



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

Global Health and Safety Initiative

Online Newsletter - Volume 2, No. 4, April 22, 2009

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From the Executive Director's Desk

Earth Day is April 22 with events and celebrations around the world. The idea of Earth Day, first established in 1970, is to call attention to the environmental status of our Earth. This is an important topic. For all its beauty, wonder and splendor, the health and sustainability of our Earth and its ability to support life, is threatened as never before. With Earth Day in mind I'd like to call your attention to a number of things that we and others have been doing that have importance to our health and safety that directly link to the health and safety of our environment.

At the CleanMed Conference (May 18-20, Hyatt Regency Chicago), the premier environmental conference for leaders in health care, we will be talking about our progress in creating an Eco-Health Footprint tool for health care, the state of knowledge of greener cleaners for use in health care and alternatives to vinyl flooring, the Ripple database of safer and more sustainable design standards for health care, healthier and environmentally smarter purchasing and about progress on energy efficiency, renewable energy and safer chemicals use in health care (see the [CleanMed website](#) for more information about the conference).

On the energy efficiency front, a coalition of GHSI, Health Care Without Harm, Practice Green Health and several health systems and other NGO's was instrumental in getting language included in the House Energy Bill (The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009) that clarifies that non-profit hospitals are eligible to receive federal funds for energy efficiency improvements. And the Department of Energy is officially launching an effort to improve hospital energy efficiency, the *Hospital Energy Alliance*, on April 29. Several GHSI health systems and GHSI itself are members of the Alliance. For more on these please see the descriptions below in the "What's New" and

"Upcoming Events" sections of this newsletter.

Also posted below is a direct link to the video discussion at the National Building Museum's program *For the Greener Good: Healthy Hospitals* which emphasized greener and safer hospitals and healthcare. Architect Robin Guenther, Professor Roger Ulrich and I were the panel discussing the topic. This link is also found on our website, www.globalhealthsafety.org.

The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) just concluded that green house gases "...are at unprecedented levels as a result of human emissions ..." and that these high levels pose potential serious health hazards for our population. This is an important finding which sets the stage for EPA regulation of the emission of green house gases and is likely to have important ramifications for many industries and the health of our population.

Our GHSI priorities focus directly on health and safety. In short they are about building the business case and establishing road maps for safer and greener buildings, products and operations, about developing an eco-health footprint for health care, and about improving energy efficiency and having safer chemicals for use in health care. As you think about our Earth's environment, think too how you can join us and others to help make a difference.

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).

- ▶ **Hospital Energy Alliance Launch 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 Wednesday, April 29, in Washington, DC. See the [US Department of Energy website](#) for more information on the HEA.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Call May 12:** On Tuesday, May 12, 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 2009 work that is underway. Time will be set aside to answer questions from call participants. To join the free call, dial-in to 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](#) to ensure you receive documents that will be referenced on the call.
- ▶ **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 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

- ▶ **FoodMed 2009:** This third international conference to catalyze local, sustainable healthcare food and food systems will be held in Detroit, June 30, through July 1, 2009. The conference draws a diverse mix of over 250 health care leaders, dietitians, food service directors, nurses, physicians, supply chain and food vendors from across the United States. FoodMed's mission is to accelerate the health care sector's commitment to local sustainable food systems and regenerative health to improve the health of people, communities and the environment. See the [FoodMed website](#) for more 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.

What's New?

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

- ▶ **The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009:** Henry A. Waxman, Chairman of the Energy and Commerce Committee and Chairman Edward J. Markey of the Energy and Environmental Subcommittee released a draft of clean energy legislation that will create jobs, help end our dangerous dependence on foreign oil, and combat global warming. The American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009 (ACES) is a comprehensive approach to America's energy policy that charts a new course towards a clean energy economy. There is no HR number for the bill yet and the bill has not yet gone through its legislative process. It appears that in direct response to coalition efforts (GHSI, Health Care Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth and other partners and supporters), nonprofit hospitals have been included. The draft amends the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2007 "to include nonprofit hospitals and public health facilities among public institutions eligible for grants and loans for energy efficiency." The bill also "requires the Secretary of Health and Human Services to promulgate a national strategy for adapting to the public health effects of climate change." More information on the [draft legislation is found here](#); stay tuned for more updates on ACES.
- ▶ **Kaiser Permanente Recognized for Efforts to Spread Health by Curbing Climate Change:** For the third consecutive year, Kaiser Permanente has been named a "Climate Action Leader" for voluntarily calculating, verifying and publicly reporting its greenhouse gas emissions under the [California Climate Action Registry](#). "Participation in the California Climate Action Registry represents a critical step toward effectively managing greenhouse gas emissions and improving Kaiser Permanente's overall sustainability efforts," said Kathy Gerwig, Kaiser Permanente's Vice President for Workplace Safety and Environmental Stewardship Officer. "Climate change will cause health effects that

directly impact Kaiser Permanente's ability to fulfill our mission of quality, affordable health care. At Kaiser Permanente, we believe a preventative approach to community health, and reducing greenhouse gas emissions is part of preventing the spread of infectious diseases and other health effects of climate change." [Read the press release.](#)

