



After one of the strangest winters in memory, one that causes all of us to reflect on the changes occurring in the environment, Earth Day seems to have special significance. It's a time to think about the role we play as guardians of this planet and the responsibility we have to ensure our children, their children, and their children's children have the opportunity to live in the same verdant and vibrant environment we are lucky enough to currently enjoy.

As we work to create a sustainable health system that will improve the lives of the people and communities we serve, for generations to come, we must recognize the critical linkage of sustainable health to a sustainable environment. Every day, we are learning more about how impurities in the air we breathe and the water we drink, chemicals in manufactured products that make their way into our bodies and the environment, and the ways in which we produce our food, all contribute to the incidence rate of some of the very illnesses for which we treat patients.

I am proud that Dartmouth-Hitchcock and Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center have been nationally recognized leaders in the environmental movement across health care institutions. For more than two decades, we have been working hard to reduce our environmental footprint and to minimize our impact on the waste stream. Just this month, we received Practice Greenhealth's highest overall award, Top 25! We have won this national organization's highest award for many years in a row now, despite the fact that more and more hospitals are achieving impressive results. The bar keeps getting raised and we continue to meet the challenge.

Now we are redoubling our efforts. In December, the Board of Trustees approved an ambitious set of goals developed by your colleagues in the Environmental Sustainability Council. The 2020 environmental goals for the organization are organized into seven different domains: Better Building, Leaner Energy and Water, Healthier Food, Smarter Purchasing, Cleaner Transportation, Less Waste, and Greener Culture. They include using less energy, improving our recycling rate, powering new buildings with non-fossil fuels, reducing emissions from vehicles, using safer chemicals, and serving more local produce and seafood. You can learn more about these goals by visiting the intranet page of the Office of Environmental Sustainability <http://one.hitchcock.org/intranet/departments/environmental-sustainability>.

Thank you all for all you do to protect our environment here and in your own lives.

Best
Jim

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