



*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

During the December holidays many of us take time to be with family and friends, to break from the day to day and appreciate life and the world we live in. Perhaps this makes the Copenhagen climate change talks and the EPA's ruling that greenhouse gas emissions are harmful to the public's health even more poignant.

As world leaders met in Copenhagen earlier this month to negotiate how the world will respond to climate change, Health Care Without Harm, a GHSI partner, led a campaign to insure that the health consequences of climate change were an important part of the negotiations. Health Care Without Harm was joined by the American Public Health Association, GHSI health systems and partners Ascension Health, Catholic Healthcare West, The Center for Health Design and Practice Greenhealth as well as many other health groups in urging President Obama to put the health of the public at the forefront of climate negotiations. In an ad recently published in the New York Times, the groups urged the president to deliver a "Prescription for a Healthy Planet" at the talks. You can learn more about these efforts by visiting the Prescription for a Healthy Planet website.

In the US, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) on December 7, 2009, filed a finding that greenhouse gases threaten the health and welfare of the American people. EPA's final findings respond to the 2007 U.S. Supreme Court decision that greenhouse gases fit within the Clean Air Act definition of air pollutants. The EPA states that greenhouse gases "are the primary driver of climate change, which can lead to hotter, longer heat waves that threaten the health of the sick, poor or elderly; increases in ground-level ozone pollution linked to asthma and other respiratory illnesses; as well as other threats to the health and welfare of Americans." EPA's endangerment finding covers emissions of six key greenhouse gases - carbon dioxide, methane, nitrous oxide, hydrofluorocarbons, perfluorocarbons and sulfur hexafluoride - and sets the stage for EPA

regulations. [Read the EPA's press release and watch a video of the press conference.](#)

GHSI health systems and partners have been working to improve the environmental health and safety of healthcare's design, buildings and operations; reduce healthcare's own environmental impact and to help institutional sustainability and safety. It is our contribution to healthier and safer healthcare and for society.

From the staff of the Global Health and Safety Initiative, season's greetings and we wish you the best for the New Year . . . and for a better world.

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

## What's New?

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

- ▶ **Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) Applauds EPA Finding Climate Change is Danger to Public Health:** HCWH has long held the position that the impacts of climate change would be devastating to the health of world populations, through increased famine, heat waves, disruption of the ocean food supply, flooding, disease encroachment, drought, population displacement, war, and chronic illness from air pollution. HCWH applauds the announcement earlier this month by the Environmental Protection Agency that climate change negatively affects human health. [Read the HCWH press release.](#)
- ▶ **Healthcare Clean Energy Exchange Update:** Earlier this month, Mercy Hospital & Medical Center in Chicago, IL, used Practice Greenhealth's Healthcare Clean Energy Exchange (HCEE) to conduct their competitive electric commodity procurement event. The HCEE is a web-based, electronic commodity market place where buyers and sellers come together to conduct energy commodity transactions. Practice Greenhealth has partnered with World Energy Solutions whom hosts the HCEE on their exchange platform. Hospitals use the HCEE to conduct reverse auctions enabling the hospital to seek bids from competing suppliers for numerous alternative RFPs varying the electric commodity price term, length of contract and percent of green power included in the electric portfolio.

Using the HCEE, Mercy requested separate pricing and issued six alternative RFPs including 12, 24, and 36 month firm fixed price, generic power and 12, 24, and 36 months firm fixed price, 10% green power. The suppliers that Mercy invited to compete on the HCEE reverse auction do so in a transparent, time bound event and compete against each other by bidding downward on each alternative RFP to win and earn a supply contract. Mercy was able to secure competitively priced electric commodity that included 10% green power and awarded a 36 month supply contract to the winning bidder. Through this supply contract transacted on the HCEE, Mercy was able to avoid its indirect GHG emissions by a total of just over 5,500 metric tons of CO<sub>2</sub> or the equivalent of taking approximately 1,000 automobiles off the road.

For more information on the HCEE, visit the [Practice Greenhealth website](#) or contact Nicholas DeDominicis, Director, Healthcare Clean Energy Exchange at 866-598-2160.

