MERCY MEDICAL CENTER: SUPPLIER-HOSPITAL PARTNERSHIP MAKES STRIDES IN SUSTAINABILITY

By Elaine Campbell, Development Officer – Foundation, Corporation & Government Grants; Green Team Coordinator

Hospital: Mercy Medical Center
Location: Canton, Ohio
Size: 476 Beds
Challenge: Advance to the next level of our sustainability initiatives through partnering with a vendor to leverage their expertise to meet our hospital-wide goals.
Results: The result of our collaboration was a customized assessment tailored to our goal of data collection and benchmarking.

About Mercy Medical Center
Mercy Medical Center, a nonprofit corporation of the Sisters of Charity Health System and University Hospitals Health System, operates a 476-bed hospital serving Stark, Carroll, Wayne, Holmes and Tuscarawas Counties and parts of Southeastern Ohio.

It has 550 physicians on its medical staff and employs 2,500 people. Mercy operates outpatient health centers in Carrollton, Jackson Township, Lake Township, Louisville, North Canton, Plain Township and Tuscarawas County. A Catholic hospital, Mercy Medical Center upholds the mission and philosophy of the Sisters of Charity of St. Augustine and continues to be responsive to the needs of the community, including the provision of care to all, regardless of their ability to pay.

Our Challenge
Catholic Health Association considers environmental concerns to be mission related and encourages hospitals to take action and be good stewards of the Earth. At Mercy Medical Center, our sustainability journey began in the 1990s with green building, energy efficiency, and cardboard recycling. Our foresight and efforts in energy efficiency were recognized in 2009 when we earned the Energy Star designation, becoming one of only two hospitals in Ohio and 87 nationwide to be awarded this distinction.

A hospital wide Green Team was formed in 2009 and efforts were made to expand the “greening process” of Mercy Medical Center. We identified objectives for recycling, energy conservation, building green, and buying green.

“It was very exciting and refreshing to learn of the significant commitment Medline has made to its customers. They have assisted Mercy Medical Center in benchmarking and measuring our green initiatives so that we can expand and sustain our environmentally conscious approach to providing quality healthcare to our community.”

Jeff Smith, Senior Vice President and COO, Mercy Medical Center
All efforts were successful but we soon hit a plateau. Some of our challenges included:

1. Like most hospitals, we did not have the budget for a dedicated sustainability manager.
2. Also like most hospitals, we have limited time to dedicate to our green initiatives.
3. Our knowledge of sustainability and implementing green changes is limited. We lacked the understanding of how to quantify our results and show the impact we can make.

We really needed assistance from someone who was an expert in the field and wanted to work with us on our needs and goals, both departmental and hospital-wide.

**The greensmart™ Solution:**

We searched for a company that would not just assist us, but work with us as a partner. We had met many individuals and companies who claimed to be “green”. Medline was different. We saw that being green was a serious, significant aspect of their existence – not just in the products they sell, but in every fiber of their operations. We saw that they didn’t just talk green, they lived green.

The greensmart Program offered Mercy the support of a dedicated sustainability manager. Very few companies have such a person and even fewer are willing to make that person available as a resource for consultation and guidance. This support helped us sharpen our focus and expand the green vision by having someone to “steer” us as we strived to reach our goals. It also provided a level of expertise that we did not previously have, particularly in the area of data collection.

Medline talked with us about our sustainability journey. They wanted to know about our accomplishments, as well as our challenges. After several conversations, they gained an understanding of the problems we were facing as a large medical facility striving to be “green”. The result of our collaboration was the building of a customized assessment tool tailored to our goal of data collection and benchmarking.

On August 10th, 2011, Medline came to Mercy’s campus armed with additional expertise to review our various waste streams. The all-day assessment process consisted of departmental dialogues, collecting information, inspecting waste outputs and crunching data.

Later, Mercy received a comprehensive report outlining the results and an in-person presentation was made to the hospital’s Green Team and Administration.

### Overview of Results

#### Potential Environmental Savings through Greener Products and Processes

21.5 tons: Potential solid waste reduction
- Flushable patient wipes (1.8 tons removed from general trash)
- Reusable patient warming bed (1.7 tons from general trash)
- Sterilization containers (18 tons from general trash and RMW)
- 6,758 gallons: Potential water and chemical savings
- Microfiber mops (2,010 gal. of water and 661 gal. of chemicals)
- Switching a single ready-to-use cleaning chemical to concentrated form (4,017 gal. of water)

38.3 tons: Potential carbon dioxide savings
- Reusable patient warming bed (21.8 tons in reduced electricity usage)
- Reusable patient warming bed and sterilization containers (16.5 tons in fewer deliveries of blue wrap and warming blankets)

#### Waste Reduction Data

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Total weights and volumes of waste streams</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Total costs of waste streams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benchmarking against similar hospitals our size</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### TRUE STORIES | SPRING 2012
areas of waste reduction, energy savings, compliance, signage, and more. Medline also made recommendations for converting to greener products and processes.

We trusted Medline’s product recommendations as being environmentally sound and not subject to greenwashing.

Mercy’s greensmart™ partnership with Medline strengthened our relationship with them as a prime vendor supplier. They listened to our complaints, observed our challenge and delivered a hands-on approach.

Hospital-Wide Value

These results were shared hospital-wide and gave Mercy’s Green Team a level of credibility that is sometimes difficult to obtain in such busy work environments like hospitals. It also brought pride, not only to the Green Team, but to departments and employees that continue to be key to our sustainability efforts, like Environmental Services.

Success in healthcare sustainability depends on the participation and collaboration with many hospital departments. The assessment interviews and data collection showed what a value each participant brings to the team. Even Mercy’s recycling vendor had a valuable experience from the assessment process.

After attending Medline’s reporting presentation, the company improved their reporting methodology which strengthened Mercy’s data collection process. A program like greensmart raises standards along the supply chain, creating an impactful ripple effect in the operations of hospitals and their vendors.

Other Environmental Initiatives at Mercy

Mercy’s energy management program began in 1993 with a $5 million project covering approximately one million square feet. Since that project, the energy management team has expanded the use and capabilities of the building automation system to include:

• Control of air handling units including temperature set points, economizers, and night/weekend set back. Load shedding of selected air handlers reduces chiller plant electrical usage.
• Control of each operating room including verification of air exchange rates and pressurization.
• Control of all isolation/negative pressure rooms including monitoring of alarms.
• Control of chiller plant including use of free cooling option and also resetting chilled water temperature based on outside air temperature/dew point.

Other key energy-saving enhancements undertaken since 1993 include:

• Installing variable frequency drives (VFDs) on air handling units and pumps.
• Retrofitting T-12 style fluorescent light fixture with T-8s and T-5s.
• Eliminating most incandescent bulbs and replacing them with compact fluorescents (CFLs).

Energy Star is a joint program between the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the U.S. Department of Energy that rewards excellence in energy performance.

For more information on Mercy Medical Center, visit www.cantonmercy.com.

For more information on Medline’s greensmart Program for Healthcare contact Francesca Olivier at 847-643-3821 or folivier@medline.com.

You can also read more at www.medline.com/greensmart.