

Challenges Accepted

Practice Greenhealth announces a new benefit: peer-to-peer learning through small groups.

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Practice Greenhealth's Member Engagement team gathered at CleanMed in May. Back row, from left: Stan Cahill, Christopher Bodkin, Janet Howard, Cecilia DeLoach Lynn, and Iqbal Mian. Front row, from left: Beth Eckl, Hermine Levey Weston, Lauren Kleinman Koch, Peggy Rademaker, Kaeleigh Sheehan, and Julie Moyle.

IMAGINE YOUR morning office routine: Coffee poured, computer on, and email loading as you settle in and contemplate the day ahead. A nagging issue pops up — one that would benefit from some discussion. But who has time for that when there are so many things to do? Are other organizations facing a similar challenge? Have they found solutions? Is there a way to tap into the community's experience?

Practice Greenhealth understands that our members value group learning, networking, and information sharing. So we're pleased to announce a new membership benefit: cohort groups.

Starting this summer, the member engagement team is hosting small-group discussions to help members connect over a shared interest area. The goal is to help member organizations move further along their unique trajectories, learn from each other, and enjoy the connection — all within one hour. The periodic calls are facilitated by a Practice Greenhealth member engagement liaison with a question to frame each call's discussion or to tackle a specific area of focus. This informal structure offers a fun way

to share challenges, obstacles, and strategies for success. Practice Greenhealth convenes the calls, facilitates the discussion, and posts key takeaways after the call on its website.

Connecting Made Easy

The new cohort calls, designed to connect members with peers and practical solutions, are modeled after a tool that Hermine Levey Weston, member engagement manager, put into place for her portfolio of hospitals.

"I support many of Practice Greenhealth's top-performing hospitals, and I recognized a common theme in my discussions with the sustainability leaders. These top performers have much of the basic environmental stewardship processes in place. They were seeking a dialogic process where they could experience group learning framed around some high-level questions about leadership and outcomes of the work," she said. "So I set up what I called 'Hermine's Small Cohort Group.' The group chooses a question to be discussed at least one month in advance. Sometimes

PRACTICE GREENHEALTH MEMBER ENGAGEMENT COHORT GROUPS

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there are best practices to share, and sometimes the conversation is more philosophical. The calls are always dynamic and interactive in the best way.”

The beauty of the calls is that they don’t require any preparation by attendees, other than being present for the call. They are an informal way to share information to help others and to identify barriers. We received such an enthusiastic response from Weston’s efforts that we are expanding cohort calls with the goal of each member being in at least one group.

Which Group Is Right for You?

For system or facility members at the partner level, a variety of cohort groups are being established, based on membership portfolios and requests from the community. For example, having a common theme such as academic

medical centers helps convene a conversation for those members who understand the opportunities and challenges of working in a research and learning environment.

Cohort discussion topics might include how to connect with your board of directors, patient satisfaction impacts from sustainability programming, communicating your hospital’s environmental success, Earth Day activities, green building as a staff retention strategy, environmental dashboards, new employee orientation, establishing funding for healing gardens, or purchasing cubicle curtains with safer chemicals. Topics will be set by cohort participants depending on their areas of interest.

The cohorts will meet on a regular basis for a year to 18 months, depending on the group. Over time, groups will be refreshed, participants moved, and new cohorts established.

The first round of cohorts is already underway, and topic suggestions are being accepted for the next round.

The highlights and associated documents will be shared at www.PracticeGreenhealth.org/cohorts for all Practice Greenhealth members.

Now back to that morning cup of coffee and contemplation of the day — and issues — ahead. Remember, Practice Greenhealth cohort groups are on the calendar to help take on those challenges. So start a list of your barriers, and bring them to the call. Chances are, if it’s a challenge for you, it’s a challenge for others. You can ease into your day, knowing you can engage with a community of peers who share your challenges, opportunities, and enthusiasm. 