

Development of a Local Sustainability Action Plan Pharmacy Department, Western Health, Australia

GGHH Agenda Goals

- Waste
- Pharmaceuticals
- Leadership

Pharmacy Department Goals

- Engage and raise awareness of staff on issues of environmental sustainability
- To commit to a set of clear targeted actions over a five year period
- Reduce waste to landfill
- Reduce energy, transportation consumption
- Work alongside pharmaceutical suppliers on reducing waste and recycling opportunities

Progress Achieved

- Agreement and implementation on a five year plan of action with (initially) twenty-one action items to reduce the Department's environmental footprint
- Additional action items added as required

The Issue

The Pharmacy Department at Western Health produces an estimated 100,000kg of non-pharmaceutical waste annually. An internal waste audit found that almost 50% of this was going directly into landfill, with a significant proportion being recyclable or could be made redundant with alternative reusable alternatives. Under Australian laws, disposal of pharmaceutical waste is via incineration and so minimisation of this type of waste was also seen a priority, in addition to the benefit of reduced waste in itself and potential financial savings.

Sustainability Strategy Implemented

Using Human Centered Design Principles, a series of one hour brainstorming sessions were conducted at each campus to elicit ideas from staff during April 2016. The attendees were asked what they saw as the biggest environmental concern for the Department. Ideas were collated, grouped into themes and evaluated by the hospital Sustainability Officer and Director of Pharmacy to assess feasibility, suitability and environmental sustainability merit. Twenty-one action items were refined and selected to be included into the Local Sustainability Plan. A Green Champion was appointed to coordinate the rollout of the actions. This person took on the role in addition to their usual duties and no additional funding was allocated to run this implementation.

Implementation process

Implementation of the action items have been coordinated by the Green Champion with the assistance of Green Reps at each pharmacy site with senior management support. The action items

are being rolled out when resources or opportunity becomes available, rather than in sequential order. Staff awareness regarding environmental sustainability issues in the pharmacy has taken some time and it is a work in progress. Some strategies we have used to raise awareness include lunchtime education sessions, regular email updates and staff meeting green tips. One of the biggest challenges has been overcoming negative perceptions of “going green” and encouraging positive behavior changes motivated by a desire to reduce our environmental footprint (rather than any other motivator).

Tracking Progress

We are tracking success through achieving the actions outlined in our Local Sustainability Action Plan and report quarterly to the hospital Executive through our service reports.

Challenges and lessons learned

- Behaviour change is a journey, rather than an endpoint
- Staff awareness and acceptance takes time
- Environmental sustainability often is seen as something “extra” people take on in addition to their usual duties, rather than as a vital component of providing healthcare. The connection between planet health and human health is well documented and it is a continuing challenge to ensure health sector staff recognise this.

Next Steps

The Local Sustainability Action Plan is a five year plan so we will continue to implement the other agreed action items. Along the way new ideas and action items have been added and have opened other opportunities to us so this plan will carry us forward beyond the initial five year end point.





Demographic information

Western Health is a health network servicing approximately 800,000 people living in the western region of Melbourne, Victoria, Australia with over 1000 acute, subacute and residential aged care beds. The Pharmacy Department employs over 100 staff across three campuses and delivers clinical, manufacturing and non-clinical support services across the hospital network.

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