



*Improving patient, workplace,  
and environmental health and  
safety in healthcare*

## Global Health and Safety Initiative

Online Newsletter - Volume 1, No. 2, Nov 25, 2008

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### Contents

- ▶ From the Executive Director's Desk
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ What's New?
- ▶ Workgroups: Information and Call Dates
- ▶ Have Questions?
- ▶ Join Us - Co-Founder Opportunities Only Through the End of 2008

### From the Executive Director's Desk

The Time for Change?

This could well be the time for change . . . the kind of change the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) stands for.

We see growing interest and involvement in the green (environmental sustainability) movement and health care everywhere - from businesses, in the media and now in politics. President-Elect Barack Obama has indicated that early priorities for his administration include climate change and energy, green jobs to help spur the economy and health care reform, centered largely on expanding health care coverage and lowering the cost of health care.

These priorities fit very nicely with the work of the GHSI. As you'll see in this newsletter and our website ([www.globalhealthisafety.org](http://www.globalhealthisafety.org)), we have focused on the intersection of smarter environmental approaches that lead to safer and healthier outcomes for patients, the workplace and our communities (see e.g. "Towards a Healthier and Safer Society," to be posted to the [Document Library](#) of our website soon.)

We have been presenting this message in a number of forums recently - e.g. to the [American Public Health Association](#), the [Health Industry Group Purchasing Association](#) and at our partner, The [Center for Health Design's 2008 annual Conference](#). You can read these presentations on our website as well. We have also had very successful meetings about the GHSI with a number of important health care organizations, including the American Hospital Association, the American

Medical Association, the Joint Commission, the Institutes of Medicine and others.

Our Initiative is growing. We welcome Partners Healthcare and MedStar Health as our newest GHSI Co-Founders - joining Ascension Health, Catholic Healthcare West, Kaiser Permanente, Hospital Sisters Health System and St. Joseph Health System of Orange. Advocate Health has also joined the GHSI and we anticipate other systems joining us shortly. Opportunities to join GHSI as Co-Founders are available through the end of the year - see further information at the end of this newsletter.

We are in conversation with the Health Administration Press, an arm of the American College of Health Care Executives to prepare a book on safety and the greening of health care. And on March 23, members of the GHSI family, architect Robin Guenther, Texas A&M professor Roger Ulrich (both on the Board of the Center for Health Design; Robin is also a co-coordinator of the Green Guide for Healthcare) and myself have been invited to the National Building Museum in Washington, DC to discuss the greening of healthcare, part of an education series billed as "For the Greener Good: Conversations that Will Change the World."

We hope so. And with your help, together we can make a difference.

Bob Eisenman, Ph.D.  
Executive Director  
Global Health and Safety Initiative information.

## Upcoming Events

More information about these and other events can be found on the events page of our [website](#). To tell us about an event, please contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org).

- ▶ **Halogenated Flame Retardants Webinar:** Sponsored by GHSI, Healthcare Without Harm, and Practice Greenhealth, on December 10 at 9am Pacific / noon Eastern, this free webinar will examine the issues concerning the use of halogenated flame retardants, the availability of safer alternatives, and what health care organizations can do to reduce their use. For details and to register, please visit the [Registration](#) page.
- ▶ **The Corporate Citizenship Assessment Tool Webinar:** Hosted by the GHSI's Corporate Social Responsibility/Public Policy workgroup on December 11 at 1pm Pacific / 4pm Eastern, this session will introduce participants to the Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship's Assessment Tool. Developed as an online platform for member organizations to assess their strengths and gaps in corporate citizenship management, the tool has been used by over 70 companies since it was first launched in March 2007. It provides a quick and practical way to assess an organization's current state of corporate citizenship management in four distinct dimensions of corporate citizenship - governance, community support, operations, and products & services. For details and to register, please visit the [Registration](#) page.

