



Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

Veterans Affairs Maryland Health Care System

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www.maryland.va.gov/index.asp

Health Care System

(Includes Perry Point and Baltimore VA Medical Centers, the Baltimore Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center and five outpatient clinics)

Member since October 2009

Management and Leadership

Environmental Team

Our Facility has a Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) Committee that meets every other month to focus on environmental compliance, resource reduction, pollution prevention, and sustainability. The committee is a multi-disciplinary group with representation from services throughout the VAMHCS, including: research, engineering, laboratory, nursing, pharmacy, housekeeping, nutrition and food, and acquisitions.

Environmental Policy Statement

The mission of the VA Maryland Healthcare System (VAMHCS) is to deliver quality healthcare to our nation's veterans. In order to accomplish this mission, the VAMHCS recognizes that it must operate so as to protect both the environment and the health and safety of patients, employees, and visitors. The VAMHCS Memorandum establishes a governing environmental policy to accomplish this mission. In accomplishing its mission of providing quality healthcare to our nation's veterans it is the VAMHCS policy to develop and implement a VAMHCS Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) that will meet the requirements and address the goals of EO 13423 and the guidance provided by Veterans Health Administration. Through the development of the GEMS program, the VAMHCS will:

- a. *Strive to be a good steward of the environment by complying with federal, state, and local environmental laws and other requirements, preventing pollution, minimizing waste, conserving cultural and natural resources and*

continually improving environmental programs.

- b. Strive to utilize sustainable practices to eliminate, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts.*
- c. Evaluate the operation of each VAMHCS facility to incorporate actions into facility planning and procedures to reduce environmental vulnerabilities.*
- d. Integrate pollution prevention, waste minimization, resource conservation, and environmental compliance into the VAMHCS operations, purchasing, planning, and decision making, wherever practical.*
- e. Strive to use natural resources efficiently and maintain and protect plant and wildlife habitat consistent with the VAMHCS mission.*
- f. Recognize that the development and construction at VAMHCS facilities must consider the unique conditions of the environment of which the facility is a part.*
- g. Train VAMHCS staff as needed to carry out environmental responsibilities of their positions.*
- h. Solicit input, as appropriate, from stakeholders including staff patients, visitors, and the local community regarding environmental matters affecting the operation of the facilities.*

<http://www.maryland.va.gov/about/GEMS.asp>



Annual Environmental Goals

Each year our Committee reviews environmental hazards that result from activities in our hospital. We use an environmental aspects and impacts spreadsheet to review over 500 facility activities that have a negative environmental impact. These items are all ranked on: Compliance, Frequency, Control, and Risk. Items with the highest scores are deemed Significant. After significant aspects are identified, objectives and targets are set to achieve a lower, more compliant ranking in the future. Our current goals for 2009 are:

- 1) Enhance our Pharmaceutical Waste Management Program: To include training to all staff including nursing and to further segregate non hazardous waste.*
- 2) Further develop a Green Procurement Policy for A&MM & Purchase card holders*
- 3) Reduce medical waste by 10%*
- 4) Insert environmental wording into 90% of Clinical Center Directors, Service Chiefs, and Associate Chiefs Position Descriptions or Functional Statements: The environmental would require a dedication to environmental stewardship in their routine job duties and a pledge to support the VAMHCS environmental program.*

- 5) Pilot a paper recycling program at the Loch raven facility: After the pilot program the recycling initiative could then be rolled out to the other facilities. Our ultimate goal is to increase recycling by 12% by 2011.
- 6) Create and online environmental training program: This training program would allow all VAMHCS staff to receive environmental training specific to their job duties; as well as awareness level training for everyone.

Environmentally Preferable Procurement

Though we do not currently have a policy in place, we have attempted to order some items that are environmentally preferred. Last year we 100% of the regular print paper purchased at the VAMHCS consisted of 30% post-consumer product or more. We also ordered all new energy efficient copiers and printers that also use less ink when printing.

Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects

This year we held two Earth day events and several lunch-and-learns that were open to our patients, visitors, volunteers, and the community. We had over 200 visitors to our Earth Day events. Additionally, we have been working with the patients at our Perry Point Medical Center to develop recycling and sustainability projects that they can participate in. The VAMHCS is also an active member of Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy environment and has both attended and presented at MD H2E events.

Independently-Audited Environmental Management System

Our GEMS program is in conformance with ISO 14001. We are independently audited by Regional offices and receive an external compliance audit every 3 years.

Waste

Recycling

We currently recycle: Cardboard, confidential paper, pallets, metal, toner and ink, electronics, tires, universal waste (including batteries), and cooking oil. Additionally we sell/donate equipment such as beds, furniture, vehicles, medical devices to other federal facilities and third world countries. Through recycling efforts we reduced our solid waste by 4% last year. This year our Perry Point Campus has increased its recycling to 26% of its total waste stream.

Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction

We have virtually eliminated all devices containing mercury, with the exception of bulbs. All of our universal waste is recycled and we currently have two battery recycling programs (one for rechargeable batteries, one for everything else). We have also developed a Hazardous Materials and Waste Management policy and conducted training on chemical purchasing.

We also have pharmaceutical and medical waste management policies and programs. Last year we reduced our medical waste by 2.2%, and 8% since 2006. This CY we are on par to reduce our medical waste by another 2%, bringing our total medical waste amount down to approximately 10% of our waste stream.

Energy

Energy Efficiency

We have completed a chiller overhaul at our Baltimore VA Medical center and have replaced all of our incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent ones at all of our facilities. We have also instituted new efficient lighting in our breezeway and set lighting on timers and motion detectors.

The Baltimore facility also participates in Demand Response with BG&E. This program allows us to run our facility on back-up generator power if the power grid becomes overloaded. Participating in this program provides us with \$52,000 in credit towards our bill.

Transportation

Employee Commute

The VAMHCS has multiple commute options that minimize emissions and traffic from employees and patients. We have a VAMHCS shuttle that is used primarily for patients commuting between facilities, however when there is room staff are also allowed to use the shuttle services. Additionally we have a VAMHCS Vanpool Program in which a van is provided to groups of 7-15 who live in the same general area with a commute longer than 30 minutes. A third option we have is the Transit Benefit program that provides a non taxable subsidy to staff that use public transportation for their daily commute.

Efficient Business Travel

Employees that do not have direct patient interaction (Engineering, Contracting, Acquisitions, Pharmacy, Pathology, Research, Nutrition & Food, Canteen, and Housekeeping) are permitted to work compressed schedules of 9-10 hour days. By doing this they can eliminate one to two days that they are required to drive to work.

Fleet Vehicles

We are currently in the process of procuring 10-20 electric vehicles for use at our Perry Point Campus. Additionally all of our vehicles used for off campus transport are compatible with E85 fuel/flex fuel

Water

Water Conservation

At our Baltimore facility, we are in the process of installing low flow self flushing toilets which are good for both infection control and water conservation. We have also implemented automatic faucets. Additionally at the Baltimore Rehabilitation and Extended Care Center and the Baltimore Medical Center, we have replaced our dish washing machines with new water reducing and energy conserving machines leading to the following savings:

Water Savings: 112,420 Gallons/year/machine

Water Cost Savings: \$495.00 per year per machine

Fuel usage savings: 936.4 therms/year

Electricity saved: 7,840 kwh/year

Cost savings from fuel and electricity: \$2,250.62 per year

Green Building

LEED Silver

We are currently in the construction phase for a community based outpatient located at Ft. Meade. It is being built to LEED Silver equivalency using the New Construction Rating System

We have also developed a Lease agreement scope that will require any buildings leased by the VAMHCS to be LEED Silver equivalent. Additionally we are in the design phase for a new nursing home at our Perry Point facility; this building is being designed to LEED Silver standards.



Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.

Learn more at www.green.maryland.gov/registry

