HEALTHIER WORKPLACES | A HEALTHIER WORLD

CPAG Content Priorities Summary Document

Revised August 2024

Part 1: Introduction

What Every OEHS Professional Should Know About AIHA Content Priorities

Content Priorities are a critical component of AIHA's strategy for ensuring organizational success and relevance into the future. Likewise, understanding these Content Priorities can help shape strategies for individual career success and globally promote the relevancy of the occupational and environmental health and safety profession in the marketplace of tomorrow. Key questions and answers to help understand and apply AIHA Content Priorities are provided below.

What is a "Content Priority"?

Content is considered any offering produced in conjunction with AIHA for use for by members or non-members (e.g., publications, webinars, Professional Development Courses (PDC), conferences, JOEH/Synergist articles, etc.). Content Priorities are concepts or themes which have been identified as having the greatest impact on the value of AIHA content.

How are Content Priorities determined?

AIHA works with outside professionals to conduct research on the global trends most likely to impact the occupational and environmental health and safety profession in the future. This research, internally gathered data, and interviews involving both AIHA members and non-members, are used to establish an inventory of trends, weak signals, and emerging issues. CPAG reviews this data and recommends a set of Content Priorities for approval by the AIHA Board. This process occurs approximately every five years, with annual "pulse checks" to ensure the selected priorities remain the most relevant.

How are Content Priorities used?

AIHA Content Priorities are promoted to help volunteer groups and other contributors generate content ideas with increased potential for impact on the occupational and environmental health and safety industry and with associated stakeholders. These ideas may be in the form of content primarily focused on an identified priority, or content that integrates one or more priorities while addressing a given hazard or environmental health and safety issue. The Content Portfolio Advisory Group (CPAG) facilitates the development of priority-focused content through interactions with volunteer groups and other stakeholders. In addition, CPAG is tasked by the AIHA Board with reviewing certain content proposals and making recommendations to the Board. The Board, and other entities that ultimately approve submitted content for development, consider proposals that integrate the Content Priorities.

What are the current AIHA Content Priorities?

A summary of each of the AIHA Content Priorities and the future trends that influence them are provided on the following pages. More in-depth information is provided in a "dashboard" for each priority which contains vision statements of desired future states, ideas for potential content initiatives, and information regarding initiatives in progress or completed. AIHA members can access these dashboards through the CPAG webpage, www.aiha.org/cpag.

Part 2: Summary of Priorities

Big Data, A.I. and Sensor Technologies: New applications of sensor technologies allow for the faster collection and communication of data across a broader set of agents. Simultaneously advancements in data analysis and Artificial Intelligence are combining formerly disparate data sets and automating decision-making. Together these developments will fundamentally alter the role of health and safety professionals. This priority focuses on helping OEHS professionals leverage cutting-edge technologies to collect and integrate data to inform risk assessment and management decisions and stay relevant in the face of transformative change. *Future Trends: Information flows, Evolving Science, IH in an A.I. World (see Part 3).*

***Total Worker Health®*:** Well-being is comprised of several interconnected dimensions including physical and mental health as well as general safety. Well-being is impacted through a complex interaction of factors including exposure to environmental agents, psychological and economic stressors, personal behaviors, and individual genomics. Advancements in science and technology are facilitating the more robust collection and integration of these factors to inform health-related interventions and decision-making in the workplace. This priority focuses on ensuring OEHS professionals are positioned to be leaders and valued participants in preventing harm and protecting and promoting worker well-being (including mental health using tools such as *Total Worker Health®,* Exposomics, Total Exposure Health). They are recognized as the preeminent experts in anticipation, recognition, evaluation, and control of exposures to environmental and physical agents and psychological stressors in the workplace, home, and community. *Future Trends: 21st Century Health, IH in an A.I. World (see Part 3).*

Enhancing OEHS Communication Skills: Increasing growth and diversification in information sources and communication channels continue diluting the influence of science-based expertise. Simultaneously, public skepticism toward traditional experts is growing in the face of unresolved concerns and perceived biases as various advocacy groups utilize scientific systems for their own advantage in various ways. These trends and technological advances around data analysis and Artificial Intelligence further diminish the reliance on scientific expertise. It is essential for OEHS professionals to convey ideas effectively to audiences with varying levels of understanding and perspectives. This priority focuses on developing the interpersonal skills of OEHS professionals to listen, relate, communicate, educate, and collaborate effectively with a diverse range of stakeholders to enhance the influence and value of the OEHS profession in a dynamic social-technological landscape. F*uture Trends: Information Flows, Politics and Society (see Part 3).*

