



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

Global Health and Safety Initiative

Online Newsletter - Volume 2, No. 1, Jan 15, 2009

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From the Executive Director's Desk

2009 - A new year, with new challenges and opportunities. A time to reflect on our progress and achievements, to build on them and to develop goals and plans for the future. And so it is with the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI).

Launched in October, 2007 the GHSI ended its first full year with the active participation of 60 plus organizations including approximately 25 of the U.S.'s leading health systems. GHSI special thanks and recognition is due to the executives and colleagues of seven health systems that by year end had become Co-Founders of GHSI and were leading our efforts and ensuring GHSI had the financial and leadership support to pursue its mission and activities:

- [Ascension Health](#)
- [Catholic Healthcare West](#)
- [Hospital Sisters Health System](#)
- [Kaiser Permanente](#)
- [MedStar Health](#)
- [Partners Healthcare](#)
- [St. Joseph Health System](#)

The GHSI is well on its way to becoming its own 501(c)(3) not-for-profit organization and we will hold our first Board meeting later this month. We will be summarizing the many achievements of the GHSI for 2008 in our first annual report due out in early February. Also in early February we'll

be publishing GHSI's strategic priorities, based on the effort of our workgroups, and input from conversations with our Advisory Council and senior leaders representing many health systems and organizations influencing the state of healthcare today. Thank you for your input and guidance.

In addition we will be publishing our GHSI Eco-Health Footprint Guide - we believe the first comprehensive guide to helping hospitals and health systems understand and begin measuring the (considerable) environmental impacts of their buildings and operations. Having base-line knowledge is a natural first step in identifying areas to focus on and to making improvements.

Because of its importance and timeliness I wanted call your attention to a public policy Initiative we have been developing in conjunction with two of our partner not-for-profits, Health Care Without Harm and Practice GreenHealth - a Health Care Renewable Energy and Green Jobs Initiative. (See also below). This Initiative appears to fit very well with several of the goals of our new President Obama's goals - i.e. helping to address climate change, promoting energy efficiency and renewable energy, creating green jobs, and improving healthcare.

We have been having discussions about this Initiative and concept with representatives from President-elect Obama's Transition Team, with good responses so far. Our goal is to make funds for healthcare energy efficiency and renewable energy part of the new President and Congress' stimulus package or through other legislation. The [draft Initiative document is available on our website](#). We would appreciate your comments and suggestions and of course support for Health Care's Renewable Energy and Green Jobs Initiative.

To be sure 2009 is likely to be a very difficult year, perhaps dominated by the economic challenges our nation and the world faces. But there are also opportunities for improvement and positive change . . . for the betterment of health care, our communities and the world. In tough economic times like these, focusing on improving safety and environmental efficiency can reduce risks and costs and position health systems well for the opportunities ahead. Together we can make a difference. In 2009 thank you for helping to make this so.

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

Upcoming Event: GHSI Strategic Update Call

On Tuesday, February 10, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern, join Global Health and Safety Initiative Executive Director Dr. Robert Eisenman and other GHSI partners for a free live chat to discuss key achievements in 2008 and what to expect in 2009. Some topics to be covered include:

- Conversations with the Obama Transition Team to advocate for support to hospitals and healthcare to improve their energy efficiency and use of renewable energy;
- GHSI strategic priority areas for 2009 and beyond;
- A developing book proposal on the safety and the greening of health care; and
- A soon to be released Eco-Health Footprint toolkit.

Time will be set aside to answer questions from call participants. To join the free call, dial-in to 1-712-432-0800, and enter access code 717344#, a couple of minutes before the designated start time to ensure a prompt start to the call. Please also [RSVP online](#).

Health Care's Renewable Energy and Clean Jobs Initiative

In conjunction with two of our partner not-for-profits, Health Care Without Harm and Practice GreenHealth, GHSI has proposed a Health Care Renewable Energy and Green Jobs Initiative to include funds for the healthcare sector for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Collectively we are leading a coalition effort to seek inclusion of these healthcare energy funds in the stimulus package or other legislation.

The idea is fairly simple. Health systems would like to make energy improvements and add renewable energy for operations, but often lack the infra-structure funds to do so. The Initiative would provide funds for this purpose. Health care is a great place to invest funds for energy improvements because health care is a growing industry, currently representing more than 16% of the nation's gross domestic product (GDP); hospitals are large energy users - the second most energy intensive industry in the U.S.; health care has a great need to renovate and build new facilities, which could include energy efficiency and renewable energy built into the designs - in fact health care was in a building boom until the financial crisis and a significant number of health care energy improvement projects are still ready to go or in planning; clean energy is good for the health of the community, reducing illnesses and the cost of treatment associated with fossil fuel emissions - and investments in energy efficiency and renewable energy can lead to green jobs to help stimulate the economy. Thus Health Care, with a little help, is poised to be a leader in energy improvements and to demonstrate how an industry can improve itself and society.

The [draft Initiative document is available on our website](#) and proposes to make funds for healthcare energy efficiency and renewable energy part of the new President and Congress' stimulus package or other legislation. We would appreciate your comments and suggestions and of course support for Health Care's Renewable Energy and Green Jobs Initiative.

Revised *Green Guide for Health Care Operations* Section Released

The most significant revision to the *Green Guide for Health Care Version 2.2 Operations* section to date has been released, marking the completion of a rigorous development process including two public comment periods. The *Green Guide for Health Care*, a project of the Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems and Health Care Without Harm, is the first voluntary, best practices green building and operations toolkit customized for the health care sector.

"The revised *Operations* section heralds a new era in sustainable facility operations in health care," said Janet Brown, director of Sustainable Operations at Practice GreenHealth who, along with Cecilia DeLoach Lynn, Lorissa MacAllister, and Adele Houghton, led the revision of the Operations Section of the *Green Guide for Health Care*. "The expanded scope and revised organization around departmental work will appeal to operational facilities eager to establish their leadership in environmental excellence."

Practice Greenhealth is the principal implementation vehicle for the *Green Guide for Health Care* and had a leadership role in the revision process for the Operations Section. Learn [more on our website](#).

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 globalhealthandsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthandsafety.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 **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 Operations workgroup call is Thursday, January 22, 1pm Pacific / 3pm Central / 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 **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 Wednesday, January 21, 8am Pacific / 10am Central / 11am Eastern. The next Materials subcommittee call is Thursday, January 22, 11am Pacific / 1pm Central / 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. Workgroup calls are on the fourth Thursday of each month at 1pm Pacific / 3pm Central / 4pm Eastern. The next CSR/PP workgroup call will be on January 22.
- ▶ Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for January 26, February 9 and 23, and are listed on the wiki.

Have Questions?

Visit our [GHSI website](#) for frequent program updates and information about upcoming meetings and events. If you have 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).

Thank you for your help. Working together through GHSI, we can transform the health care industry and improve patient, worker, workplace and environmental health and safety.

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Global Health and Safety Initiative, 5957 Chabot Crest, Oakland, CA 94618