



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

Global Health and Safety Initiative

Online Newsletter - Volume 2, No. 2, Feb 18, 2009

For more, visit www.globalhealthsafety.org

Send comments to info_AT_globalhealthsafety.org

Subscribe and unsubscribe info at end of this message

Contents

- ▶ From the Executive Director's Desk
- ▶ Save the Date: GHSI Public Launch
- ▶ Upcoming Events
- ▶ What's New?
- ▶ Workgroups: Information and Call Dates
- ▶ Have Questions?

From the Executive Director's Desk

Based on extensive discussions with health system leaders, associations and organizations important to health care, and our GHSI workgroups and partners, we have developed our multi-year strategic priorities (found on our website: www.globalhealthsafety.org). The five priorities, listed below, support GHSI's mission to improve patient, worker-workplace, community and environmental health and safety through transforming the way that healthcare designs, builds and operates its facilities, as well as the products used within those facilities:

- Document the Economic and Business Case for Investing in Greener and Safer Hospitals and Health Care
- Develop a Roadmap Guide to Greener and Safer Hospitals and Health Care
- Reduce Healthcare's Footprint by Producing a GHSI Eco-Health Footprint Toolkit
- Promote Energy Efficiency and Greater Use of Renewable Energy by Healthcare
- Promote the Use of Safer and More Effective Chemicals and Biologics in Healthcare

We believe that it is by making significant progress in the above priority areas that GHSI, its partners and colleagues can add value and improve healthcare, our communities and society.

One example of how our GHSI strategic priorities are translated into concrete action is the work we've done with others on our Health Care's Renewable Energy and Green Jobs Initiative (also posted on www.globalhealthsafety.org and referenced in our last e-newsletter, a special update on our public policy work). Thanks to a coalition effort by Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth, and Global Health and Safety Initiative and several of you (Thank you!), we made

significant progress advocating for the provision of federal funding support to the nation's non-profit hospitals for energy efficiency and renewable energy. Unfortunately, like many other specific programs, we were unable to get non-profit hospitals included in the final stimulus bill. However the case for supporting non-profit hospitals for energy improvements has been made, and we believe there is now good support from the Hill. We have several other opportunities ahead of us to achieve our goal - e.g. a probable energy bill, likely climate change legislation and possible funding through appropriation bills - and we hope that you'll continue to work with us to support these efforts.

Thank you for your support and good work . . . together we can make a difference.

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

Save the Date: GHSI Public Launch

Plan to join us in Washington, DC, on September 16 and 17 for the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) Public Launch. We're planning an exciting event which will include a public policy focus, announcements of progress, commitments and goals by health systems, governmental organizations and others and a discussion of GHSI priorities and strategic directions. We're expecting representation from CEOs and other executives from major health systems, from the Administration and Congress and other key policy leaders. Details to follow - for now please save the date.

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 globalhealthandsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthandsafety.org).

- ▶ **GHSI Members Speaking at the Association for Community Health Improvement:**
Gary Cohen from Health Care Without Harm, and Kathy Gerwig and Loel Solomon from Kaiser Permanente are making a presentation about the future of "community benefits" at the Association for Community Health Improvement's (ACHI) Spring Training for Health Champions national conference in Los Angeles, California on March 11-13, 2009. For more information, visit the [ACHI website](#).
- ▶ **GHSI Executive Director and CHD Board Members Speaking at the National Building Museum:** Global Health and Safety Initiative Executive Director Bob Eisenman, Center for Health Design Board Member Roger S. Ulrich, and Center for Health Design Board Member and Green Guide for HealthCare Co-Director Robin Guenther, will be speaking at the [National Building Museum](#) on March 23, 2009, as part of it's [For the Greener Good](#) public series. The series affirms the National Building Museum's commitment to environmental sustainability and calls on experts from diverse backgrounds to investigate links between environmental sustainability and design, public health, energy policy, bioscience, infrastructure, education, and even popular culture. The March 23, 2009 session explores why a green hospital is a healthier one. See the National Building Museum's website for [ticket information](#).

- ▶ **Hospital Energy Alliance Launch Tentatively Scheduled for April 29:** The official launch of the Hospital Energy Alliance is tentatively scheduled for Wednesday, April 29, in Washington, DC, in conjunction with the annual meeting of American Hospital Association. Secretary of Energy Dr. Steven Chu is being invited to announce the launch and it is hoped that his presence will secure national media and public attention to the industry and its hallmark efforts in the area of energy efficiency.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Calls to be Held Quarterly:** We held our first GHSI Strategic Update Call on February 10, with over 70 individuals calling in. In response to positive feedback received, GHSI will now hold these calls quarterly. Future calls are currently scheduled for:
 - Tuesday, May 12, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern
 - Tuesday, August 11, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern
 - Tuesday, November 10, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern

These calls are a good way to keep up to date and to discuss GHSI activities and topical events. Discussion topics, registration and call-in details will be posted to the [Events Page of the GHSI website](#) approximately one month in advance of each call. We hope that you can join us.

What's New?

