



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

## Global Health and Safety Initiative

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### From the Executive Director's Desk

This issue of the GHSI newsletter is primarily about health care's built environment. This is an important topic. The demand for health care continues to rise. The population of the United States is growing and the population of those over age 65 and those over 85 - the largest users of health care - is expected to double by 2030 (see [www.agingstats.gov](http://www.agingstats.gov)). New medical technology is contributing to improving the quality of life for many with medical problems and to prolong life. And life style, pollution and chemical exposure and climate change all harbor the probability of increased demands for health care.

Yet this comes at a cost. Health care already represents approximately 17% of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of the US, i.e. \$2.4 trillion in 2008, and is expected to rise to 20% of GDP by 2017. Many consider our health care cost unsustainable. This is especially true given that we spend considerably more on health care than other advanced industrialized nations, but do not have better health care outcomes; some 46 million Americans are uninsured and health insurance expenses are the fastest growing cost component for employers, leading to competitive issues for US businesses (see [www.nchc.org](http://www.nchc.org)). All this has given rise to efforts for health care reform, including those of President Obama's new Administration.

Until the recent economic downturn in the US (and worldwide), health care was in the midst of a building construction boom. In 2006 USA Today declared the US "in the middle of the biggest hospital-construction boom in more than 50 years." However by November 2008, the American Hospital Association was reporting that many hospitals were delaying construction projects, a situation that has gotten worse as economic conditions deteriorated.

The Global Health and Safety Initiative has made the built environment one of our key areas. We've partnered with other experts, such as the Center for Health Design, Practice Greenhealth and its Green Guide for Health Care, Healthy Building Network, the Department of Energy and others, to bring the state of the knowledge about safer and greener design to health care buildings. There is much that we know that will significantly improve our health care buildings - from a safety, efficiency, satisfaction and quality perspective. And they don't have to cost more.

By the time you read this, the National Building Museum in Washington, DC, will have hosted a conversation on many of these points: [For the Greener Good: Healthy Hospitals](#), a discussion with myself (Bob Eisenman), Executive Director, Global Health and Safety Initiative, Robin Guenther, Architect and co-author of *Sustainable Healthcare Architecture*, Joanne Silberner, Health Policy Correspondent, NPR (moderator), and Roger S. Ulrich, PhD, Director of the Center for Health Systems and Design, Texas A&M University.

You can follow that discussion and the efforts discussed in this newsletter by visiting our website: [www.globalhealthsafety.org](http://www.globalhealthsafety.org). Given the increasing demand for health care and the cost pressures associated with health care buildings, staff and operations, we now have an opportunity to use our knowledge, and get it right. This is especially true in how we plan and build our health care infrastructure, the emphasis we place on the health of the population and prevention, and making smart choices about what and how we build.

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

## 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).

- ▶ **Greenhealth Tracker: Free Online Demonstrations:** Practice Greenhealth will hold two free online demonstrations of the new [Greenhealth Tracker](#), a new data tracking tool that will help health facilities manage, track, and quantify all waste stream volumes, costs, savings, and environmental impact. The free online demonstrations are scheduled for:

- Monday, March 30, 9am Pacific / 11am Central / noon Eastern
- Wednesday, April 8, 9am Pacific / 11am Central / noon Eastern

For more information and to register for one of the free demonstrations, see the [Practice Greenhealth website](#). Further demonstrations and a dedicated pre-conference session will be held at [CleanMed](#).

- ▶ **On-Site Virtual Tour of Green Cardiovascular Center in Boston:** On April 2, 2-4pm Eastern, as part of Health Care Without Harm's "Talking Shop" ongoing seminar series, come learn about Partners HealthCare's Carl J. and Ruth Shapiro Cardiovascular Center at Brigham and Women's Hospital. In addition to being the most advanced cardiovascular center of its kind in the region, the Center embodies the latest advances

in "green" design and technology. Poised to receive the USGBC's LEED Silver rating on less than a 0.5% first cost premium, this 136-bed facility has focused on energy conservation and earth-friendly materials ensuring a safer, healthier patient and staff environment. [Learn more about the Center online](#), and [email to register for this Boston-based tour](#).

- ▶ **GHSI Members Speaking at CERES Conference on April 15:** Robert Gotto from Kaiser Permanente and Gary Cohen from Health Care Without Harm are speaking about GHSI's Healthy Purchasing Workgroup at the CERES conference in San Francisco. For more information, visit the [CERES Conference website](#).
- ▶ **Hospital Energy Alliance Launch Tentatively Scheduled for April 29:** The Hospital Energy Alliance (HEA) is an industry-led initiative bringing together hospital leaders committed to achieving deep energy savings in facilities while preserving or enhancing health care delivery. 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 the American Hospital Association. See the [US Department of Energy website](#) for more information on the HEA.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Calls to be Held Quarterly:** The purpose of these calls is to keep the greater GHSI community up to date on current activities, and to discuss 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. 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

We hope that you can join us.