## What's New?

Here are a few of the latest developments from GHSI's workgroups, members, and NGO partners:

- ▶ **Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) / Public Policy (PP) Leadership:** While the CSR/PP

workgroup is advancing CSR and PP concepts through a number of avenues, there are already examples of CSR/PP leadership among many of the GHSI members. In fact, there are several relevant CSR paths that GHSI members have taken to develop and communicate their commitment to environmental and social issues. For example:

- Catholic Healthcare West endorses the Ceres Principles, uses the Global Reporting Initiative (GRI) as its framework for CSR reporting and has posted reports on the Corporate Register.
- Catholic Healthcare West, Kaiser Permanente and St. Joseph Health System are members of the California Climate Action Registry, which in turn is a part of The Climate Registry.
- The Cleveland Clinic signed on to the United Nations Global Compact.

Additional details can be found at on [our webpage](#).

The CSR/PP workgroup is collaboratively preparing draft PP guidelines on climate (energy), chemicals and food. In addition, the CSR/PP workgroup is exploring tools that will support GHSI members and the healthcare industry in assessing CSR performance. One area of development is around an *Eco-Health Footprint* tool that will enable systems to evaluate their energy and carbon impacts, as well as other key environmental indicators such as waste, water, and toxic chemicals. Another tool that is currently being used by Kaiser Permanente is the *Corporate Citizenship Assessment Tool*, developed by Boston College Center for Corporate Citizenship. A webinar demonstration is scheduled for December 11; registration information is available on [our website](#). Boston College has agreed to collaborate with GHSI members on the use of this tool. As an interim step, the CSR/PP workgroup is developing an *Engagement Model*, whereby workgroup members will assess their own systems CSR position.

- ▶ **Job Description Developed for a Healthcare Sustainability Director:** In early September, the Sustainable Operations workgroup finished the development and vetting of a draft job description for a healthcare sustainability director. Compiled from job descriptions for currently existing roles in leading healthcare organizations, this tool is intended for executive teams who are discussing the potential to create a dedicated position for a sustainability officer. The job description is now available on the GHSI wiki under Sustainable Operations Projects and will be posted on the GHSI website shortly.
- ▶ **The Eco-Checklist Tool for Healthcare Operations:** The Sustainable Operations team has reviewed and signed off on an Eco-Checklist Tool for Healthcare Operations. This new Practice Greenhealth tool will assist hospital green teams or system environmental leadership committees to get a snapshot of where they sit on the environmental sustainability spectrum. A comprehensive set of criteria in categories such as environmental infrastructure, energy, water and climate change, waste management and environmentally preferable purchasing allow organizations to develop a problem baseline and utilize the baseline information to determine sustainability goals. The tool will be available for download in early December.
- ▶ **Collaboration with the Health Industry Group Purchasing Association (HIGPA):** Purchasing workgroup members met for a one day planning meeting in September in conjunction with the HIGPA annual conference in Orlando, Florida. Group members proposed goals in three priority areas: recycled content paper, DEHP- and PVC- free medical devices and electronic devices, desired information to be available through the environmentally preferable product (EPP)

specifications database, and how Group Purchasing Organizations and systems can work together to collectively buy EPP products and shift the market. Several GHSI members presented during the conference, and their presentations are [available here](#). Since this meeting, Purchasing workgroup leaders have continued to work with HIGPA to develop a collaborative approach. The Purchasing workgroup will be reviewing the discussion and action items from the meeting during its next call.

Purchasing workgroup leader Mark Rossi is one of several speakers featured in an upcoming free webinar on halogenated flame retardants and their alternatives, scheduled for December 10; please see our [Events](#) page for more information and to register.

