

Environmental Sustainability

HealthPartners Environmental Sustainability

Project Goals HealthPartners is committed to caring for the places where we live and work so we can provide a healthier, cleaner and more livable environment for our employees, members, patients and future generations. Our sustainability goals include:

- Expanding the use of sustainable and earth-friendly practices to help us work smarter, be healthier and save money;
- Encouraging employees to participate in, champion and support sustainability practices, both at work and at home;
- Measuring and monitoring our progress toward our sustainability goals; and
- Leading, advocating and implementing initiatives that improve the health and well-being of the communities we serve.

Project Description

HealthPartners' sustainability program is central to and fully aligned with their mission, vision and values. To achieve the positive, long-term result with the community that their mission requires, they must take health, well-being and sustainability into account. This approach goes beyond their four walls and extends into the communities they serve, as well as into other parts of the country where they acquire goods and services.

For HealthPartners, their sustainability program lies at the intersection of their triple aim (health, experience, affordability) and their triple bottom-line (people, planet, prosperity). They want to move beyond “business as usual” and transform into an organization that does “more good” instead of “less bad.” One example of this transformative change is their Medicine Take-Back program, where they collect the public’s unneeded or unwanted medicines for proper disposal. In 2020, they had 25 medicine take-back kiosks in service at their clinics and hospitals and collected over 4,200 pounds of medication from the public. While this program comes at a cost to the organization, it also keeps medications away from those who shouldn’t have them, keeps chemicals from being released to the environment, and supports their larger mission. In short, it’s the right thing to do.

Health care is a resource-intensive industry that uses a significant amount of energy and generates an enormous amount of waste. This is why they are committed to a comprehensive sustainability program to help use energy wisely, continually install new and more efficient equipment at their facilities, and minimize the amount of waste they generate. In addition, HealthPartners has committed to renewable energy. In 2020, their solar panels produced the equivalent of over 1,300 houses’ worth of electricity, and they have signed agreements that will produce over 2,000 houses’ worth of solar electricity starting in 2021. By reducing their carbon footprint, they also decrease airborne pollutants, thus lowering incidents of asthma and other coronary/respiratory diseases.

On the waste minimization front, they diligently look for ways to avoid waste, such as working with our suppliers to cut back on packaging, and when waste is unavoidable we try to find a way to keep it from going to a landfill or incinerator. In 2019, they diverted over 6.4 million pounds of materials from going to

the landfill. This total included more than 220 tons of organic wastes and more than 130,000 pounds of material, equipment and supplies that were donated to medical mission trips and other non-profit organizations. Again, these efforts help support HealthPartners mission by providing jobs and materials to those in need, avoiding environmental impact all while saving HealthPartners money. In 2019, HealthPartners saved over \$2.3 million with their waste minimization efforts and over \$3.5 million with their overall sustainability initiatives.

HealthPartners has 23 green teams that work hard on leading their sustainability initiatives. These teams exist across their organization, including at the HealthPartners headquarters in Bloomington, Hudson Hospital & Clinic, Lakeview Hospital, Methodist Hospital, Regions Hospital, Westfields Hospital & Clinic, Amery Hospital & Clinic, and several of their clinics.

Finally, they are reducing paper use by having members sign up for paperless Explanation of Benefits (EOB). And since 2014, their telemedicine programs like Virtuwel have prevented over 3,800 tons of carbon dioxide – the equivalent of taking over 790 cars off the road for one year.

HealthPartners won a 2020 Sustainability Award for exemplary sustainability strategy for the fifth year in a row from Practice Greenhealth, the leading health care sustainability organization in North America. It also received additional high honors nationally from Practice Greenhealth, winning 31 awards in 2020. Amery Hospital & Clinic, Hudson Hospital & Clinic and Westfields Hospital & Clinic have all received a Green Masters award from the Wisconsin Sustainable Business Council. In 2019, six of their hospitals were named to the Becker's Greenest Hospital in America list.

Entities Involved

Practice Greenhealth, Clean Air Minnesota, Minnesota Sustainable Growth Coalition, Health Care Climate Council, and the Women's Environmental Network.

How Health Plans Support the Project

HealthPartners' comprehensive sustainability programs supports their mission to improve the health of communities, and engage their members, patients, colleagues and other stakeholders.

Questions?

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