



Commitment to Practicing Environmental Sustainability

The University of Vermont Medical Center's mission and vision are built on a foundation of values that includes a longstanding commitment to being prudent stewards of limited natural resources. We will continuously look for new ways to build upon our long tradition of environmental responsibility.

We recognize that the health of the community is integral to the total health of the environment. We strive to ensure that day-to-day operations are founded in sound environmental practices in all aspects of care delivery. Working together we will continue to improve health and mitigate the impact of climate change through efforts in the following areas:

Leadership

The Sustainability Council Strategic Plan is supported by our Senior Leadership. As an organization, we will continue to invest resources to support the objectives outlined in the strategic plan and take appropriate action steps to maintain our position as a local, regional and national leader in sustainable practices.

Waste

Through innovation, we will work to reduce waste thereby reducing toxicity, conserving natural resources and lowering costs. We will work to reduce the volume of wastes requiring special treatment, recycling and re-using products where appropriate. Ongoing monitoring of all categories of waste generation will continue, with associated analyses of waste volumes as related to healthcare delivery services.

Chemicals

We use a range of different chemicals to do everything from cleaning and disinfecting floors and surfaces to diagnostic testing in labs. Chemicals are used in the formulation of products, supplies, furnishings and various building materials. While many chemical compounds have beneficial uses, hazardous exposures to some chemicals can seriously impact health.

We not only commit to regulatory compliance when working with chemicals but also commit to selecting safer chemicals wherever possible. We segregate and manage pharmaceutical wastes, have eliminated the use of mercury, use green cleaning solutions for environmental cleaning and prohibit the purchase of furnishings containing flame retardants. We continue to work on elimination of products containing chemicals of health concern.

Healthy Food

We are committed to offering locally produced and minimally processed foods. Our procurement priorities include food that is, among other attributes, produced without synthetic pesticides and hormones, or non-therapeutic antibiotics. Preference is given to organic foods. Food procurement supports producers practicing environmentally sound, farmer-safe and ecologically protective approaches. Our commitment is to mitigate climate change and support economic development through our food purchasing decisions.

Smarter Purchasing

We will collaborate with our suppliers to ensure that selected health care products afford efficacy in care delivery, as well as economic and environmental performance. We will take a long-term approach in evaluating reusable versus disposable products. Environmental impacts and resource use will be a factor in these decisions. A preference will be developed for products that support the principles listed herein.

Leaner Energy

We will continue to identify opportunities for energy conservation in all aspects of operations to build on the successful track record of energy conservation over the past decade. It is our goal to reduce overall energy use intensity through new project development and operational improvement. We will engage in exploration of alternative energy sources wherever feasible.

Water and other Natural Resources

We recognize that there is a finite quantity of natural resources such as clean air, land and water. We will conserve, recycle and re-use those resources where appropriate. We will make efforts to achieve an ongoing performance record of emissions reductions. This may include, air, water, and other waste emissions, which could have an adverse effect on the environment.

Climate

We are committed to mitigating the impact of climate change. We have joined with healthcare organizations across the country in our efforts to make impactful, measureable progress to address climate in our own operations. We will continue investments in energy efficiency and, where feasible, explore opportunities for renewable energy sources. We will engage our staff leaders and healthcare providers in educational opportunities to expand awareness and advocate for policies locally, regionally and nationally that ensure a sustainable and healthy future for the people we serve.

Green Buildings

We are committed to supporting total health for patients, families and staff through the built environment. We apply environmentally sustainable and health-focused design principles to the layout and function of projects wherever feasible. A leading Master Facility Planning guiding principle is that all new construction is designed to comply with the US Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design Criteria.

"Upstream" Management System

Through the Environmental Management System, we will focus on the root cause of situations that lead to potential environmental problems. Root cause allows problems to be solved "upstream." In particular, we will continue to engage, educate, and partner with our workforce and community at large on environmental issues, pollution prevention and waste management. Educational efforts will promote conservation and ultimately help to minimize the environmental impact of health care byproducts.

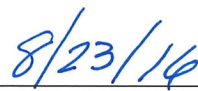
We will continue to demonstrate improvement in environmental performance. This will be driven by the Sustainability Strategic Plan, which will contain objectives, tactics and deliverables. Other indicators may include data from ongoing waste audits/assessments, monitoring of recycling and re-use programs, hazardous materials use, energy, water and fuel consumption, emissions, and more.

The University of Vermont Medical Center makes this commitment as part of our ongoing mission to improve the health of the communities we serve. We believe that by practicing environmental sustainability we can improve people's lives.

Signed in Support of:



Eileen Whalen, MHA, RN
President and Chief Operating Officer



Date:

