

MERCY MEDICAL CENTER

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COMPANY BACKGROUND



DES MOINES

Mercy Medical Center was founded in 1893 by the Sisters of Mercy. Today it is part of Catholic Health Initiative, which encompasses 72 hospitals in 18 states. Mercy is Des Moines' longest operating hospital and one of the largest employers in the state, with more than 6,600 employees and medical staff of more than 950 physicians and health professionals. Mercy's accomplishments in sustainability include opening the first LEED certified hospital in Iowa, at Mercy West Lakes.

PROJECT BACKGROUND

Mercy Medical Center has made several advances in becoming more sustainable in the past few years. The 'Green for Mercy' motto was created, and a green committee encourages and implements sustainable projects. The Pollution Prevention Intern Program has enabled Mercy to further pursue and implement solid waste projects, and to show the impact the medical center can have as an environmental steward.

INCENTIVES TO CHANGE

The Mercy staff and green committee recognize the need for sustainability, to improve the overall quality and integrity of their services. Mercy's commitment to stewardship and its core values drive its pursuit of excellence and continual improvement. New waste reduction and recycling projects will not only provide economic savings, but could also divert more than 720 tons from the landfill each year.

RESULTS

Single Stream Recycling: Through a single stream recycling program that is in progress, more than 640 tons of solid waste is expected to be recycled each year. Iowa Department of Natural Resources' Solid Waste Alternatives Program will assist Mercy with project development and equipment purchases for the program.

Operating Room Blue Wrap Reduction: By using reusable sterilization trays, blue wrapping for operating tools and



equipment can be reduced by 80 percent. The trays will reduce the need for most blue wrap on equipment by providing a complete vacuum seal after sterilization. This program is projected to prevent 5 tons of plastic wrapping from going to the landfill and to save Mercy over \$80,000 per year. The Solid Waste Alternatives Program will provide some start-up funds for this program.

New Confidential Document Disposal: With improved education and better management practices, Mercy could replace some confidential document shredding with paper recycling. Many paper documents that are not considered confidential could be recycled, rather than placed in confidential document shredding containers. Through this



recycling change, as well as understanding quantities of shredded materials produced each week, Mercy can save more than \$55,000 annually.

Cardboard Recycling at Distribution Warehouse: Mercy Medical Center's supply distribution was moved from the downtown Mercy location to a separate facility. The move made it possible for the facility to recycle more than 60 tons of cardboard and plastic wrapping annually. With the purchase of a baler or compactor, the distribution warehouse could begin to recycle this material, saving more than \$7,000 every year.

Styrofoam Reduction and Recycling: Reducing or recycling styrofoam plates, cups and other items can keep more than 8 tons of styrofoam products from going to the landfill each year. This program allows for polystyrene materials to be replaced by reusable dishware or to be recycled into new materials. A densifier can be used to recycle styrofoam through compaction into 15-inch diameter cylinders.

CONVENTIONAL AIR POLLUTANTS AND GREEN HOUSE GASES DIVERTED IN STANDARD TONS

Total for all sectors					
CO ₂	SO ₂	CH ₄	N ₂ O	CFC	PM-10
841.10	3.30	36.80	3.13	----	3.45

PROJECT	ANNUAL COST SAVINGS	ENVIRONMENTAL RESULTS	STATUS
SINGLE STREAM RECYCLING	\$22,000	640 TONS	IN PROGRESS
OPERATING ROOM BLUE WRAP REDUCTION	\$80,000	5 TONS	IN PROGRESS
NEW CONFIDENTIAL DOCUMENT DISPOSAL	\$55,000	11 TONS	IN PROGRESS
CARDBOARD RECYCLING AT DISTRIBUTION WAREHOUSE	\$7,300	60 TONS	RECOMMENDED
STYROFOAM REDUCTION AND RECYCLING	\$600	8 TONS	IN PROGRESS

