

Health

Emission

Sustainable
developmentCO₂

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.



Let Practice Greenhealth help you lead change in your hospital. To get started today, email join@practicegreenhealth.org.

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



This guidance has been reviewed for conformance with the GHG Protocol Corporate Accounting and Reporting Standard.