



Why Less Waste?

As they care for patients, hospitals generate an average of 42 pounds of total waste per patient day. Hospitals bury and burn garbage composed of plastics, chemicals, paper, food, needles, packaging and electronics in an effort to dispose of this waste. However, amid rising concern about increasing waste removal fees, the mercury released from medical waste incinerators and pharmaceutical waste in drinking water, health systems are recognizing waste disposal can have a health impact on local communities. To limit this impact, the Healthier Hospitals program is working with hospitals to reduce the amount of waste generated and increase recycling.

Healthier Hospitals Solutions

Healthier Hospitals is challenging hospitals to take on three measurable goals to help hospitals reduce the amount of waste they generate. These goals have been selected for their positive impact on human health and the environment, as well as to drive increased demand for healthier products in the marketplace.

| Objective | Impact |
|--|---|
| Track disposal of solid waste, regulated medical waste, recycling and hazardous waste. | Identify opportunities to reduce the amount of waste generated and resulting pollution. |
| Reduce regulated medical waste to less than 10 percent of total waste or less than eight tons per operating room per year. | Lower the risk of needle sticks and infection; decrease disposal costs. |
| Achieve a 15 percent recycling rate | Reduce waste generation and resulting pollution |
| Achieve an 80 percent recycle and diversion rate for major renovations and new construction | Reduces of amount of construction waste that is incinerated or sent to landfills |

Hospitals and health systems will be recognized for achieving ranks of Level One, Level Two and Level Three for achieving one, two or all three goals in the Less Waste Challenge in the order of their choice.

Why Should Hospitals Take on this Challenge?

By decreasing waste, hospitals have opportunities to reduce toxicity, conserve natural resources and lower associated costs. Given the rising waste removal costs, hospitals can reduce expenses by recycling more materials. Some health systems have succeeded in recycling more than 40 percent of their total waste. In addition, hospitals can reduce the potential for biological or chemical waste exposure and mismanagement with detailed training and education programs.

Success Stories

Anne Arundel Medical Center, headquartered in Annapolis, Maryland, enrolled in the Less Waste Challenge and set a goal for construction and demolition debris recycling. The project team incorporated diversion and recycling specifications in construction management contracts and tracked and reviewed progress regularly. HH's goals were surpassed with 1,750 tons of waste diverted from the landfill during construction, a 93.3 percent recycling rate.

HealthPartners Hudson Hospital & Clinic, a 25-bed general medical and surgical critical access hospital

in Hudson, Wisconsin have achieved level three of the Less Waste Challenge — taking on all three of its goals. Since 2010 they have achieved a median recycling rate of 37.60 percent, reduced regulated medical waste to a median 4.21 percent and diverted 50-100 tons of demolition debris from area landfill. They are listed in national Top 20 Critical Access Hospitals.

In the last 14 months, **Inova Health System** reduced its Regulated Medical Waste stream by more than one million pounds, saving more than \$250,000.

Get Started

Register today to enroll in Healthier Hospitals, which is free to any hospital in the United States and Canada. To get started, visit www.healthierhospitals.org and choose one or more Challenges. Enrollees are invited to commit to at least one of the six “Challenge” areas: Engaged Leadership, Healthier Food, Leaner Energy, Less Waste, Safer Chemicals and Smarter Purchasing. Hospitals can choose to tackle a single Challenge or any combination of the six Challenges. By signing up, health systems will gain access to free tools and resources such as how-to implementation guides,

webinars and a network of peers. Through the Healthier Hospitals program, hospitals will track progress at the local level and share data to show the measurable impact of the project. Visit the HH website to learn more about the Challenges and the resources available to help participating health systems achieve these goals.

Questions? Ask us at info@practicegreenhealth.org. Or follow us on Twitter at [@HHIorg](https://twitter.com/HHIorg) or on Facebook at www.facebook.com/healthierhospitalsinitiative.