

Environmental Stewardship and Magnet® Hospitals

Making the Connection

Introduction

*Practice Greenhealth's environmental stewardship objectives and Magnet® hospital goals are in alignment and offer an opportunity for synergy. The desired outcome — **quality care and mission demonstration** — is a shared goal.*

*This document describes the **Five Magnet® Hospital Model Components**¹ and explores a shared strategy for creating cultures of environmental excellence. A brief description of the Magnet® Component is provided and then the synergy for environmental stewardship is demonstrated through a real-life example or quote from a Practice Greenhealth member facility. Environmental Stewardship – creating healing environments by reducing stress of building occupants, contributing to ecological health and improving safety – is critical to mission demonstration and plays an important role in safe and respectful work environments for all staff.*

1. Transformational Leadership

Magnet® — “Today's leaders are required to transform their organization's values, beliefs and behaviors. It is relatively easy to lead people where they want to go; the transformational leader must lead people to where they need to be in order to meet the demands of the future. This requires vision, influence, clinical knowledge and a strong expertise relating to professional nursing practice. It also acknowledges that transformation may create turbulence and involve atypical approaches to solutions.”

“The organization's senior leadership team creates the vision for the future, and the systems and environment necessary to achieve that vision. They must enlighten the organization as to why change is necessary, and communicate each department's part in achieving that change. They must listen, challenge, influence and affirm as the organization makes its way into the future. Gradually, this transformational way of thinking should take root in the organization and become even stronger as other leaders adapt to this way of thinking.”

Practice Greenhealth — “At Gundersen Lutheran Health System, we believe healthcare organizations need to be honest with themselves and ‘look in the mirror’ when it comes to environmental factors that affect human disease. Our mission is to improve the health of the communities we serve, and we cannot accomplish this mission without looking at our organization's environmental impact and how that contributes to disease. Through our Envision® program, we've taken a look in the mirror and are taking steps that will have an impact on the health of our communities – such as improving our energy efficiency 25 percent, increasing our renewable energy supply to 100 percent, improvement of our pharmaceutical and hazardous waste management and a commitment to recycling, resulting in a 35 percent recycling and reuse rate of the solid waste stream. We believe healthcare's core principle of striving to “first do no harm” relates to environmental contributors to disease. The best part is that we can achieve this mission while reducing the cost to deliver care by passing along savings we see from our sustainability programs.”



Jeffrey Thompson, MD, CEO
Gundersen Lutheran Health System

2. Structural Empowerment

Magnet® — “Solid structures and processes developed by influential leadership provide an innovative environment where strong professional practice flourishes and where the mission, vision and values come to life to achieve the outcomes believed to be important for the organization. Further strengthening practice are the strong relationships and partnerships developed among all types of community organizations to improve patient outcomes and the health of the communities they serve. This is accomplished through the organization's strategic plan, structure, systems, policies and programs. Staff need to be developed, directed and empowered to find the best way to accomplish the organizational goals and achieve desired outcomes. This may be accomplished through a variety of structures and programs; one size does not fit all.”

Practice Greenhealth — Bon Secours Health System is a \$2.9 billion, not-for-profit, Catholic health system. The system is made up of 19 acute care hospitals, five nursing care facilities and several other sites. It employs more than 21,000 and is spread throughout seven states. Bon Secours sees each sustainability initiative as:

- A mission driven endeavor,
- A cost-savings opportunity,
- A community benefit and
- An employee engagement effort.

These four separate drivers act as leverage points for creating a structure that supports a firm, ongoing commitment with top-down, bottom-up engagement and measurable results. **Bon Secours leadership feels that Environmental Sustainability is about improving the quality of human life while living within the current and future capacity of supporting eco-systems.** They also understand the need for **Operational Sustainability—the maintenance, control and improvement of organizational activities** that are required to produce goods, provide services and meet the organization's goals and objectives. Their key challenge then is to merge the two definitions into one reality.

The mission, values and operating principles of Bon Secours Health System shaped this initiative to enable a consistent ethic of functioning. The program focus is on assessment and reduction of the system's carbon footprint through efficient recycling and waste stream management, toxic chemical use reduction, energy conservation, and movement toward the use of sustainable products and resources, and to develop within the Bon Secours Health System **a culture of sustainability** and awareness of the far-reaching impact of decisions and actions. The connection between the health of individuals, community and environment underlie decisions and program planning. This mission driven programming led to a three-year action plan, which was a road map for the development of the ecology model and basis for transforming the Organization to meet the expanded mission. The three basic elements of the plan were to:

- Design and implement the program
- Establish an organizational model
- Provide support tools and resources

3. Exemplary Professional Practice

Magnet® — “The true essence of a Magnet® organization stems from exemplary professional practice within nursing. This entails a comprehensive understanding of the role of nursing; the application of that role with patients, families, communities and the interdisciplinary team; and the application of new knowledge and evidence. The goal of this component is more than the establishment of strong professional practice; it is what that professional practice can achieve.”

