

Two EVS techs earn CHEST certification, first hearing-impaired workers in the country to complete program

Every day, Environmental Services (EVS) technicians work on the front lines, collaborating with clinical staff to be sure pathogens and other biohazards are inactivated and removed as a threat to patients. The impact our EVS teams have on patient safety, quality and experience shouldn't be underestimated.

Two of our own EVS technicians at Geisinger Community Medical Center (GCMC), Anna Bagienska and Jolanta Piszczek, recently took their commitment to patient safety to the next level, completing a rigorous EVS training program and earning CHEST certification.

This achievement makes them the first hearing-impaired EVS technicians in the country to ever participate in and complete the program. And while earning CHEST certification isn't an easy feat for anyone, Anna and Jolanta — who are both originally from Poland — needed to translate and interpret American Sign Language well enough to take the required classes and exam.

More about CHEST certification

The Association for the Health Care Environment (AHE) created this nationally certified program to establish performance and knowledge criteria for EVS technicians and recognize their role in quality outcomes and satisfaction. Short for Certified Health Care Environmental Services Technician, CHEST is centered around the typical day in the life of an EVS technician.



Anna Bagienska, EVS technician

To qualify for the program, Anna and Jolanta were required to have six months of EVS experience in an acute care setting. After submitting their applications, their supervisors conducted and submitted evaluations on their behalf. From there, they were presented to the CHEST Committee for acceptance.

Once accepted, Anna and Jolanta needed to complete 24 hours of classroom instruction focused on industry standards for seven domains: infection prevention, waste handling, cleaning and disinfection, linen handling, communication, floor care and safety. After completing class hours, they were required to take and pass an online proctored exam to receive CHEST certification for three years.



Jolanta Piszczek, EVS technician

Geisinger is the first organization in the country to offer this program to employees who are hearing-impaired. With the help of five interpreters, Director of Hospitality Services Jane Martin, and System Support Specialists Jenelle Shellenberger and John Wynn facilitated the 24 hours of classroom instruction and proctored the exam.

Keep reading to hear from Anna and Jolanta on what this accomplishment means to them.

Q: What's the most rewarding part of earning CHEST certification?

Anna: I feel more confident in my ability to offer a safe environment to patients. They can recover here knowing they're in good hands.

Jolanta: The confidence I gained knowing that the quality of care I give to patients is of the highest standards.

Q: How will this certification help you provide better patient care?

Anna: It will help achieve improved outcomes. Implementing what I've learned from the CHEST program can help lower infection rates, lower turnover rates and improve Hospital Consumer Assessment of Healthcare Providers and Systems (HCAHPS) scores.

Jolanta: I'll use improved safety measures at work. Safety is different here than it is in Poland, so I enjoyed learning more about safety precautions and OSHA during the program.

Q: What do you love most about being an EVS technician?

Anna: Believe it or not, I like cleaning. I also like that it lets me help people and make sure the hospital is safe for everyone.

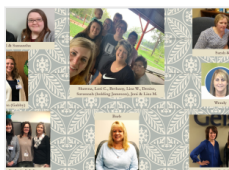
Jolanta: My favorite part of my job is working in the emergency room. It's busy and keeps me on my toes. I like interacting with others and get a lot of support from my co-workers.

Join us in congratulating Anna and Jolanta on this incredible accomplishment!

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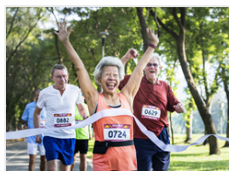
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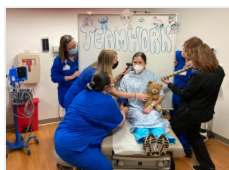
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