

Planetalk

Brought to you by Planetree, your Source for Patient-Centered Solutions and News

Planetalk Goes Paperless!

Despite the growing number of health, human, and economic benefits for organizations to adopt environmental sustainability plans, and the increased ease of doing so, healthcare in general has been a "Cautious Adopter" of instituting established "green" practices into corporate policy and operations. In the United States alone Healthcare facilities generate nearly two billion pounds of paper and cardboard waste every year. This type of waste represents approximately 45% of an average acute care hospital's waste stream, and being nonhazardous, the easiest to recycle hospital generated waste. Leaders in human health and safety like the US Department of Health and Human Services and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recognize the impact of environmental stewardship on creating healthy communities and have tools such as a "Sustainability Scorecard" for their partners as well as setting a goal of recycling at least 50% of all Agency nonhazardous wastes by 2015.



Planetree's new Designation Criteria, for Healing Environments that foster Healthy Communities, requires organizations seeking to be Planetree Designated® to be "able to demonstrate their commitment to promotion of holistic community health through environmental stewardship and encouraging environmentally-friendly practices." Because Planetree is compelled to champion this standard, we feel obligated to demonstrate our commitment to it through our own practices and actions. One of the ways we are doing so is by auditing our own corporate sustainability practices. Understanding that "mindful reduction" has a higher impact on embodied energy costs than recycling, one of the strategies we are implementing is to decrease or eliminate nonessential practices and product use that contribute to ours or others waste streams. By intentionally reducing our own use and distribution of printed paper products, we are contributing to healthier community environments though:

- Reducing transportation CO2 emissions resulting from the combustion of petroleum-based products, like gasoline, in internal combustion engines needed to transport and ship paper products.
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions that can contribute to climate change by avoiding methane emissions and reducing energy required for producing paper.
- Saving considerable landfill space.
- Decreasing the need for disposal (i.e., landfill or incineration which also decreases the amount of CO2 produced).

There is also ample evidence that reducing paper in the workplace improves efficiency. Electronic documents are more portable, easier to share, can be filed on cloud storage not requiring physical space onsite, and searched for and sourced more rapidly. Planetree has discovered that in the process of moving to virtual platforms for much of our communication and information distribution that we can offer more content related to patient-centered care, more frequently, and more individually personalized to meet the needs and interests of our affiliates.

This is the first of many "Sustainability Stories" we look forward to sharing with one another. In the meantime we hope you enjoy "Paperless Planetalk;" where the only tree used in creating it is the one in our logo.

References

Hopkins, M. S., Kruschwitz, N., Haanaes, K., Kong, M. T., Arthur, D., & Reeves, M. (2011). Sustainability: The 'embracers' seize advantage. *MIT Sloan Management Review*, 52(3), 3-27.

[Pollution Prevention and Compliance Assistance Information for the Healthcare Industry](#) Healthcare Environmental Resource Center.

[Waste. Sustainability roadmap for Hospitals: A Guide to Achieving your Sustainability Goals](#)

[CDC Sustainability Scorecard](#), Sustainability: Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

[EPA US Environmental Protection Agency](#). "Sources of Greenhouse Gas Emissions."

Share this email:



[Manage](#) your preferences | [Opt out](#) using TrueRemove™

Got this as a forward? [Sign up](#) to receive our future emails.

View this email [online](#).

130 Division Street
Derby, CT | 06418 US

This email was sent to .

To continue receiving our emails, add us to your address book.