Changing Work Dynamics: The work being done, the workplace, the workers involved and their relationship with each are changing rapidly. People are increasingly engaging in nontraditional work arrangements such as gig work, contract work, telecommuting and working for multiple employers. Global economic shifts, multiple generations, migration, increasing diversity in the workforce, and the introduction to new technologies, will significantly impact the evolution of occupational and environmental health and safety concerns and how they are managed. This priority focuses on educating OEHS professionals on the implications of the changing work dynamics (i.e., worker, workplace, working relationships, new technologies or new processes) and how the OEHS community can respond to protect human health in the workplace and community. *Future Trends: Workforce Shifts, Politics and Society, 21st Century Health (see Part 3).*

Part 3: Global Trends

AIHA worked with an outside consultant to conduct an environmental scan identifying current and future trends in the occupational and environmental health and safety (OEHS) industry. They developed an inventory of 76 trends, weak signals, and emerging issues. The highest-rated trends were used as the starting point of an ideation process to identify trend "clusters." These trend clusters were eventually grouped into the following 6 key change areas.

- **Information Flows**: Information is changing rapidly, with an accelerating role for A.I. Media is fragmenting and personalizing, with former gatekeepers now bypassed. Like other fields, OEHS will contend with A.I.-driven changes in how information is acquired and used. The following trends fall under Information Flows:

    - A.I. replaces search
    - A machine-readable world
    - Domain-specific A.I. models
    - IH data standardization
    - Social media as a news source
    - A.I. tools for chemistry
    - Nano and micro influencers

- **Evolving Science**: A.I. is poised to spark a new scientific revolution through the rapid identification of patterns in vast amounts of data and the ability to generate answers in the absence of theoretical models. Mastery of the new digital tools of science will become an increasingly critical skill of OEHS professionals. The following trends fall under Evolving Science:

    - Accelerating synthetic biology
    - A machine-readable world
    - Science without theory
    - Automation of science
    - IH data standardization
    - A.I. tools for chemistry
    - A.I. devising dangerous materials

- **Workforce Shifts**: Demographic and cultural changes are driving changing expectations in the workforce, in ways that will increasingly impact OEHS. Growth in underrepresented groups and generational shifts will require OEHS professionals to adapt to a workforce with different needs and priorities. The following trends fall under Workforce Shifts:

    - Widespread remote work
    - Forever labor shortages
    - "Practical" college degrees
    - Women in STEM
    - Declining U.S. college enrollments
    - Women in higher education
    - Gen Z mental health focus

- **21st Century Health**: New threats to workplace health are emerging from broad societal trends. OEHS professionals face a growing challenge in the external health threats that are encroaching on the 21st century workplace. The following trends fall under 21st Century Health:

    - Deaths of despair

- Climage change-driven heat at work
- Mental health in remote work
- Rising attention to “forever chemicals”
- Wellness and work schedule stability
- Workplace violence against women
- Overdoses on the job

- **Politics and Society**: As in all areas of American life, issues of polarization and trust are impinging on OEHS. Views of science, safety, and regulation are all being affected. IH professionals will have to navigate growing doubts about the credibility of experts and the potential for myriad issues to become politicized. The following trends fall under Politics and Society:

    - Public doubts about science
    - America’s polarized politics
    - Social media as a news source
    - Declining U.S. college enrollments
    - Curtailing federal regulatory power
    - Credentialing as a political target
    - Oscillating climate policies

- **IH in an A.I. World**: A.I. and other factors are changing the systems in which IH operates. OEHS, like all fields, will have to work out its relationship with A.I. in the coming years. OEHS professionals will need to integrate the capabilities of A.I. into the practice of IH but ensure that A.I. assists human judgement rather than replaces it. The following trends fall under IH in an A.I. World:

    - Domain-specific A.I. models
    - Enterprise-scale LLMs
    - The circular economy
    - Automation anxiety
    - A.I. and responsibility
    - Chief health officers
    - A.I. devising dangerous materials