



*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

On January 6, 2010, the Global Health and Safety Initiative's (GHSI) Board voted to conclude the activities of GHSI and dissolve the organization. GHSI was conceived as an initiative made up of the CEOs and top leaders from a small number of health systems to provide leadership in improving safety and sustainability across the health care sector. While our Board members, founders and participating health systems remain committed to this goal, the Board determined there were more efficient and effective ways to achieve sector-wide leadership and environmental sustainability improvements in today's economic and political climate. GHSI staff is in the process of wrapping up our activities and closing out GHSI by the end of January 2010 and can be reached at info@globalhealthisafety.org; that email address will continue to be monitored through March 31, 2010, for any GHSI related inquiries.

The original premise of GHSI – to promote health system leadership in environmental sustainability to improve patient, workplace and community health and safety – was and is an important and powerful idea. Together with our health system and nonprofit partners, GHSI did help make improvements and contribute to the field – e.g. the Eco-Health Footprint Guide, a guide to environmental footprinting specific for the healthcare industry, environmentally preferable purchasing criteria endorsed by GHSI health systems and GPOs, commitments for purchasing DEHP & PVC-free medical devices as well as other safer and more sustainable procurement choices, a sustainability agenda to guide the industry (Healthy Hospitals-Healthy Society Agenda), the EcoChecklist available through Practice Greenhealth, safety and sustainability research priorities, white papers on flooring and chemical hazards in healthcare, building materials fact sheets, contributions to The Center for Health Design's Ripple database and Healthy Building Network's Pharos database, and securing the eligibility of nonprofit hospitals for federal funding in the House and Senate Energy bills. Through GHSI health systems increased collaboration and the development and replication of best practices in building standards, energy improvements, safer chemicals and much more.

I wish we could have accomplished more, but our collective work will live on and I am hopeful that a focus on safety and sustainability will continue to grow. Many of the resources developed are currently available from our GHSI [Document Library](#) which will remain online through March 31, 2010 – you are welcome to download these resources to assist you in your efforts. Many other

tools and resources are available to assist you in improving sustainability and safety. I encourage you to visit these other websites to learn about what other resources may be available to you and how you can get involved: [American Hospital Association](#), [Business-NGO Working Group](#), [Center for Environmental Health](#), [The Center for Health Design](#), [Center for Maximum Potential Building Design](#), [Clean Production Action](#), [Green Guide for Healthcare](#), [Health Care Without Harm](#), [Healthy Building Network](#), [Physicians for Social Responsibility](#), [Practice Greenhealth](#), and many others. Thanks are due to these organizations that contributed so much to our collective efforts and especially to the health systems that founded, led and funded GHSI: Advocate Health Care, Ascension Health, Catholic Healthcare West, Hospital Sisters Health System, Kaiser Permanente, MedStar Health, Partners HealthCare, St. Joseph Health System and University of California, Davis and San Francisco Medical Centers.

Much of GHSI's work and products will be transferred to Health Care Without Harm and Practice Greenhealth who are in the process of reconstituting an approach for health system leadership in sustainability and safety. Building on GHSI's formative work the new initiative will:

- Focus on sustainability and its linkage with patient and worker safety;
- Provide enhanced technical assistance on sustainability issues to participating health systems;
- Create standards and programs on sustainability that can transform the entire healthcare sector;
- Provide opportunities for advocacy on sustainability and environmental health issues;
- Provide opportunities to collaborate on research projects with other healthcare systems; and
- Provide opportunities for healthcare executives to demonstrate leadership on sustainability issues and network with their peers.

On behalf of GHSI staff I'd like to thank the health systems that contributed and supported this groundbreaking effort, and thank all of you for your past and future support of sustainability and safety efforts in healthcare. All our best to you and your organization.

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

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