

Greener Cleaners – Reducing Employee and Patient Exposure to Chemicals of Concern

Environmental and Human Health Impact: Overall increase of national use of green cleaning products from **23 percent to 43 percent** of purchase dollars, reducing employee and member exposure to chemicals that can cause negative health impacts, including asthma and respiratory illness.

Business Impact: Overall savings approximately **\$85,000 dollars** or **9 percent** annually.

Challenge

In 2009, Kaiser Permanente adopted a multi-year environmental stewardship strategy to support our overarching commitment to programs addressing safety, human health, and environmental excellence.

Organizational guidelines were developed for sustainable food, climate, and safer chemicals. The safer chemicals strategy included performing a chemical hazard assessment that ultimately generated a Targeted Ten list of products that are pervasive in our facilities and could potentially expose employees and patients to chemicals of concern (COC) as defined in our Environmental Preferable Purchasing policy.

KP committed to substitute those products with safer alternatives, where alternatives meet all KP requirements. One of the Targeted Ten products is **cleaning chemicals**. KP selected a full suite of cleaners that includes general purpose and floor care products that will have minimal health risk associated with their ingredients and meets all requirements of the KP sourcing process.

Aim/Goal

To standardize cleaning chemical products at KP and decrease member and employee toxicity exposure.

Team

Lori Bliss, Co-Chair – Environmental Services Core Group (NW)
 Paul Asman, Co-Chair – Environmental Services Core Group (HI)
 EVS Managers and Directors – All regions
 Enid Eck, Infection Prevention
 Joel Sigler, National Environmental Health and Safety
 Emmanuel Lawrence, Sourcing Manager
 Oscar Pacheco, Service Line Director, MedAssets

Actions Taken

- ✓ The sourcing team established product criteria to assess product cleaning efficacy, safety, cost, and environmental performance.
- ✓ It was determined that KP would use Green Seal certification as our minimum COC performance specification wherever possible.
- ✓ The team performed a marketplace search for available products.

- ✓ Using the established criteria, a variety of products were tested at facilities throughout KP. All cleaning product categories were selected except for floor care, because a suitable set of floor care products was not found in the first set of testing. An additional round of floor care product testing was required.
- ✓ Because of the rigor and complexity required to obtain national agreement on the cleaning chemicals we use, the initiative took two years to complete.

Results



Total green cleaners increased from **23 percent to 43 percent** of purchase dollars.

Excluding floor care products, total green cleaners increased from **34 percent to 79 percent** of purchase dollars.*

*Floor care products make up a significant portion of cleaning chemical spend and therefore skew the spend percentage.

Note: 60 percent of cleaners used at KP are purchased directly by KP. A contract completed in 2011 will obligate, with a penalty clause, janitorial service providers to use ONLY KP-specified products.

Lessons Learned

- ✓ Inclusion and commitment from all regions regarding agreement to transition to standard products is essential.
- ✓ Driving compliance is critical to successful implementation.

Next Steps

- ✓ Through a product usage tracking and supplier management plan, including audits performed by an outside firm, KP will monitor the use of the approved products to ensure program compliance.
- ✓ Complete contracts with janitorial service providers that contain a penalty clause and track product usage data generated through auditing of janitorial service providers against contract requirements.