

Mercy Medical Center

COMPANY BACKGROUND



Mercy Medical Center, located in downtown Cedar Rapids, has been providing personalized health services since its founding in 1900 by the Sisters of Mercy. With 331 operational patient beds and more than 2,100 employees, they take pride in offering high quality care to thousands of patients every year. Mercy Medical Center is the only hospital in the Iowa City-Cedar Rapids Corridor to offer 100 percent private acute care patient rooms. The importance of compassion, dedication and professionalism is embodied in their motto, "The Mercy Touch."



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PROJECT BACKGROUND

The mission statement of Mercy Medical Center, "...to enhance the health of the communities we serve..." demonstrates the importance Mercy places on the well-being of the community. Caring for the environment is no exception. The hospital uses green cleaning chemicals and recycles cardboard, paper, LDPE pallet wrap, fluorescent light bulbs and used cooking oil. The hospital also recently received an award for being virtually mercury-free.

INCENTIVES TO CHANGE

The continued improvement of recycling and waste minimization efforts is important to Mercy Medical Center. A more comprehensive recycling program that includes new recyclable materials will reduce the amount of waste leaving the hospital, save on disposal costs, and create new revenue for the facility. With the implementation of a new pharmaceutical waste disposal program, Mercy wanted to ensure they were correctly disposing of this waste and complying with regulations.

RESULTS

Recycling Program Improvements

A new vendor is willing to accept materials currently recycled by Mercy, including cardboard, newspaper, office paper and LDPE pallet wrap. They will also offer services for new recyclables, #1 and #2 plastics, and blue sterile wrap.

Currently, Mercy pays to have papers containing patient information destroyed and recycled. The new recycling vendor is able to securely recycle paper with protected health information. This vendor will not charge for the destruction of the documents but instead will provide a reimbursement.

Prior to this summer, Mercy had no house-wide newspaper recycling program in place. Only an estimated 43 percent of newspaper brought into the hospital was recycled. Recycling bins located in areas where newspapers are delivered saves Mercy money on disposal costs and also generates revenue.

Sterile wrap is a very clean, durable material that encloses surgical instruments before they are sterilized. The waste is generated in only a few areas of the hospital, making it an ideal recyclable that will create revenue for Mercy.

Currently, Mercy recycles no plastics. The new recycling vendor will accept #1 and #2 plastics and offer a reimbursement. Recycling will also save on avoided disposal costs.

Cafeteria Styrofoam Usage Reduction

An estimated 8 percent of people who go through the cafeteria line choose a carry-out Styrofoam box but then stay in the cafeteria to eat. This creates unnecessary waste. Signage in the cafeteria encouraging people to choose a plate if they are staying to eat would be a simple way to reduce waste.

Bathroom Faucet Aerators

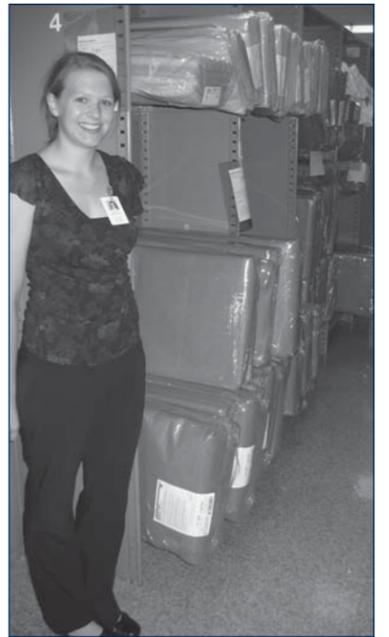
Many of the faucets in Mercy are old or have no aerators. These faucets have a flow rate greater than necessary for hand washing. Installation of these inexpensive aerators would save money and water.

Pharmaceutical Waste Audit and Reduction

Mercy recently started a pharmaceutical waste handling program with the opportunity to reduce hazardous pharmaceutical waste by 25%. This can be accomplished by eliminating obvious wastes such as partially used IV drip bags containing saline solution from the hazardous waste stream.

Mercury Audit and Reduction

Mercy received an award in 2006 for being virtually mercury-free. However, no formal inventory of mercury-containing devices was in place. Most mercury was found in the biomedical area, in mechanical rooms and in fluorescent lighting. The lab replaced four mercury thermometers with mercury-free alternatives.



Project	Annual Cost Savings	Environmental Results	Status
SWITCHING RECYCLING VENDORS	\$3,723	IMPROVED EFFICIENCY, NEW ITEMS RECYCLED	IN PROGRESS
SWITCHING HIPAA PAPER RECYCLERS	\$28,232	SAVED TRANSPORTATION	RECOMMENDED
NEWSPAPER RECYCLING	\$867	4.57 TONS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL	IMPLEMENTED
BLUE STERILE WRAP RECYCLING	\$730	7.55 TONS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL	IN PROGRESS
PLASTICS RECYCLING	\$140	1.45 TONS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL	IN PROGRESS
CAFETERIA STYROFOAM USAGE REDUCTION	\$1,923	0.60 TONS DIVERTED FROM LANDFILL	RECOMMENDED
BATHROOM FAUCET AERATORS	\$1,083	328,705 GALLONS OF WATER	RECOMMENDED
PHARMACEUTICAL WASTE AUDIT AND REDUCTION	\$8,200	SAVED ENERGY AND REDUCED EMISSIONS FROM AVOIDED INCINERATION	RECOMMENDED
MERCURY AUDIT AND REDUCTION	AVOIDED POSSIBLE CLEAN-UP COSTS	INCREASED SAFETY	IMPLEMENTED