

# Environmental Stewardship update

## System, regional and local efforts

### System efforts

#### Resource, Engineering and Hospitality

The Resource, Engineering and Hospitality (REH) team manages a large portion of products and services used by our organization – everything from a desk stapler to cafeteria and nurse registry services to complicated implantable medical devices. This team is responsible for sourcing products and evaluating suppliers and vendors, issuing RFPs, negotiating contracts and managing inventory, as well as managing purchase orders and processing invoice payments to close the loop.

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*“It is important for our organization to focus on environmentally preferable purchasing because health care goes beyond patient care. It includes the goods and services that we use to care for our patients and what we expose our caregivers to daily. Caring for our patients, caregivers and communities compels us to make more sustainable choices.”*

**– Jennie Kim, director of Contract and Supplier Management, REH**

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As one of the largest health care organizations in the country, REH leverages our size and purchasing power with our suppliers.

- We collaborate with suppliers to reduce cardboard packaging, waste and chemicals of harm during the manufacturing process.
- We seek suppliers that are committed to “green operations” focusing on renewable energy sources and water reduction in their own facilities.
- We encourage cleaner distribution and transportation methods by reducing fossil fuel use in vehicles.
- We engage caregivers and stakeholders to remove or reuse single-use products with safe, more durable alternatives.

Our effort to increase environmentally preferable purchasing combined with our caregiver engagement will reduce our footprint. To learn more, contact: Jennie Kim, director of Contract and Supplier Management, REH at [jennie.kim@providence.org](mailto:jennie.kim@providence.org).

#### Providence business travel

To further our carbon-negative goal, Providence contracts with transportation vendors who are transparent about emissions, so we can understand the footprint associated with our airline travel and car rentals.

- Our partners include AMEX, Alaska Airlines, Enterprise/National, Avis/Budget and other partner airlines.
- We have established a goal of reducing airline travel by 75 percent through 2022 from 2019 levels after successfully adapting to virtual meetings during 2020.
- Future plans include:
  - Integrating environmental stewardship criteria into RFPs so that vendors are also in alignment with our goals.
  - Empowering caregivers to choose greener car rental or hotel options.

- Understanding and reducing greenhouse gas emissions from reimbursed miles traveled with caregiver vehicles used for care delivery.

To learn more, contact the business travel team at [phstravel@providence.org](mailto:phstravel@providence.org).

### Providence Information Systems (IS)

In alignment with our carbon-negative goal, the Information System (IS) department has plans to increase efficiency and reduce consumption. Four key efforts include:

1. Establishing a standard that requires newly purchased electronic products to be certified by the global [EPEAT](#) registry to ensure environmentally preferable equipment was used.
2. Establishing a partnership with [Sipi Corporation](#), a leader in refining, recycling and reusing electronics, so equipment doesn't end up in the landfill at the end of its lifecycle.
3. Installing power management software on new computers to reduce consumption when not in use.
4. Encouraging adoption of practices that will lead to a less-wasteful organizational culture (i.e., printing less, printing only when truly needed)
  - To learn more about our e-waste disposal program: [IT Hardware e-Waste Disposal \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
  - To learn more about our printing modernization work: [Enterprise Print Optimization \(sharepoint.com\)](#)
  - To learn more about the modern solution to procurement of devices for caregivers: [ReadyTECH Device Fulfillment Program \(sharepoint.com\)](#)

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*“We are leveraging the global standard, EPEAT, to help us consistently procure secure, environmentally sustainable, electronic products. At the time of disposal, we reduce e-waste by partnering with Sipi, who recycles our electronics. These practices help us to do our part to preserve the environment.”*

**-Kathleen Finley, director of Asset Management in IS TEO**

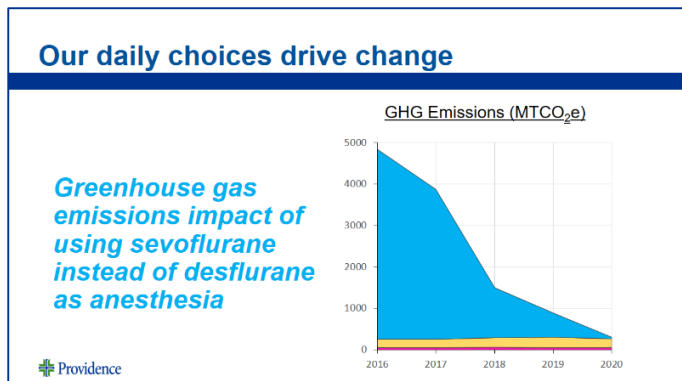
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To learn more, contact: Kathleen Finley, director of Asset Management in IS TEO at [kathleen.finley@providence.org](mailto:kathleen.finley@providence.org)

