

HCI *...Home and Away*

A reminder, not to set the video for a soap opera—that shows my age!, but that we are all members of Healthcare Caterers International (HCI) through our NACC membership. This gives us all access to information and services of the other member associations a lot of it free, and to attend events or buy documents at membership rates.

At this year's Board meeting topics were discussed that face all the member associations regardless of the country we are in ...our profiles, membership, information sharing, government policies and how we communicate with our members. It is also clear from speaking to colleagues from abroad we all face similar issues in providing our services no matter where we are in the world. With this in mind we are investigating ways to share the information more readily, very much in the similar vein we started out as an association over 20 years ago, with the aim of not re inventing the wheel but now sharing worldwide best practice.

We have now started to put topics on the HCI website for general discussion (www.hciglobal.org) the first three topics have been staffing, nutrition and hydration. You will see from visiting the “blog” that there are areas we can learn from, and others who are learning from our experiences. Don't be afraid to contact HCI members in other countries direct via the various association websites, after all they are just like us keen to share and learn.

Do remember too that one of the HCI member associations is closer to home .. the Hospital Caterers Association (www.hospitalcaterers.org).. who celebrated their Diamond Anniversary last year have been at the forefront of healthcare catering for many years. Nationally we are sharing many platforms with them as we strive to get the same messages across regarding preventing malnutrition, and regionally we have held joint meetings with them. In fact it was also decided at the last HCI board meeting that the message all the associations want to get across in their respective countries is about preventing malnutrition, and that nutrition has a fundamental role in health and care provision.

Without developing these links we would not have a wider depth of knowledge to tap into of the “been there tried that”, or here is some relevant research to utilise. As an association directly from these links we have access to research into the link between amount spent on food and on healthcare costs, which is part of our community meals campaign; we have started our Mayors for Meals Day. On the residential side of things the care is more integrated and legislated abroad even down to hours of dietitians per car home resident, but it is something we can aspire to raise and bring forward as forms of good practice. An are we can build on and highlight this good practice as we discuss improving nutritional health with our own Food Standards Agency. It is a two way interaction, and many of our international colleagues are interested to learn more about “professionally operated” community meals services, as we are seen as world leaders in this area.

National and international representation is important we cannot remain alone. So, in the same vein the original local authorities who formed the then ABSSC, found they could no longer work in isolation a generation later we are forging international links for our successors to build up on and share good practice.



It is a big world out there but the access from your desk top has never been easier. Follow the links from the NACC website and you'll they open up a whole new world, and wealth of information with our fellow care catering associations across the world. You can see some of the topics and interest areas they are discussing, and through most of the sites you can contact individual officers to find out more.

Some interesting facts from our colleagues around the world5.6 million Australians reported food poisoning last year ... and they call us whinging poms! About 1 in 4 of the population (UK's around 1 in 10 FSA estimate) Institute of Hospitality in Healthcare IHHC

In Ontario, Canada it is legislated that dieticians must spend 15 minutes per month per resident in care homes supporting the nutritional welfare of the residents and the Canadians are lobbying for more time as this isn't enough! Canadian Society for Nutritional Management CSNM

In the US, & Canada job specifications essential requirements include membership of the professional association .. the Dietary Managers Association DMA or the CSNM

The average catering managers salary in the US is \$42,786. (Don't work out the exchange rate work, work on \$ price = £ price that's roughly the value of the salary having visited the US last year.) The west coast pays higher wages than the southern states. DMA member survey

The Danish Diet & Nutrition Association is the professional association for dietician and healthcare cooks in Denmark, and also a recognised trade union for the members. It was formed in 1923, and it's 8,000 membership is still 99% female. But they aren't the oldest association .. you have to find out who is on the HCI website!

Care Cook of the Year has been running in Norway since 1994, and it's aim is to raise the profile of "institutional catering" .. the same as ours. Norwegian Dietetic Association