



Environmental Sustainability and Catholic Health Care — Getting Started

The Catholic health ministry is called to act responsibly toward the environment in order to show our respect for all creation and to promote the health of our communities and the world.

WE RECOGNIZE THAT:

- Concern for the earth is a moral issue.
- God's creation is a gift to us and deserves our reverence and protection.
- The gospel message tells us to be concerned about the most vulnerable of God's children – those who are poor, young or frail. They are most hurt by environmental hazards.

WE ARE COMMITTED TO:

- Doing our part to protect the environment.
- Having policies and practices that promote responsible use of resources and health in our communities.
- Developing a culture of sustainability.

HOW CAN MY ORGANIZATION GET STARTED WITH ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY?

- Develop a vision for sustainability.
- Secure leadership support.
- Identify a champion.
- Form a green team.
- Develop policies on waste, energy management, food and toxic materials.
- Set goals with some quick wins.
- Join Practice Greenhealth.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE GREEN TEAM?

- Perform a needs assessment and gather baseline data.
- Set annual environmental goals and action plan.
- Develop an education plan for new and current staff.
- Monitor progress and report to leadership, staff and community.
- Celebrate achievements.

WHO SHOULD BE ON THE GREEN TEAM?

A multi-disciplinary team will help ensure that programs are feasible and that education/awareness initiatives are effectively targeted.

Some team members could include:

<i>Public relations and marketing</i>	<i>Engineering</i>
<i>Materials/supply chain management</i>	<i>Finance</i>
<i>Mission</i>	<i>Pharmacy</i>
<i>Operations</i>	<i>Environmental services</i>
<i>Information technology services</i>	<i>Food services</i>
<i>Nursing and other clinicians</i>	<i>Community relations</i>
	<i>Safety/environmental health</i>
	<i>Facilities management</i>

WHAT ARE SOME FIRST STEPS?

Begin with one or two small steps, such as:

- Participate in free Practice Greenhealth webinars at www.practicegreenhealth.org.
- Announce: We are “going green.”
- Purchase recycled paper and print on both sides.
- Keep track of all waste.
- Eliminate mercury-containing devices and equipment.
- Tell vendors you want less-hazardous products.
- Sign the Health Care Without Harm Healthy Food Pledge – www.noharm.org
- Buy local and organic foods.
- Join ENERGY STAR.
- Replace disposables with mugs and glasses.
- Eliminate bottled water.

WHO CAN HELP?

- Practice Greenhealth – www.practicegreenhealth.org
- Health Care Without Harm – www.noharm.org
- The Green Guide for Health Care – www.gghc.org
- Catholic Coalition on Climate Change – www.catholicsandclimatechange.org
- Utilize and order resources developed by the Catholic Health Association and some of its members, which are available on CHA’s website at www.chausa.org/environmental_responsibility
- Join CHA’s network of Catholic health organizations working to promote environmental sustainability by contacting: JTrocchio@chausa.org