EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greenhouse Gas Reduction Toolkit

Why health care must track, set a goal, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions

Climate change is the greatest public health threat and opportunity of the 21st century. To reduce the health impacts of climate change, greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions must be reduced, and hospitals have an essential role to play.

Solving health problems always starts with setting a goal. Establishing a clear, ambitious target can motivate staff and help drive strategies for success. Setting a GHG reduction goal is imperative to making progress.

Practice Greenhealth develops resources to help hospitals and health systems track GHG emissions and set reduction goals. Here’s why:

1. The imperative: Climate change affects health and health care delivery, and hospitals are dealing with the impacts today. Reducing GHG emissions protects the health of patients, employees, and communities.
2. Mission alignment: Health care’s carbon footprint is significant, and a hospital cannot simultaneously contribute to climate change and meet its mission to “do no harm.”
3. Operational benefits: Reducing GHG emissions leads to cost savings and makes hospitals more resilient to extreme weather events.

In a video titled “Climate Change - An Urgent Human Health Issue,” Kaiser Permanente’s CEO Bernard J. Tyson sums up why they have committed to carbon neutrality by 2020: “It’s about health.”
Steps to start

1. Establish a GHG inventory with operational boundaries and a selected baseline year.
2. Gather data for the baseline for full Scopes 1 and 2 (onsite and purchased energy, refrigerants, fleet vehicles, anesthetic gas) and limited Scope 3 categories (employee commute, business travel, waste, and meat procurement).
3. Review goal options and make the case to leadership to establish a GHG reduction goal. (Some organizations establish a goal first and then do their GHG inventory.)
4. Begin working toward that goal to make progress on GHG reduction.

Resources

- Practice Greenhealth members have access to the full Greenhouse Gas Reduction Toolkit with health care-specific resources on:
  - Understanding why this issue is important and critical to the mission of health care
  - How to develop an inventory and set a baseline
  - How to make the case to leadership and set a goal
  - How to make progress on that goal
  - An Excel-based tracking tool specifically designed for hospitals
  - A PowerPoint template to make the pitch to leadership on setting a GHG goal
- The Climate Action Playbook highlights Practice Greenhealth health systems making significant energy and other GHG reductions that also result in cost savings.
- Additional resources – such as webinars, cohort learning groups, and one-on-one support – are available through Practice Greenhealth membership.

Examples of Practice Greenhealth member GHG reduction goals

- Boston Medical Center: 25% by 2020 and 100% by 2050
- Cleveland Clinic: Carbon neutral by 2027
- Dartmouth Hitchcock: 25% reduction by 2020
- Dignity Health: 40% reduction by 2020
- Gundersen Health: Energy independence achieved in 2014
- Kaiser Permanente: Carbon net positive by 2025
- Memorial Sloan Kettering: 50% reduction by 2025
- Montefiore Health System: 50% reduction by 2025
- NYU Langone: 50% reduction by 2025
- Ohio State Wexner Medical Center: Carbon neutral by 2050
- Partners Healthcare: 25% by 2020 and 100% by 2050
- Providence St. Joseph Health: 30% reduction by 2025 and 100% by 2040
- Rochester Regional Health: 100% renewable electricity by 2025
- Sutter Health: 50% by 2025 and 80% by 2030 with a 2014 baseline
- University of California Health: Carbon neutral by 2025
- Virginia Mason Memorial Yakima: Carbon neutral by 2025