



A MESSAGE FROM BARBARA CATT, PRESIDENT OF IPAC CANADA

Ohhhh my goodness! It is October already and time for Infection Prevention and Control Professionals to think about National Infection Control Week (NICW) if you have not already done so.

Here is a bit of the history on this event. The third week in October is designated as National Infection Control Week (NICW) in Canada and the U.S. In Canada, Infection Control Week originated in 1988 to highlight infection control efforts in Canadian hospitals, long-term care facilities and in the community. It was an opportunity for infection control professionals to educate staff and the community about the importance of infection prevention and to promote the important work that was being done by infection control professionals in a visible and fun way. In 1989 the federal government proclaimed Infection Control Week as an annual event.

This year, it is the week from October 19th to the 23rd. The theme for this year is “Infection Prevention and Control Beyond the Horizon.” With this metaphor, what comes to my mind is the unforeseen. This lack of visibility can be compared to our current state of emergency, the COVID-19 global pandemic. Globally, there are close to thirty-four million cases and over one million deaths associated with this infection. Did we see this pandemic coming? I don’t think so. However, we do know that history has a way of repeating itself. When we think back to the 1918-1919 Influenza Pandemic or Spanish Flu, it wiped out entire communities with estimations of 500 million people infected and 50 million deaths.

One hundred years later, we are better prepared, not just because of modern-day medicine, but because we have YOU. YOU are Infection Prevention and Control Professionals who sit at decision tables, who mitigate transmission, who provide strategies to control outbreaks, and on and on. YOU each have dedicated so much time, work time and personal time, to fight this COVID-19 pandemic. The important work that YOU do does not go unnoticed. Opposite to being “invisible” or beyond that horizon, YOU are visible. I want to thank each one of YOU for your hard work and dedication, not just for the fight with COVID-19 pandemic, but also for your important work wherever YOU are. I am grateful for everything YOU do!

IPAC Canada has a webpage to assist you in planning and implementing Infection Control Week in your facility. Whether your event spans the entire week or only one day, whether it is large or small, you might find some useful information, tips and tools here to use to help with its success and save you some time and resources. For resources and activity suggestions, see <https://ipac-canada.org/national-infection-control-week.php>.

Thank YOU and stay safe!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Barbara Catt".

Barbara Catt RN BScN MEd CIC
President, IPAC Canada