



*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

The evidence is mounting. Healthcare may well be in the forefront of demonstrating that how we design, build and operate facilities; the choice of materials, products and goods used in healthcare and how we conduct our daily activities (operations) can have a significant positive impact on the health and safety of the public - patients, workers and communities in the case of healthcare.

For example two recent articles summarize the state of research evidence that shows how we build (and operate) hospitals "...can measurably enhance the care they provide, improve the perceptions of the experience of that care by patients, families, and staff, and actually have a positive economic impact on their organizations." And "It is now widely recognized that well-designed physical settings play an important role in making hospitals less risky and stressful, more healing for patients, and better places for staff to work." Read more about these two articles in the "What's New" section below. Articles are Sadler BL, Joseph A, Keller A, Rostenberg B, *Using Evidence-Based Environmental Design to Enhance Safety and Quality*, IHI Innovation Series white paper, Cambridge, Massachusetts: Institute for Healthcare Improvement; 2009, and Ulrich RS, Zimring CM, Zhu X, DuBose J, Seo H, Choi Y, et al (2008), *A review of the research literature on evidence-based healthcare design*, Health Environments Research & Design, 1(3), 61-125.

During the CleanMed conference - May 18-20 in Chicago - numerous examples of safer and more environmentally appropriate approaches will be highlighted through presentations, case studies and research discussions. This newsletter lists just a few of the examples, especially those that participants in the Global Health and Safety Initiative are involved with. To truly understand the breadth and depth of knowledge and activities concerning environmental issues and healthcare you just have to be there - and it's not too late to register and attend! For more on CleanMed, see the

"Upcoming Events" section below.

Other evidence is coming from government. Based in part on data and reports from governmental organizations like the Centers for Disease Control, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Energy, Department of Health and Human Services and others, President Obama's key agenda focuses on energy, climate change, green jobs, education and health care reform.

Imagine bringing all this together - the marrying of safety, quality and environmental sustainability for healthcare and society. Imagine a No Harm Agenda which links what we know works in building design to produce better outcomes, with environmentally preferred purchasing of healthier materials, goods and products, with how we operate our facilities to promote health, safety, quality and sustainability, with evidence-based research to document what is effective (and what is not) and with public policy to make certain we make the right choices. Imagine a dashboard that documents the progress we are making in cost-effectiveness and outcome improvements from such an Agenda. Imagine a healthier population and society. This is the current work of the Global Health and Safety Initiative - our founding and other active health systems, nonprofit partners, others working with us - and we hope, you.

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



CleanMed 2009: This sixth international conference to catalyze environmental improvements in the health care sector will be held next week in Chicago, May 18-20, 2009. An exciting and packed agenda awaits attendees. 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. Some highlights not to be missed:

- Practical, Leading Edge Ecological Footprinting:** On Wednesday at 11am, (concurrent session D8), learn about the emerging Eco-Health Footprint Toolkit, which will enable health care facilities to measure and improve their eco-health performance in greenhouse gases (including anesthetic gases), medical wastes, process and potable water, toxic chemicals, air pollutants and built land. The Toolkit's steering committee and early adopters will describe case studies and demonstrate innovations such as Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center's eco spreadsheet, and Practice Greenhealth's web-based Energy Impact Calculator, which measures energy-induced health incidents and treatment costs per unit of energy used. The Eco-Health Footprint Toolkit will also be available at the Practice Greenhealth table at CleanMed as well as for download on the GHSI website later this month.

- **Greenhealth Tracker:** [A demo of Practice Greenhealth's environmental data tracking tool](#): On Monday afternoon, learn how Practice Greenhealth's new web-based environmental data tracking system can help measure and monitor waste stream activity, analyze opportunities to reduce costs associated with waste management and disposal, and benchmark against hospital organizations nationally.
- **The Research Collaborative will be debuting two white papers, one on greener cleaners, and one on resilient flooring (vinyl alternatives):** You can learn more about these issues and pick up a copy of each on Tuesday at 4pm, (concurrent session C8, Resilient Flooring Alternatives for HealthCare), and Wednesday at 11am, (concurrent session D6, Optimizing Infection Control While Transitioning to Greener Cleaning Chemicals & Equipment). These white papers will be referenced in the opening session of the conference, will be available at other related concurrent sessions, at the Practice Greenhealth table at CleanMed, and for download on the GHSI website later this month.

[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. We hope to see you there!

- ▶ **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.
- ▶ **GHSI Strategic Update Calls:** 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, August 11, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern
 - Tuesday, November 10, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern

We hope that you can join us.