Practice Greenhealth — Nurses are environmental advocates and play an important role in connecting environmental stewardship activities to a safe environment and commitment to communities, wellness and prevention. Practice Greenhealth captures data from its Environmental Excellence Awards and shares that data back to the community in the form of a Sustainability Benchmark Report.

Among the Environmental Leadership Circle Award (top performers) winners:

- 36 percent is the average recycling rate
- 96 percent have clinicians involved in environmental programs
- 100 percent have engaged in a regulated medical waste (RMW) education and reduction program
- 92 percent are reprocessing single-use devices
- 75 percent have implemented a reusable sharps container program
- 96 percent have implemented a pharmaceutical waste management program
- 71 percent have an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policy
- 92 percent have communicated a desire for EPP products with their Group Purchasing Organization

“I believe there is nothing more important than the work to redefine human health to include a healthy environment. All of us must be advocates to help leaders in healthcare see the value of sustainable practices and to see environmental quality as preventive care.”



**Lloyd Dean, President and CEO
Catholic Healthcare West**

4. New Knowledge, Innovation & Improvements

Magnet® — “Strong leadership, empowered professionals and exemplary practice are essential building blocks for Magnet®-recognized organizations, but they are not the final goals. Magnet® organizations have an **ethical** and professional responsibility to contribute to patient care, the organization and the profession in terms of new **knowledge, innovations and improvements**. Our current systems and practices need to be redesigned and redefined if we are to be successful in the future. This Component includes new models of care, application of existing evidence new evidence and visible contributions to the science of nursing.”

Practice Greenhealth — Emerging research around environmental stewardship demonstrates its role in improving safety, reducing costs and improving environmental impact. Lean principles, evidence-based design, community benefit, quality, safety and engagement are a variety of drivers for good stewardship and quality care. Several of the Practice Greenhealth members’ green teams are chaired by health care ethicists, seeing responsible procurement, use and management of resources and materials as an ethical issue and in line with a mission to serve. The diverse community offers connection to emerging areas of research, expertise and voices, where we’re all teachers and all students. Ongoing work around sustainability and its connection to community benefit continue the trend of connecting good stewardship for the environment with health.

“Kaiser Permanente’s *mission* is to improve the health of our members and communities we serve. We can’t do that without helping to address environmental contributors to disease. We work on safer chemicals, climate action and sustainable food in order to prevent cancer, new infectious diseases, diabetes and other conditions linked to pollution.”



**Kathy Gerwig Vice President,
Workplace Safety and Environmental Stewardship Officer,
Kaiser Permanente**

5. Empirical Quality Results

Magnet® — “Today’s Magnet® Recognition process primarily focuses on **structure and processes**, with an assumption that good outcomes will follow. Currently, outcomes are not specified, and are minimally weighted. There are no quantitative outcome requirements for ANCC Magnet®. Recently lacking were benchmark data that would allow comparisons with best practices. This area is where the greatest changes need to occur. Data of this caliber will spur needed changes. Outcomes need to be categorized in terms of clinical outcomes related to nursing workforce outcomes; patient and consumer outcomes and organizational outcomes. When possible, outcomes data that the organization already collects should be utilized. Quantitative benchmarks should be established. These outcomes will represent the “report card” of a Magnet®-recognized organization, and a simple way of demonstrating excellence.”

Practice Greenhealth — Practice Greenhealth feels we can’t manage what we don’t measure and offers tools to measure qualitative and quantitative improvements. Assessment tools like the Eco Check List and the Environmental Excellence Awards application help assess where a facility falls on the greening spectrum and identifies future areas of focus. The Awards process drives hospitals to gather data on waste, energy, environmentally preferable purchasing, construction, healthy food and other initiatives. The data is aggregated to set sector benchmarks and make it possible for health care providers to compare their data to top industry performers. *Greenhealth* magazine highlights the diverse individuals working together to continuously build upon these successes.

1. www.nursecredentialing.org/Magnet/ProgramOverview/New-Magnet-Model.aspx

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Join practice Greenhealth. You’ll be in good company.

Practice Greenhealth is a learning community working toward the greening of health care, offering the next generation of tools and services that can take organizations, wherever they are on the continuum, to the next level of sustainability excellence.

Beyond helping members establish goals and best practices, Practice Greenhealth is widely recognized for leadership in developing specific programs, tools and services – and hands on assistance in reaching those goals.

Join Practice Greenhealth and seize this remarkable opportunity to become a change agent and healing force on behalf of your hospital, patients and staff.

Please contact our Director of Membership, Stan Cahill at 866-598-2050; scahill@practicegreenhealth.org

