



# EARTHCARE

CHW's Ecology Bulletin

SPRING 2009

EARTHCARE is a source of information on the ecological work of CHW hospitals, updates on system developments and projects, and resources to help all of us further our mission of partnering with others to improve quality of life. [www.CHWHealth.org/About Us/Community Health](http://www.CHWHealth.org/About_Us/Community_Health)



## ASCENT HEALTHCARE SOLUTIONS

At a time when improving the healthcare system and exploring environmental initiatives are no longer abstract goals but vital requirements, sustainability initiatives have emerged as a cornerstone of responsible hospital behavior. CHW's partnership with Ascent Healthcare Solutions represents our most impactful sustainability initiative, demonstrating leadership and commitment to being a responsible steward of the environment. Ascent Healthcare Solutions is the medical device manufacturer that offers the most extensive remanufacturing/reprocessing program in North America to help keep medical devices out of our landfills. This alliance allows our hospitals to effectively redirect resources from medical device supplies to initiatives that increase the quality of care. Ascent's remanufacturing/reprocessing program treats single-use medical devices (SUDs) as assets, not trash. Many SUDs can, with the right clinical and technical expertise, be remanufactured to perform at their original level for one or more additional uses. Rather than throwing away those medical devices it collects that can't be reprocessed, Ascent works with local recycling companies to break those devices down into their component parts so they can be recycled appropriately.

In 2008, remanufacturing and reprocessing helped CHW hospitals reduce medical waste by **154,551 pounds** and save over **\$5.8 million** in supply costs. Our medical device remanufacturing/reprocessing program represents a mindset for CHW focused on making the best use of the resources we have. Our mindset involves a detour from the "throw away" mentality and recognizes and appreciates that what has traditionally been viewed as trash is not trash, but assets that

should be protected, so that we can improve patient care and reduce harm to the environment.



## FOOD BASKET PROGRAM

A commitment to life-long wellness has been at the heart of Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center's century-old mission in Northern Nevada. Now, thanks to an innovative partnership with a local food cooperative called the Great Basin Food Basket, Saint Mary's employees, clinicians, patients and visitors have direct access to locally grown fruits and vegetables, encouraging healthier eating and supporting Saint Mary's wellness-driven philosophy.

The Great Basin Food Basket makes weekly deliveries to Saint Mary's campus, providing baskets of seasonal fruits and vegetables to individuals via a pre-paid subscription-based service. The program not only benefits participants but also regional farmers seeking to draw attention to community-supported agriculture.

## FOOD FOR THOUGHT

One of the goals of the F&N Council this fiscal year is to have all CHW F&N Managers complete the Green Guide to Healthcare self-certification. This would give the council a great baseline on the environmental/sustainable programs in place at all CHW facilities. The data gathered from all sites will be used to set the council's environmental goals for FY10. F&N Managers have been participating in conference calls to discuss and review the self-certification guide. These calls have also provided a great forum for sharing current environmental practices. More to come on this initiative!



## RECYCLE SYMBOLS-WHAT DO THEY MEAN?

A chasing arrow diagram is found on products that contain recycled content. On plastics, it is used along with a numbering system (1-7) to help designate plastic resins used in the product. The three arrows on the symbol represent different components of the recycling process. The top arrow represents the collection of recyclable materials (e.g. an aluminum can, a piece of white office paper, a plastic #2 milk jug) for processing. The collection can be from a curbside collection or a drop-off site. The second arrow (bottom right) represents the recyclables being processed into recycled products (e.g. a new aluminum can from an old aluminum can, notebook paper from white office paper, a park bench from recycled plastic milk jugs). **The third arrow on the bottom left is the most important arrow.** This one represents when the consumer actually buys a product with recycled content. This is the most important step as it closes the recycling loop. Without this last step, we are pretty much just sorting our garbage.



## CLEAN AND GREEN: EASY HOUSEHOLD TIPS FOR EARTH-FRIENDLY SPRING CLEANING

**Kitchen sinks:** Make your own sink scrub using one part vinegar, four parts baking soda and several drops of your favorite essential oil (or oils). Scrub the paste on with a sponge, let sit for a few minutes then rinse.

**Tubs and toilets:** Spray with vinegar first, then sprinkle on baking soda for totally natural, fizzy cleaning power. Scrub with a sponge or toilet brush, then rinse clean or flush.

**Garbage cans:** Sprinkle the bottoms with the natural mineral borax to prevent mold and fungus, and to keep away insects. For more information:

[http://greenliving.suite101.com/article.cfm/clean\\_and\\_green#ixzz0BNBQB8SY](http://greenliving.suite101.com/article.cfm/clean_and_green#ixzz0BNBQB8SY)



## PRACTICE GREENHEALTH 2009 ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS

CHW and 14 CHW hospitals will be honored by Practice Greenhealth at the CleanMed conference in Chicago on May 19, 2009.

### System for Change Award

Catholic Healthcare West

### Environmental Leadership Circle Award

Dominican Hospital, Santa Cruz  
St. Joseph's Medical Center, Stockton

### Partner for Change Award

Chandler Regional Medical Center  
Community Hospital of San Bernardino  
Mercy General Hospital  
Mercy Gilbert Medical Center  
St. Bernardine Medical Center  
St. Elizabeth Community Hospital  
St. John's Pleasant Valley Hospital  
St. John's Regional Medical Center

### Partner Recognition Award

Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta  
Mercy San Juan Medical Center  
Northridge Hospital Medical Center

### Making Medicine Mercury Free Award

Chandler Regional Medical Center  
French Hospital Medical Center  
Mercy Gilbert Medical Center  
Mercy Medical Center Mt. Shasta  
Northridge Hospital Medical Center

## WEBSITES

[http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2007/06/22/musicians/Musicians who support Mother Earth – Grist's 15 Green Musicians and Bands](http://www.grist.org/news/maindish/2007/06/22/musicians/Musicians%20who%20support%20Mother%20Earth%20-%20Grist's%2015%20Green%20Musicians%20and%20Bands)

<http://ww2.earthday.net/node/73>

[www.greenlivingideas.com](http://www.greenlivingideas.com)

[www.wildlifehc.org/earthday/resources.cfm](http://www.wildlifehc.org/earthday/resources.cfm)

[www.townofcharlton.net/earthday.htm](http://www.townofcharlton.net/earthday.htm)

<http://earth911.org/support/environmental-glossary/>

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*The bulletin was created by a subcommittee of Ecocontacts: Pat Burdullis, Supply Chain, Phoenix; Milissa Chanice, St. Joseph's Phoenix; John Kendle, St. Joseph's Stockton; Mary Ellen Leciejewski, Dominican; Debi Simon, Sequoia, St. Mary's, Saint Francis; Roselli Tria, Saint Mary's Regional Medical Center, Reno; Susan Vickers, SF Corporate Office.*