
Hospital Recycling Revolution and Sustainable Reform

Initiative Type

Service Improvement

Status

Sustained

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05 September 2024

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<https://clinicaexcellence.qld.gov.au/improvement-exchange/hospital-recycling-revolution-and-sustainable-reform>

Summary

Children's Health Queensland Hospital and Health Services (CHQHHS) has empowered its workforce, young people, families and care partners to pursue innovative ways to minimise their environmental impact of our health care service. We have established an Environmental Stewardship Network, the 'CHQ Green Team', which has grown to over 200 active members who work together

to meet the targets set out in the CHQHHS Environmental Sustainability Plan 2021-2024. A collective approach across the hospital was imperative to realising our environmental sustainability agenda. Not only staff, but also our patients are involved, for example the designing containers to collect clean, clear, stretchy, soft plastics across the hospital. This has established QCH as an international example for sustainable healthcare service delivery, both financially and environmentally. One of the first amazing ideas of the team was to take nearly expired consumables to a central area where they are exchanged at the 'medical market'. This prevented consumables being discarded, which resulted in a saving of \$183,000 during the first year and \$112,000 in the second year. The green team also has a monthly meeting where people are encouraged to bring their recycling ideas. This engagement where people celebrate each other's ideas is a very important part of the project.

Key dates

Jul 2020

Jun 2023

Implementation sites

Queensland Children's Hospital

Key Contacts

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Aim

To build a sustainable healthcare service by proactively embed environmentally sustainability into how we do business every day.

Benefits

CHQ showcases sustainable leadership that has successfully diverted 491 tonnes of waste from landfill and generated and saved over \$580 000 in 2021/22.

Background

Most averaged sized metro hospitals generate over one million kilograms of waste a year and big hospitals approximately four million kilograms of waste. It is very expensive on the budget as well as the environment. The health industry is the second largest industry on carbon footprints in Australia.

Solutions Implemented

Empower staff, young people and families in identifying and implementing environmentally sustainable initiatives. Some initiatives will include:

- educate staff about the importance of different coloured waste bins in the hospital
- educate staff not to use single-use plastic trays and replace them with reusable green trays
- targeted the operating theatres because the plastic there is sterile.

Evaluation and Results

CHQ Green Team initiatives have resulted in emission reductions, improved energy efficiency and waste reduction at the Queensland Children's Hospital (QCH) in South Brisbane. We are recycling about 1.5 tons of metal a month out of our hospital and actually returning an income from this initiative.

