



## **Global Health and Safety Initiative Strategic Priorities – 2009 & Beyond**

The following strategic priorities for the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) are based on GHSI Workgroup activities, discussions with GHSI health care leaders and with other leaders in health care, in associations and organizations important to health care. The priorities represent a summary of the state of the knowledge and activities to date in the areas of greener and safer health care --- the mission of the Global Health and Safety Initiative. Hospitals and health systems vary tremendously on their understanding of the issues, commitment and achievements to date. Health care has some outstanding examples of improvements in patient, worker/workplace and environment health and safety. But many hospitals and health systems are at more basic places --- asking for help in understanding and convincing others why it is important to make changes, what makes sense to do and how to go about making improvements.

Given the state of the economy and the health care field, these GHSI priorities represent our best thinking on what is needed and what can be achieved in 2009 and in the next few years.

### **GHSI Objectives:**

- **Patient Safety:** Reduce hospital-related infection and exposure to chemicals of concern and improve patient satisfaction
- **Worker/Workplace Safety:** Reduce injuries and exposure to chemicals of concern
- **Environment/Community Safety & Sustainability:** Reduce health care's direct and indirect footprint

### **GHSI Strategic Priorities**

#### **1. Document the Economic and Business Case for Investing in Greener and Safer Hospitals and Health care**

Logic: Healthcare leaders do not understand the economic and business reasons to make environment and safety improvements part of their priorities. The social and economic costs and case for change has yet to be convincingly made. Health care leaders are looking for data that demonstrates a savings and adequate return on investment (financial and cost avoidance) to justify investments in concepts that promote green and safe health facilities and operations. Beyond these are good nice things to do, there is a cost imperative to do so. The sector needs information to demonstrate the known link between climate change/energy sources and the use of chemicals/biologics and the resulting impacts on population health and disease.

Impact: Patient, Worker, Community Health and Safety

## **2. Develop a Roadmap Guide to Greener and Safer Hospitals and Healthcare**

Logic: Healthcare leaders need help in sorting through information, prioritizing approaches and knowing where to start making greener and safer improvements in their facilities and operations, as well as benefiting their surrounding community. The Roadmap will provide this prioritized approach and provide case examples, practical steps and guidance on how to achieve greener and safer hospitals and health care.

Impact: Patient, Worker, Community Health and Safety

## **3. Reduce Healthcare's Footprint by producing a GHSI Eco-Health Footprint Toolkit**

Logic: Healthcare is a major direct and indirect user of energy, water and producer of waste, CO2 and green house gas emissions, but few hospitals know their baseline footprint, its consequences for public health or what they can do to reduce their footprint and costs. The Eco-Health Footprint is the first step in understanding a hospital's impact on the environment and is designed to health care leaders make decision on how they can lessen their impact.

Impact: Community Health and Safety

## **4. Promote Energy Efficiency and Greater Use of Renewable Energy by Healthcare**

Logic: Hospitals and healthcare need assistance and support to reduce their energy use and move toward renewable energy. Hospitals are the second most energy intensive industry in U.S. and health care represents 16% of GDP, approximately 5 million jobs and growing. Healthcare can play a leadership role in helping to create green jobs to stimulate the economy, reduce energy use and thus help slow climate change, improve the health of population and save money for better uses within healthcare.

Impact: Community Health

## **5. Promote the Use of Safer and More Effective Chemicals and Biologics in Healthcare**

Logic: Healthcare is a significant user of chemicals that have been demonstrated to cause harm to human health, as well as other species and the environment. There is a strong desire to use safer alternatives, but many healthcare leaders lack the knowledge of the existence or efficacy of alternatives. At times safer chemicals do not exist at competitive costs, are not yet available in the marketplace or have not been approved to address the specific infection control needs of health care systems. Management and purchasing practices can be improved to reduce patient and worker exposure and environmental and community accumulation.

Impact: Patient, Worker, Community Health and Safety