

Case Study: Smarter Purchasing - Surgical Kit Review



Summary

Seattle Children's Hospital has a strategic environmental management plan to help safeguard health and resources, while lowering operating costs so it can fulfill its founding promise: "To care for every child in our region, regardless of their family's ability to pay." Part of that work is the reduction of waste. By evaluating the surgical kits in operation rooms with staff and the facility's vendor every 1-2 years, the team is able to eliminate unnecessary items and prevent their waste. The end results are streamlined surgical kits, enhanced vendor relationships and cost savings.

Seattle Children's Hospital

Project

Review of 90 percent of operating room surgical kits for removal of unused or redundant items.

Challenge/Situation

Surgeons and operating room staff have evolving needs, and the contents of surgical kits can become outmoded, containing unnecessary medical supplies and redundant plastic bags.

Strategy/Actions

Seattle Children's Hospital (Children's) was one of the first medical centers in the country to apply the methods and scientific rigor of the Toyota production system to health care. Children's adaptation of this method is an organization-wide philosophy and improvement approach called continuous performance improvement (CPI). Removing waste in the operating room is an extension of our CPI work.

Implementation Process

Working with OR leadership on timing and staff participation, the team targets a complete review of surgical kits every 1-2 years. One representative from sourcing/supply chain and one from sustainability work with the vendor in a conference room disassembling surgical kits and reviewing the contents with the surgical nurses and technicians involved in those types of cases. The team uses an 80/20 rule: if you use the item at least 80 percent of the time, it stays in the pack.

Benefits/Results

- Savings:
 - Annual savings in supplies cost: \$39,642
 - Annual avoidance of regulated medical waste cost: \$3,867
- Environmental benefit:
 - Annual weight reduction of 8,470 lbs of waste, much of it regulated medical waste.
 - Annual reduction of >1000 unnecessary plastic bags.
- Staff satisfaction with participation and results.

About Seattle Children's Hospital

With over 300 licensed beds, Seattle Children's serves as the pediatric and adolescent academic medical referral center for Washington, Alaska, Montana and Idaho—the largest region of any children's hospital in the country. For more than 100 years, we have been dedicated to providing top-quality care to every child in our region who needs us, regardless of the family's ability to pay.

The Team

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Lessons Learned/Recommendations

Children's has a demand-supply system for medical supplies that is organized and centralized in the OR. This has helped decrease anxiety about having to search for an item during a case. Also, by working closely with the vendor Medline, the team was able to identify and quantify the pack waste as well as increase the number of supplies that contain recycled content and dye free plastic. Medline was able to work with supply manufacturers to reduce packaging in the kits.