- ▶ **Business NGO Workgroup Holds Annual Meeting:** The Business NGO Workgroup is a unique collaboration of business and NGO leaders who "are creating a roadmap to the widespread use of safer chemicals in consumer products." Starting in 2006, with twenty-two organizations from the environmental community and the electronics, healthcare, furnishing and retails sectors, the group has grown to 170 participants, working on three key initiatives: safer chemicals, sustainable materials and public policy reform. The Workgroup held its annual meeting earlier this month, with GHSI supporters Catholic Healthcare West and Kaiser Permanente participating. [Read press coverage of the annual meeting](#) and [learn more about the Business NGO Workgroup](#).
- ▶ **An Interview with Franklin Becker, PhD:** Franklin Becker, PhD, co-author of A Practitioner's Guide to Evidence-Based Design, discusses why it is important to know about the effectiveness, adoption and diffusion of evidence in the first of a four-part podcast series. [Watch the first podcast](#). Topics like this are explored in A Practitioner's Guide to EBD. This 98-page guide is an easy-to-use tool for evidence-based design (EBD) practitioners or those looking to become EBD practitioners. [Visit The Center for Health Design's online store](#) for more information.
- ▶ **New York Times Commentary on Kaiser Permanente's KP Innovation Effort:** Kaiser Permanente's collaborative, institution-wide effort known as KP Innovation is discussed in this commentary by New York Times writer Allison Arieff. The goal of the effort is to improve the patient experience, from designing greener, healthier buildings to increasing the amount of time nurses spend at bedside. [Read the article](#).
- ▶ **Health and Climate Change Series Compiled by The Lancet:** Climate change already affects human health, and, if no action is taken, problems such as malnutrition, deaths and injury due to extreme weather conditions, and change in geographical distribution of disease vectors will worsen. The Lancet has compiled a Series that is the result of an international collaboration of scientists supported by a consortium of funding bodies coordinated by the Wellcome Trust, UK. The Comments and Articles make a strong case for linking climate and health goals, and provide a quantitative underpinning for this important health message. For more, [visit The Lancet website](#).
- ▶ **Study Correlates Workplace BPA Exposure to Male Sexual Dysfunction:** According to a NIOSH-funded study by Kaiser Permanente, high levels of workplace exposure to Bisphenol-A (BPA) may increase the risk of reduced sexual function in men. The five-year study examined 634 workers in factories in China, comparing workers in BPA manufacturing facilities with a control group of workers in factories where no BPA was present. The study found that the workers in the BPA facilities had quadruple the risk of erectile dysfunction and seven times more risk of ejaculation difficulty. The study is the first to look at the effect of BPA on the male reproductive system in humans and adds to the body of evidence questioning the safety of BPA, a chemical made in the production of polycarbonate plastics and epoxy resins found in baby bottles, plastic containers, the lining of food and beverage cans, and in dental sealants. [Read the Kaiser Permanente press release](#) and [download the study](#).
- ▶ **World Carbon Emissions Overshoot "Budget":** According to a report released by

global accounting firm PriceWaterhouseCoopers, the world has emitted extra greenhouse gases this century equivalent to the annual totals of China and the United States above a maximum for avoiding the worst of climate change. The report also said the world was already far above a "budget" of total emissions of 1,200 billion tons of carbon dioxide from 2000-2050 which it estimated as the maximum permissible while avoiding the worst of climate change. [Read the Reuters article](#) covering the report.

## 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@globalhealthsafety.org](mailto:info@globalhealthsafety.org).

- ▶ **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, February 9, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern
- Tuesday, May 11, 10am Pacific / noon Central / 1pm Eastern

We hope that you can join us.

- ▶ **The Science of Improvement: Accelerating Your Capacity to Change:** Scheduled for January 20-21, 2010, in Boston, Massachusetts, this interactive seminar sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement is designed to provide participants with a framework for organizing and implementing improvement projects, as well as the opportunity to enhance their understanding of quality improvement concepts, tools, techniques, and methods. [See the Institute for Healthcare Improvement website](#) for more information.
- ▶ **International Summit and Exhibition on Health Facility Planning, Design and Construction:** Developed through the combined efforts of the American Society for Healthcare Engineering (ASHE) of the American Hospital Association (AHA) and the American Institute of Architects Academy of Architecture for Health (AAH), and scheduled for March 14-17, 2010, in San Diego, California, the International Summit and Exhibition on Health Facility Planning, Design and Construction (PDC) aims to provide attendees with innovative concepts and practical tools that can be used to resolve challenges during the health facility planning, design and construction/renovation process. This is the only forum that offers the collaboration of all professionals involved in the PDC process, including architects, CEO's, CFO's, contractors, facility managers, nurses, and more. [Visit the ASHA website](#) for more information as it becomes available.
- ▶ **Building a Quality Measurement System that Works:** Scheduled for March 18-19, 2010, in Chicago, Illinois, this new hands-on seminar sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement will provide the practical framework for constructing and evaluating a dashboard of key measures to help inform decision makers and board members on where the organization is headed and how it is progressing toward its

strategic objective. Faculty will offer valuable guidance and recommendations for selecting a balanced set of measures, specifying operational definitions, and building data collection plans. [See the Institute for Healthcare Improvement website](#) for more information.

- ▶ **Environments for Aging.10:** Sponsored by the Vendome Group LLC and The Center for Health Design, in association with SAGE, the AIA Design for Aging Knowledge Community and the American Society of Interior Designers, Environments for Aging (EFA) is a comprehensive three-day experience, during which attendees and presenters will explore and share new ideas for creating attractive and functional living environments that meet the unique needs of our aging population. This conference is designed for architects, owners, developers, facilities managers, design professionals, product manufacturers, gerontology professionals and government officials working in the environments for aging industry. EFA will be held March 21-23, 2010, in San Diego, California. For more, [visit The Center for Health Design website](#).
- ▶ **2010 International Forum on Quality and Safety in Health Care:** Open to all, the International Forum on Quality and Safety in Health Care is aimed at physicians, nurses, managers, other health professionals, health care leaders, policy makers, researchers, patients, and patients' representatives. The Forum will benefit both beginners and those experienced in quality improvements. Co-sponsored by the Institute for Healthcare Improvement and the BMJ Publishing Group, the Forum will be held April 20-23, 2010, in Nice, France. [Visit the Forum website](#) for more information and to register.
- ▶ **AHA Annual Meeting:** The American Hospital Association's Annual Meeting will be held in Washington, DC, April 25-28, 2010. [Visit the AHA website](#) for more information.
- ▶ **CleanMed 2010:** CleanMed 2010 will be held in Baltimore, Maryland, May 11-13, 2010. CleanMed is the premier environmental conference for leaders in health care. The conference attracts key decision-makers from across the health care supply chain. For more information, [visit the CleanMed website](#).

## 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@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 read prior issues of the GHSI Online Newsletter, go to the [GHSI press room](#).

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