I discovered this quote [“The road to success is always under construction.” – Author unknown] in the mid 90s and it became one of my favorites. My interpretation of it indicates that one takes several journeys throughout his/her life and career in an effort to be successful, and that there is always more to do. I reference this quote now as I start my year as CBIC president and hope to have a successful journey.

On one of my previous journeys, I was one of many who urged APIC to develop a certification program. As a result, CBIC was founded in 1981 and the first certification exam was administered in 1983. The purpose of certification in infection prevention and control (CIC®) is to protect the public by raising the standard for the infection prevention profession. Members of the current board – as well as those who have served on previous boards – have consistently worked to improve the exam and communication with its certificants and candidates.

Today, there are approximately 5,100 infection preventionists (IPs) who have obtained the CIC credential. These IPs work in hospitals, long-term care facilities, ambulatory care centers, and other healthcare settings throughout the U.S., Canada, and other parts of the world. It is hard to know the exact number of candidates who should and have yet to become certified, but it is probably close to 10,000.

Two of the most frequent questions CBIC receives are “How do I study to take the exam?” and “How do we encourage others to become certified?” Here are some answers to take you and/or your colleagues one step closer to obtaining certification:

- Challenge your APIC chapter to determine how many members are certified. Then, work toward increasing that number by a defined percentage each year.
- If you are already certified, be sure to start the process of recertifying early in the year that your recertification is due.
- Certified chapter members can help their colleagues and chapter members by setting up study groups. If this isn’t possible, certified IPs should mentor non-certified IPs.
- Refer to CBIC’s updated website at www.CBIC.org and reference the revised Candidate Handbook. It contains the current content outline developed from a practice analysis completed in 2010. Test questions are based on this outline. The Candidate Handbook also includes references used to validate correct answers to the questions.
- Purchase a practice exam from CBIC.

If you have suggestions regarding how you have studied or plan to study, please share them with us and we will pass them on.

Whether you are planning your recertification or initial certification this year, I hope you’ll join me in my journey and make it successful by, at minimum, doubling the pool of certified professionals over the next few years.