- ▶ **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:

- ▶ **Urgent Action Needed: Help Ensure Nonprofit Hospitals are Included in the Senate Energy Bill:** Following up on our good news last month about the inclusion of nonprofit hospitals in the American Clean Energy and Security Act of 2009, the House draft energy bill, we want to ask you to help ensure that nonprofit hospitals are included in the Senate version of the energy bill as well. Please contact Senator Jeff Bingaman (Chair, Senate Energy and Natural Resources Committee) and Senator Marie Cantwell (Chair, Sub-Committee on Energy) to urge them to include language for nonprofit hospitals to be eligible for federal funds for energy efficiency improvements and increased use of renewable energy. We have a [draft letter](#), a [one-page backgrounder](#), and [draft legislative language](#) for your use; these documents can also be requested via email. Should you have any questions, please contact us at info_AT_globalhealthsafety.org. Please note that this effort needs to be completed in the next two weeks to be most effective. Thank you in advance for helping to secure federal energy funds for nonprofit hospitals.

- ▶ **Using Evidence-Based Environmental Design to Enhance Safety and Quality:** A new white paper available on the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's website shows health care leaders how, as part of an integrated improvement strategy, evidence-based environmental design interventions can measurably enhance the care they provide, improve the perceptions of the experience of that care by patients, families, and staff, and actually have positive economic impact on their organizations. The white paper includes:
 - A series of relatively low-cost recommendations that virtually any health care organization should consider implementing
 - Recommendations that are best addressed as part of new facility construction or major renovation
 - Examples of interventions for unit-specific microsystems
 - A facility checklist that any organization can use as a guide to determine whether its environment is actually helping or hindering care and the care experience
 - A suggested framework for calculating the economic return on investment of an intervention or group of interventions
 - A discussion of how to balance initial, one-time capital expenditures with ongoing operating cost savings and revenue enhancement through market differentiation

[Download the paper from the Institute for Healthcare Improvement's website.](#)

- ▶ **A Review of the Research Literature on Evidence-Based Healthcare Design:** This report surveys and evaluates the scientific research on evidence-based healthcare design and extracts its implications for designing better and safer hospitals. The review found a growing body of rigorous studies to guide healthcare design, especially with respect to reducing the frequency of hospital-acquired infections. The findings further support the importance of improving outcomes for a range of design characteristics or interventions, including single-bed rooms rather than multibed rooms, effective ventilation systems, a good acoustic environment, nature distractions and daylight, appropriate lighting, better ergonomic design, acuity-adaptable rooms, and improved

floor layouts and work settings. [Read the abstract](#) or [download the report](#).

- ▶ **The Impact of Environmental Strategies on Outcomes in Healthcare Facilities:** The Center for Health Design (CHD) was awarded a grant from the US Green Building Council (USGBC) in late 2008 to identify the design strategies that are adopted by sustainable healthcare facilities and the outcomes associated with these design strategies. Based on a literature review, CHD researchers are identifying metrics that can be used to measure environmental variables as well as outcomes associated with incorporating these environmental strategies. The goal is to establish common metrics in environmental safety and upload this information to the [Ripple Database](#). A key part of this project involves the formation of focus groups to identify additional metrics. If your healthcare organization is interested in participating in one of these focus groups, please contact [Carolyn Quist](#) by the end of May. This project will be discussed at CleanMed in Chicago, during the session entitled "Sustainable Design Strategies in Healthcare: Linking Research to Designs" and at The [CIMIT Forum in Boston](#). For more information on this session, [visit www.cleanmed.org](http://www.cleanmed.org).
- ▶ **Scientists Find Link Between Autism and Vinyl Flooring:** A recently released study indicates that children who live in homes with vinyl floors, which can emit phthalates, are more likely to have autism; the study of Swedish children is among the first to find an apparent connection between the disease and an environmental chemical. In the study, Swedish families were asked questions about flooring as part of research investigating allergies and indoor air pollutants. Four environmental factors associated with autism were identified: vinyl flooring, the mother's smoking, family economic problems and condensation on windows, which indicates poor ventilation. Since the research was not designed to focus on autism, the researchers recommend further study of larger numbers of children to see whether the link can be confirmed. [Read Scientific American's article regarding the study](#).

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@AT.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 meeting is at CleanMed on Monday, May 18, at 6pm local (Central) time, and the next call is scheduled for June 3.
- ▶ 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 Operations workgroup meeting is at CleanMed on Monday, May 18, 1pm local (Central) time.

- ▶ 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 meeting will be in-person at CleanMed on Monday, May 18, from 9am to 5pm local (Central) time.
- ▶ 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 meeting will be in-person at CleanMed on Tuesday, May 19, from 7am to 8:30am local (Central) time. The next Materials subcommittee call is scheduled for Thursday, May 28, 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 May 28.
- ▶ The next two Workgroup Leader calls are scheduled for June 1 and 15, 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 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.

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