- ▶ **CleanMed 2009:** This sixth international conference to catalyze environmental improvements in the health care sector will be held in Chicago, May 18-20, 2009. The [agenda](#) has been posted, and [registration is now open](#). The conference draws a diverse mix of over 600 health care leaders, materials/purchasing managers, Environmental Health & Safety staff, nurses and providers, architects, designers, and medical and building product vendors from across the United States. CleanMed's mission is to accelerate the health care sector's commitment to environmental sustainability and regenerative health to improve the health of people and the environment.
- ▶ **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.

## What's New?

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

- ▶ **Kathy Gerwig Highlights Kaiser Permanente's Environmental Work in Congressional Testimony:** Kathy Gerwig, Kaiser Permanente's Vice President for Workplace Safety and Environmental Stewardship Officer, testified on February 26, 2009, before the House Committee on Energy and Commerce, Subcommittee on Commerce, Trade, and Consumer Protection, about [Kaiser Permanente's efforts to curb the use of potentially toxic substances](#). The Committee is reviewing the Toxic Substances Control Act and is looking to organizations such as Kaiser Permanente for lessons learned regarding the experience of downstream users of available information to manage environmental and health impacts of potentially toxic substances. The testimony was timely because environmental sustainability is a major focus of President Barack Obama's economic recovery and government reform efforts. Kaiser Permanente has been working for years to limit its environmental impact and improve the health of the communities it serves by using safer chemicals, building greener hospitals, reducing waste and using less energy. Read [Kathy Gerwig's full testimony](#).
  
- ▶ **EnergySmart Hospitals Releases "Improving Design and Construction" Fact Sheet:** The US Department of Energy's (DOE) EnergySmart Hospitals (ESH) initiative has recently released a new fact sheet, "Improving Design and Construction," which focuses on Integrated Building Design (IBD) and energy-efficient technologies to maximize new hospital performance. Topics covered include developing an IBD approach during pre-design, planning steps to consider during the conceptual/architectural phase, and specific recommendations for energy-efficient design development in lighting, HVAC, hot water, medical equipment, and plug loads. The final section, on construction and operations, offers strategies for creating an effective, long-term energy management program. Visit the [ESH website](#) for this publication and others in the ESH series:
  - "Creating Energy Efficient, High Performance Hospitals," which focuses on the business case for integrating energy efficiency and renewable energy into hospital design, construction, and operations and maintenance
  - "Retrofitting Existing Facilities," featuring a series of "quick-win" energy-efficiency tips for facility managers and operators
  - "Integrating Federal Resources for High Performance Hospitals," which charts the complementary resources provided by DOE's EnergySmart Hospitals and the US Environmental Protection Agency's ENERGY STAR® for Healthcare
  
- ▶ **First Hospital in the World to Receive LEED Platinum Designation:** Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, a member of Ascension Health through the Seton Family of Hospitals, has become the first hospital in the world to receive the LEED (Leadership in Energy & Environmental Design) Platinum designation, given by the US Green Building Council. "Even before the first plans were drawn up, we set our sights on creating a world-class children's hospital, and becoming the first LEED Platinum hospital in the world was definitely part of that," said Robert Bonar, President and CEO, Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas. Dell Children's, which occupies nearly one-half million square feet on 32 acres that were once part of Austin's old Mueller Airport, opened in June 2007. Its environmentally-sensitive design not only conserves water and

electricity, but positively impacts the hospital's clinical environment by improving air quality, making natural sunlight more readily available, and reducing a wide range of pollutants. For more, see the [Dell Children's Medical Center website](#).

- ▶ **New Environmental Data Tracking Tool from Practice Greenhealth:** Practice Greenhealth is about to release a new data tracking tool that will help health facilities manage, track, and quantify all waste stream volumes, costs, savings, and environmental impact. [Greenhealth Tracker](#) has been customized specifically for health care use and is being tested by longtime Practice Greenhealth partner, Cleveland Clinic. The tool is designed to track and manage data on all waste stream costs and volumes, including recycling, hazardous and regulated medical waste, solid waste, and donated and reused materials. Practice Greenhealth will hold two free demonstrations; see listing above in "Upcoming Events" for dates. An annual license fee is required. Practice Greenhealth members will receive a significant discount.

## 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. Workgroup calls are on the first Wednesday of each month at 9am Pacific / 11am Central / noon Eastern. The next Research workgroup call is Wednesday, April 1.
- ▶ 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. Workgroup calls are on the second Thursday of each month at 1pm Pacific / 3pm Central / 4pm Eastern. The next Sustainable Operations workgroup call is scheduled for April 9.
- ▶ 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 scheduled for Thursday, April 2, 9am Pacific / 11am Central / noon 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. Workgroup calls are on the fourth Wednesday of each month at 8am Pacific / 10am Central / 11am Eastern; the next two calls are scheduled for March 25 and April 22. The

next Materials subcommittee call is scheduled for Thursday, March 26, 1pm Pacific / 3pm Central / 4pm 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; this month's call will be on Thursday, March 26.
- ▶ Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for April 6 and 20, 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](#).

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

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