

CASE STUDY



The Green Officers program is a voluntary program where interested staffers help communicate and educate others about sustainability programming at Beaumont. Any staffer can volunteer to be a Green Officer. The Green Officers act as role models to other staff through energy, water and waste conservation practices and they help to recruit new Green Officers. Green Officers are trained to assess their individual departments to identify opportunities for further waste reduction, recycling and other environmental improvements. Once opportunities are identified, they are connected with the expert for implementation. For example, a Green Officer may identify a need for motion detection for lights to shut off in individual offices and would be connected with Facilities Management for completion. This helps to address the numerous small improvements that are part of larger goals, in this case, around energy performance. Another example is a department identifying a significant generation of plastics, leading to a connection with Environmental Services to increase recycling for this area.

Beaumont Health System

One of the founding organizations of Beaumont Health, Beaumont Health System, includes three hospitals with 1,778 licensed beds, more than 20,200 employees and 3,100 physicians, including 553 employed physicians in the Beaumont Medical Group and more than 2,500 private-practice physicians. In addition to its hospitals in Royal Oak, Troy and Grosse Pointe, Michigan, Beaumont has 54 community-based sites of care including medical centers in Oakland, Macomb and Wayne counties, family practice and internal medicine practices, five nursing centers, home care services and hospice. The Beaumont Research Institute has 924 open research studies including 270 clinical trials with more than 7,800 participants. Beaumont is the exclusive clinical teaching site for the Oakland University William Beaumont School of Medicine.



Program Details

Job Description for Green Officers

Educate and advocate for practices at Beaumont, consistent with the Beaumont plan.

Role model green behaviors

- Use revolving doors
- Use reusable mugs and bottles
- Turn off lights
- Power down computer and printers
- Recycle paper, plastic, cardboard
- Don't use carry-out containers for food if you are not carrying out, be an advocate
- Don't criticize, share the green plan with co-workers
- Look for ways to reduce, reuse, and recycle goods
- Look for ways to reduce water and power consumption
- Share ideas with green team and on the green blog

Recruit more green officers

What you can expect from the green team:

- Green officer certification
- Regular emails that update you on new plans
- Green Town Halls

Take green home

Green Officers participate in a one-time training (Beaumont University). This is where they are educated on programmatic specifics and provided with updates of existing programs. The 90-minute training includes a slide presentation and requires a test to demonstrate an understanding of roles and responsibilities. While the training was initially conducted on each site by the site lead, it is now recorded and streamlined with a standardized message for all staff. The site lead follows up with a site-specific tour and answers any questions. Green Officers continue their education by attending Green Officer Town Halls, which are offered six times per year. Green Officers receive a pin that is affixed to their ID, clearly identifying their role to others. However, Green Officers are not the only way to engage departmentally. As a quality protocol, a team audits the buildings twice a month, looking for opportunities around water and electricity, two Beaumont goals.

Challenges

There were initial challenges around getting staff to attend the Green Officers Training. Success was realized when certain department heads identified that all of their staff or supervisors become green officers and the entire department would get onboard. Another strategy included bringing the training to key departments, like nursing or the operating room, and conducting the training in their own space. Other challenges include its impact on overall staff engagement. As a

result, a cohort of University of Michigan students from the School of Natural Resources Master's Program have taken on this project. Through the development of a survey, the team has committed to developing a strategy to measure staff and patient impressions around sustainability initiatives and connection to their own health. While leadership is supportive of sustainability initiatives, the question remains, does it lead to organizational performance improvement? This is the question that they seek to answer through working with the University of Michigan graduate students.

Communication

A Green Officer Blog is a way to provide continuous updates and a feedback forum. The blog is written by Green Officers and by Green Team participants. For example, a new initiative which was featured in the training and through the blog is the greening of the Gift Shop. The Green Intern wrote the blog, about activities that had taken place in the gift shop to reduce waste and energy use (sample attached). Other communication strategies include posters and staff memos.

An example of an idea from the blog: One staff member noticed that coffee pots were heating water 24/7 so they put timers on the pots so that they weren't heated up on off-hours. This helped reduce energy use. The garden was an employee and volunteer initiative. A staff member reported that sprinklers turned on when it was raining. They installed a system to detect moisture to prevent use of sprinklers.

What Does Success Look Like?

The more staff that is designated as Green Officers, the more staff is engaged with sustainability programming overall. Staff brings their ideas and sees those recommendations addressed. This demonstrates that their voice is heard and there is a process for them to take an active role in the improvement of their workplace environmental and actively participate in positive change.

What's Next

Digital Session for Green Officer Training and the survey to measure impressions of sustainability programming.

Measurable Outcomes

The number of green officers

- 2011 – the program started and 124 green officers were identified
- 2012 – added 184
- 2013 – added 190
- 2014 – added 182 with a total of 680 by 2015

Employee engagement survey

The employee survey asks, “Does the organization care about my health?” and staff members rate their impressions.