- ▶ **New Tool for Architects and Designers Released:** The Materials Subcommittee of the Built Environment workgroup is working with The Healthy Building Network (HBN) to put together a document for designers and hospitals to help signal to manufacturers their interest in green building materials. The document is a tool that hospitals or architecture and design firms might want to use or adapt to help communicate with vendors from whom they purchase building materials. In addition, the Materials Subcommittee - in particular the healthcare architect and design firms - helped draft and review a tool to assist HBN in undertaking the first steps in auditing or assessing green building material sourcing for two pilot hospitals in California, GHSI member systems Catholic Healthcare West and St. Joseph Health System.
- ▶ **Built Environment Group at Healthcare Design 08:** Several members of the Built Environment workgroup who attended the conference met at the meeting. It was a great opportunity for new and potential members to have a chance to meet each other in person. Systems were asked to bring a list of their top 10 priorities that would be areas of focus for the group to work on for GHSI in 2009. Each system shared their initial ideas. What emerged from the discussion was a need to expand the lists to encompass all three safeties as the lists that each system shared focused primarily on sustainability. Additionally the group wanted to spend more time discussing areas of similarities and strategies that could be applied. What also became clear is that any work that the Built Environment group focused on in 2009 had to work synergistically with the health systems current priorities and work. There was a willingness to share and the group has more work to do to define the work that we will focus on next year. Additionally, information about GHSI was available at the Center for Health Design booth and a new program called EDAC (Evidence Based Accreditation and Certification) was launched and everyone received their first Study Guide that teaches people about the Evidence Based Design process to be used when building healthcare facilities.
- ▶ **The Ripple Database Update:** GHSI members now have access to an [open-source searchable database](#) on innovative design recommendations that include 170+ Kaiser Permanente innovations. The ACT track of Ripple will be live in mid-December, and the Center for Health Design's Pebble Projects will be uploaded soon. The Built Environment workgroup will be working with St. Joseph Health System to input their design strategies into Ripple. In addition, a case study template will be loaded onto this database shortly. If you have any case studies you would like to share, please send them to Carolyn Quist at [cquist\\_AT\\_healthdesign.org](mailto:cquist_AT_healthdesign.org).
- ▶ **Research Workgroup Preparing for 2009:** Over the last several months, Dr. Peter Orris and Rachel Machi have been conducting meetings with the GHSI member health systems to collect information about current research being conducted within their institutions and research priorities around patient, worker and environmental health and safety. From the meetings a

white paper will be produced that provides an overview of the findings and advises the research agenda in order to ensure that it meets the goals and objectives of the GHSI.

Proposals are moving forward on several of the priority research projects identified during the Research workgroup CleanMed meeting in May. It is projected that white papers will be published on both the greener cleaner and resilient flooring proposals early in 2009. Additionally, several other white paper and research projects are being developed into proposals.

- ▶ **Partners Hires Sustainability Manager:** "Partners Healthcare has appointed Hubert Murray AIA as Manager of Sustainable Initiatives to support Partners' commitment to environmental health and safety for patients, employees and the healthcare system, including:

- Greater energy, materials and operational efficiencies in buildings
- Higher environmental standards in the purchase of products and materials
- Safe and sustainable standards in daily operations including patient care, research laboratories, food services, cleaning, and transportation.

Partners is a founding member of the GHSI, a national consortium of healthcare providers committed to these goals. The combination of Partners local initiatives with the experience of other systems across the country promises great potential for achieving higher levels of environmental sustainability, greater operational efficiencies and a safer environment for everyone involved in the healthcare system." Hubert Murray has joined GHSI's Built Environment workgroup.