- ▶ **Healthy Building Network and Kaiser Permanente Honored with EPA's 2009 Environmental Awards:** The [US Environmental Protection Agency \(EPA\)](#) recently chose the winners of its 2009 Environmental Awards, and two GHSI partners, the Healthy Building Network and Kaiser Permanente, were recipients. The Healthy Building Network received the award for the Pharos Project - a revolutionary on-line tool for evaluating and comparing the health, environmental and social impacts of building materials in a comprehensive and transparent way - which it developed in 2008 with partners, architecture firms, health care systems, and GHSI. Kaiser Permanente was chosen for its wide ranging efforts towards sustainability and environmental justice, including efforts to reduce car trips, increase access to locally grown produce, and to purchase greener equipment and build healthier facilities. Congratulations!
- ▶ **New Study Links Hospital Cleaning Fluids to Increased Health Risks:** A pilot study carried out at six separate facilities in eastern Massachusetts indicated that hospital cleaning fluids may pose a health risk both to staff and patients. The researchers evaluated cleaning fluids used and found that many included some potentially hazardous chemicals such as ammonium chlorides, glycol ethers and ethanolamine, all of which irritate either the skin or lungs. The researchers also found that exposure levels were affected by the way the agents were used. Study leader Anila Bello, from the University of Massachusetts at Lowell, said: "Because the severity of cleaning exposures is affected by both product formulation and cleaning technique, a combination of product evaluation and workplace exposure data is needed to develop strategies that protect people from cleaning hazards." The authors concluded that "hazardous exposures related to cleaning products are an important public health concern because these exposures may impact not only cleaning workers, but also other occupants in the building." The [abstract and article are available on the Environmental Health website](#); a [press release](#) is also available.
- ▶ **National Building Museum: Healthy Hospitals - Video of Discussion:** GHSI 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 recently spoke about healthy hospital design at the National Building Museum. The [video of the discussion](#) is now available from the National Building Museum's website.
- ▶ **Evidence-Based Design Accreditation and Certification (EDAC):** In times of economic distress, architects and designers are facing tough competition to gain new clients, and healthcare facility planners are looking for innovative ways to stay within budget. The innovation lies in an evidence-based design process. If you are involved in healthcare building design, the EDAC credential will set your skills apart from the rest. The Center for Health Design invites you to become EDAC accredited and increase your ability to apply environmental design research to justify associated expenditures. The exam is open to the public - [register today.](#)

With support from Nurture by Steelcase, The Center for Health Design has [released a set of three study guides](#) to help prepare for the exam. Visit www.healthdesign.org/edac for more information.

- ▶ **New State Bill to Ban Smoking on All Hospital Grounds:** California Assemblymember Jerry Hill (San Mateo) has introduced legislation (AB 574) that would extend the current smoking ban to entire hospital campuses. Current law allows for smoking on hospital campuses when buildings are separated by more than 200 feet. The bill would also prohibit designated smoking areas on hospital campuses. AB 574 does not apply to state psychiatric hospitals. For more, see [Assemblymember Jerry Hill's website](#).
- ▶ **Department of Energy Program to Provide Stimulus Funding:** The Department of Energy's (DOE) National Energy Technology Laboratory program will provide \$106 million in stimulus funding for district energy, combined heat and power (CHP) and waste energy recovery projects. There is an additional \$50 million in program funding for efficient industrial equipment, under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act, and eligibility has been expanded to include public and private entities. Key aspects include:
 - Financial support for CHP, waste heat recovery, district energy, and efficiency measures which achieve at least 25% improvement
 - Must be implemented within 120 days of the award
 - Applicants will be permitted to submit multiple projects
 - Total budget nationally: \$106 million for CHP, district energy, and waste energy recovery; and \$50 million for industrial efficiency
 - The industrial efficiency area requires a proposal for multiple projects with totals over \$5 million

Read the [Special Notice on the DOE website](#) for more information.

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, May 6.
- ▶ 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 Thursday, May 14.

- ▶ 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 30, 1pm Pacific / 3pm Central / 4pm 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; please note that April's call has been cancelled. The next call is scheduled for May 27. The next Materials subcommittee call is scheduled for Thursday, April 23, 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; the next two calls are scheduled for April 23 and May 28.
- ▶ Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for May 4 and 18, 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](#).

Errata

In the March edition of the GHSI Newsletter, we erroneously stated that the *Green Guide for Health Care* is a project of [Practice Greenhealth](#) (PGH). PGH is implementing the Guide but the *Green Guide for Health Care* is actually a project of [Health Care Without Harm](#) and the [Center for Maximum Potential Building Systems](#), and is the first voluntary, best practices green building toolkit customized for the health care sector using the US Green Building Council's LEED Â© credit framework, with permission. To date, the *Green Guide* has attracted more than 25,000 website registrants, and 189 registered projects. The *Green Guide's* international reach has expanded to 113 countries and includes every state and province in the US and Canada.

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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