruth J. Wagner, M.D., Public Health Service, in memory of his brother. It reflects Dr. Wagner's deep respect and admiration for the professional sanitarian. To date, twenty five Diplomates are recipients of this honor.

In addition to individual recognition, the Academy is a participant and cosponsor of the **Samuel J. Crumbine Award**. The Crumbine Award, given by the Conference for Food Protection, is awarded annually to a local environmental health jurisdiction that demonstrates excellence and continual improvement in a comprehensive food protection program. The purpose of the award is to encourage improvement and

stimulate public interest in foodservice sanitation. The award is named in honor of Dr. Samuel J. Crumbine (1862 – 1954), a sanitarian-physician and public health pioneer who was renowned for his innovative methods of improving disease prevention through public health initiatives. More information on the Crumbine Award, including a list of previous winners and their nomination packages, is available through the Foodservice Packaging Institute website.