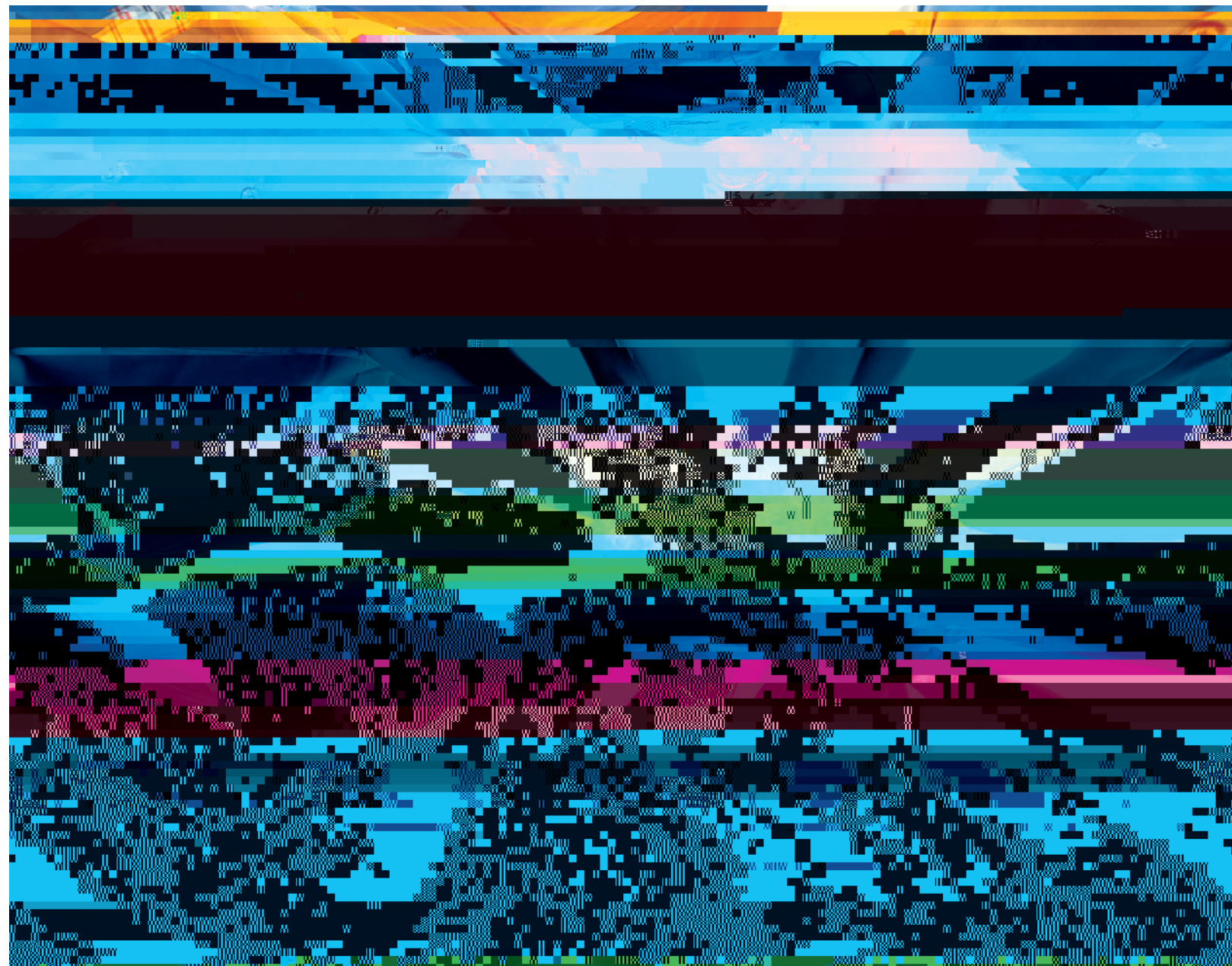




**L**ast year at the EXCHANGE conference, I challenged attendees, AHE members, sponsors and vendors to make a change in the naming convention for health-care cleaning. AHE believes this change will have a profound impact on the profession. I asked everyone in the room to commit to or continue the commitment to referring to their department as environmental services; and to identify the personnel caring for the healthcare environment as environmental services technicians rather than housekeepers, janitors and custodians.

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of coordination is required. The potential for disease transmission must be eliminated, and it requires a much wider knowledge base acquired through ongoing training, education, certification and continuing education. Hundreds of research studies have been conducted over the last eight to ten years just on healthcare cleaning and surface disinfection. The evidence supports the notion that improved cleaning leads to improved patient outcomes and lower infection rates. That level of responsibility and getting to the desired outcomes is more complicated. Healthcare environmental services is part of a care team that needs us to be on top of our game all day, every day.

We know a large majority of healthcare organizations have already moved from housekeeping to environmental services. Military contracting is changing from housekeeping to environmental services. Surveyors are being trained to identify technicians as

technicians and not housekeepers. There are other organizations in the process of educating their clinical staff as well as patients and families of the impending change and explaining why the change is being made. Then there are others that have pushed back, saying that the length of stay is so short that re-educating the patients and staff doesn't make sense. We respectfully disagree. As awful as it may sound, just by virtue of perception, the words housekeeper, janitor, custodian are not job descriptors widely