### Regional efforts – Oregon

#### Efforts led by Dr. Brian Chesebro, anesthesiologist and medical director of Environmental Stewardship

- A system effort to reduce greenhouse gas emissions from anesthesia. In the Oregon region, this effort has reduced greenhouse gas emissions by 95 percent by switching from desflurane to sevoflurane, a lower-emission, lower-cost, alternative anesthetic that delivers quality clinical outcomes.
- An effort at Providence St. Vincent in Portland, Ore., to optimize the use of surgical supplies and reduce unnecessary sterile reprocessing of unused, durable equipment trays. By



reducing wasted supplies and processing about 75,000 fewer opened but unused surgical equipment trays, the hospital was able to reduce associated greenhouse gas emissions by nearly **1,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent** and cut water consumption by nearly **a million gallons per year**.

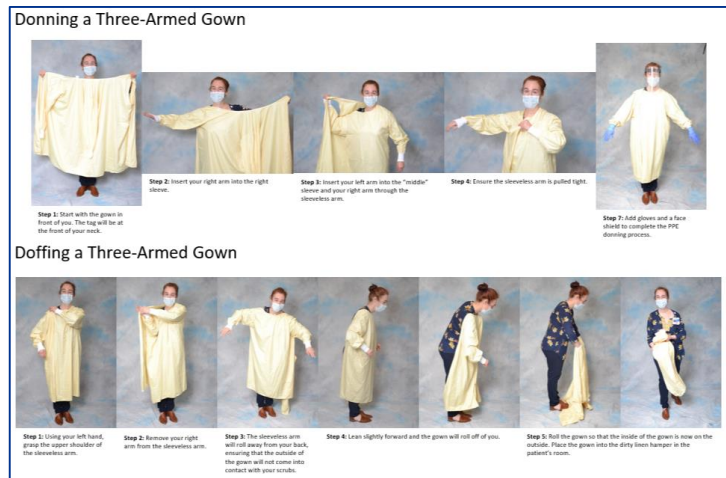
- An assessment of laundry and linen service in the Portland area found that **laundering a single blanket consumes nearly 2.5 gallons of water and emits two-thirds a kilo of carbon dioxide equivalent**. And our clinical use and consumption of linens is a direct driver of these of these downstream impacts. So every time a clinician grabs three blankets, when really one would suffice, we generate a tremendous amount of unnecessary and unintended environmental impacts.

To learn more, contact: Dr. Brian Chesebro, medical director, Environmental Stewardship, Oregon Region at [brian.chesebro@providence.org](mailto:brian.chesebro@providence.org).

### Local efforts – Providence Regional Medical Center, Everett, Wash.

During COVID-19, caregivers at Providence Regional Medical Center in Everett, Wash., were consistently using between 2,000 and 2,500 disposable gowns per day. Concerned about this tremendous amount of waste, infection prevention and operations leaders realized there was an opportunity to explore reusable gowns.

- Everett participates in a laundry co-op. The team learned that other participants in the co-op were using reusable gowns that were purchased/owned and laundered by the co-op, but essentially “rented” by other health care organizations.
- A few different reusable gowns were available, so testing in collaboration with clinical teams, nursing leaders and infection control leaders was needed to identify the best choice for the group and build buy-in.
- A specific reusable gown with a third arm to provide better coverage and protection was selected. The linen co-op began delivering clean gowns daily and picking up soiled ones. This meant the ministry did not need to purchase them outright, nor worry about laundering.
- During roll-out, the team prepared visual instructional materials, including a one-pager with a QR code and a video on donning and doffing reusable gowns. Critical to success is making the materials useful and readily available where caregivers are located.
  - Check out their donning and doffing educational video [here](#).
  - Check out their donning three-armed gown instructions [here](#).



To learn more, contact: Sarah Wilkerson, manager, Infection Prevention at [sarah.wilkerson@providence.org](mailto:sarah.wilkerson@providence.org), and Darren Redick, CEO at [darren.redick@providence.org](mailto:darren.redick@providence.org).