



## Why Less Waste?

- Hospitals in the United States produce more than five million tons of waste annually—a figure based on data collected from Practice Greenhealth award applicants and extrapolated to the sector.
- Landfilled waste produces methane—potent greenhouse gas with six times the global warming potential of carbon dioxide.
- Incinerated waste or waste-to-energy incinerators also produce greenhouse gases while concurrently emitting dioxins, heavy metals such as mercury and cadmium and other toxic substances, while leaving toxic fly ash residue. Incinerators emit more CO<sub>2</sub> per megawatt-hour than any fossil fuel-based power source—including coal-fired power plants, and have been linked to an increased risk of asthma in surrounding communities.
- Pharmaceuticals are in our nation's lakes, rivers and drinking water.
- Food services waste alone, makes up approximately 25 percent of the overall health care waste stream.
- The OR has been estimated to produce between 20-33 percent of the total waste generated in the hospital as is the largest departmental generator of regulated medical waste.