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

- ▶ **Mercury-Free Health Care: Partnership to Substitute Mercury-Based Medical Devices Around the World:** Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) and the World Health Organization (WHO) are co-leading a global partnership to achieve virtual elimination of mercury-based thermometers and sphygmomanometers. This initiative is based on the [2005 WHO Policy Paper](#) which calls for short, medium and long-term steps to achieve the gradual substitution of mercury-based medical devices. The partnership has set the following objective: By 2017, to phase out the demand for mercury-containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers by at least 70% and to shift the production of all mercury-containing fever thermometers and sphygmomanometers to accurate, affordable, and safer non-mercury alternatives.

In order to achieve this objective, WHO and HCWH are working together to build a global coalition of ministries of health, other government entities, health care systems, hospitals, academic institutions, professional associations, NGOs and others committed to mercury substitution in the health care sector. Institutions are invited to join them as Founding Members in this partnership. For more, visit: www.mercuryfreehealthcare.org.

- ▶ **Guiding Principles for Sourcing Building Products, Finishes and Furnishings:** A new template has been posted to the GHSI website that provides health care systems and architect and design firms with guiding principles in support of healthier building products, furniture and furnishings; this template can be used wholesale or as a menu of items to be adopted. See the [GHSI Library](#) for this and other guidance documents.

- ▶ **New Program Launched by The Center for Health Design: EDAC:** A new program, EDAC (Evidence-Based Accreditation and Certification) has been launched by The Center for Health Design. The program's mission is to develop a community of accredited industry professionals through education and assessment of an evidence-based design process. EDAC is an educational tool, offering a set of three study guides that define an evidence-based design process (EBD) and prepares individuals for the exam which can be taken beginning in April 2009. By providing education about the EBD process, The Center's goal is to establish new standards and expectations for individuals who are using the process and institutionalize EBD as an accepted and credible approach to improve health outcomes.

This month some GHSI systems and other organizations (including architects and designers), and health care administrators will take the beta test to establish the cut score for the exam. Learn more about EDAC at www.healthdesign.org/edac.

- ▶ **EnergySmart Hospital Training Program in Development:** Health Care Without Harm is working with the US Department of Energy to develop EnergySmart Hospital trainings. Energy efficiency and renewable energy are mission-critical investments on many levels. Although energy is a small part of a hospital's total operating budget, it is one of the few cost centers that managers can directly control - and savings go right to the bottom line. When available, these sessions will be accessible to GHSI members.
- ▶ **Ripple Database Update:** New additions are coming soon to the Ripple database. They will include new case studies and discussion threads in the ACT track. GHSI members will be encouraged to participate in these discussions as well as to post articles and information to the site. Contact Donna Deckard and Carolyn Quist if you have information that you would like to add to Ripple.
- ▶ **Invitation to Join Research Workgroup:** Strong, evidence-based research can provide important tools for making informed decisions about new technologies, innovation and reforms within systems around patient, worker and environmental health and safety. Over the last several months, the Research Collaborative has been conducting meetings and interviews with GHSI member health systems, partners and governmental entities. We are in the process of constructing a first draft paper synthesizing the discussions we have had, outlining the current state of research and recommendations for a future GHSI research agenda. At this point, we would like to inform current members that we are reconvening the work group and extend an invitation to those that may be interested in joining the Research Workgroup as we embark on building the future research agenda and priorities for GHSI for 2009 and beyond. The agenda for the first meeting will be:
 - An update on current research
 - A roundtable discussion on the newly drafted research white paper
 - Discussion of criteria for future research
 - Setting a regular meeting time for the group

Please contact Rachel Machi at rmachi_AT_uic.edu if you are interested in participating.

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. Over the last several months, the Research Collaborative has been conducting meetings and interviews with GHSI member health systems, partners and governmental entities, and is in the process of constructing a first draft paper synthesizing the discussions, outlining the current state of research and recommendations for a future GHSI research agenda. The next Research workgroup call is Wednesday, March 4, 9am Pacific / 11am Central / noon Eastern.
- ▶ 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 Thursday, March 12, 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 next Purchasing workgroup call is Wednesday, March 4, 10 am Pacific / noon Central / 1 pm Eastern.
- ▶ 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 Built Environment workgroup is finalizing a 2009 workplan that will include exciting new work in three areas of focus: materials, design and energy. Member health systems will be identifying where they have interests and priorities. The next Built Environment meeting is Wednesday, February 18, 8am Pacific / 10am Central / 11am Eastern. The next materials sub-committee call is Thursday, February 26, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm 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 / 4pm Eastern; February's call will be on Thursday, February 26.

- ▶ Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for February 26, March 4, 12 and 26, and are listed on the wiki calendar.

Have Questions?

Visit our [GHSI website](#) 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).

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

To unsubscribe, send a blank email to: [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org)

To subscribe to the Global Health Safety Initiative Newsletter, send an email to [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org) and type "subscribe" in the message line.

To ensure that this email newsletter doesn't get delivered to your JUNK folder by mistake, please add our "From" address [info AT globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org) to your address book.

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