- ▶ **GHSI Hires Program Manager:** GHSI welcomes May van Scherrenburg as the new Program Manager. May has over eight years experience in the social change sector working primarily for grantmaking institutions such as the Steven and Michele Kirsch Foundation. Much of her time was spent working to connect smaller, grassroots organizations with critically needed resources to move their environmental health work forward. Prior to May's foundation years, she worked as an agricultural biologist in Silicon Valley, and as an organic chemist, testing for toxins in produce, soil and water. She can be reached at [may\\_AT\\_globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:may_AT_globalhealthsafety.org).
- ▶ **New and Alarming Report About Global Resource Demands:** According to newly released figures from the Global Footprint Network, humanity will require two planets to meet our demands by the mid-2030s. From the Global Footprint Network: "Our demand on nature, just as the economy, is reaching a critical tipping point. Two years ago, Global Footprint Network data showed humanity on track to reach the two-planet mark by 2050. Now it appears we are set to this critical threshold much earlier, at around the time children born today are entering the workforce. Meeting this level of demand is likely to be physically impossible, and would likely cause ecosystem failures that would threaten the economic underpinnings of our society." The information is part of comprehensive new data from Global Footprint Network exploring the changing state of human pressure on the planet and how it compares across 200 nations. A summary of the findings are presented in the [Living Planet Report 2008](#), produced with WWF and the Zoological Society of London. Complete country-by-country graphs, data tables, sources and methodology are available in [The Ecological Footprint Atlas 2008](#).

## Workgroups: Information and Call Dates

Interested in joining the GHSI and participating in one or more of these workgroups? Please

contact GHSI staff at [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org), and we'll put you in touch with the appropriate workgroup leader to get you started.

- ▶ The focus of the **Research Collaborative** is to help provide funding and facilitate research that links better building designs, greener and safer materials and products and improved approaches to operations that will reduce the hazards associated with negative health affects. The Research workgroup will reconvene in January; an e-mail will go out to existing workgroup members to query available dates and times.
- ▶ The **Sustainable Operations** workgroup strategy focuses on the acceleration of best practices for operations among the GHSI partners and the entire healthcare sector, including Environmental Services, Hazardous Materials, Safety, Dietary/Food Services, and Risk Management. The next Sustainable Operations workgroup call is December 11, 1pm Pacific / 4pm Eastern.
- ▶ The **Healthy Purchasing** workgroup will use the collective purchasing power of participating hospital systems and their Group Purchasing Organizations (GPOs) to transform the market for healthcare products and technologies that meet the goals of patient and workplace safety and environmental sustainability, including identifying priority products and developing a database of environmentally preferable product specifications. The next Purchasing workgroup call will be scheduled soon.
- ▶ The **Built Environment** workgroup will provide access to an array of "best practices" to implement strategies that augment patient safety and workplace safety. These strategies also will maximize the sector's environmental performance while reducing healthcare's eco-footprint and contributing to the health and safety of patients and workers. The next Built Environment meeting is December 10, 8am Pacific / 11am Eastern, and the next Materials subcommittee call is December 2, 11am Pacific / 2pm Eastern.
- ▶ Corporate social responsibility (CSR) is the concept of leveraging assets in ways that promote economic, social and environmental health. The **CSR and Public Policy** workgroup provides an avenue to advance CSR concepts by integrating safety and sustainability into members' business strategies and operations. The public policy component of this workgroup's efforts will focus on collective strategies for pursuing responsible public policy that supports safety and sustainability in health care, such as reducing greenhouse gas emissions. The next CSR/PP workgroup call will be the Corporate Citizenship Assessment Tool webinar on December 11 referenced in the "Upcoming Events" section of this newsletter. In 2009, workgroup calls will be on the last Thursday of each month at 1pm Pacific / 4pm Eastern.
- ▶ Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for December 1, 15, and 29, and are listed on the wiki.

## Have Questions?

Visit our [GHSI website](http://ghsi.org) for frequent program updates and information about upcoming meetings and events. If you have direct questions about becoming a member of GHSI, please contact the GHSI Executive Director, Bob Eisenman, Ph.D., at 510-418-6197 or [beisenman AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:beisenman@globalhealthsafety.org).

GHSI encourages health systems to join as Co-Founders through the end of 2008. Co-

Founders are recognized as leaders in safety and sustainability and help guide the work of GHSI. In addition, Co-Founders receive system membership in Practice GreenHealth and discounts for participating in the Center for Health Design.

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