



RECOGNITIONS

- 2013 Partner Recognition Award
- 2014 Greenhealth Partner for Change Award
- 2015 Greenhealth Partner for Change Award
- 2016 Greenhealth Partner for Change Award
- 2016 Making Medicine Mercury Free Award
- 2016 Greening the OR Recognition Award

Alaska Regional Hospital Improves Its Environmental Performance and the Health of its Community

Alaska Regional Hospital is a 250-bed licensed and accredited hospital facility that has been serving the community of Anchorage since 1963. As a member of Hospital Corporation of America, one of the nation’s largest healthcare providers, it gives Alaskans access to best-in-class medical resources. It is also committed to reducing the health impact its facility has on patients, staff and the local community through sustainable, environmentally preferable practices. Its goal is to enhance their commitment to safety and operational excellence, while providing a healthy and sustainable facility for their patients and community.

Moving Sustainability and Compliance Programs to the Next Level

For any healthcare organization, meeting sustainability goals is a work in progress. Managing multiple waste streams is especially challenging to tackle since it requires everyone’s participation, from the administration and janitorial staff to the doctors and medical staff. It involves reducing regulated medical waste, diverting pharmaceutical waste from the water supply, increasing recycling and properly handling and storing hazardous waste, all while maintaining compliance with state and federal regulations.

The hospital administration recognized that with so many moving parts, they needed a subject matter expert who could provide daily operations and reporting support to make their sustainability program a success. They turned to Waste Management (WM) for that support.

Sustainability Plan—Putting a WM Project Manager On Board

WM recommended placing a Project Manager at the facility full-time. Working in collaboration with the facility’s leadership team, the WM Project Manager helped develop and implement an action plan that earned management support and generated the level of employee engagement required for long-term success.

One of the team’s first tasks was to establish realistic sustainability and compliance goals that were aligned with the Practice Greenhealth benchmarking framework. These included regulated medical waste reduction, recycling and construction and demolition debris recycling.

“Managing waste at a hospital is particularly challenging due to the number of waste streams, the different departments contributing to those waste streams and the various federal and state regulations. Having a WM representative on-site that is familiar with our operations has proved to be very beneficial. Their industry knowledge and resources helped guide us in improving our operational efficiencies and in meeting our established sustainability goals.”

Seth Clark, Facilities Manager/Safety Officer, Alaska Regional Hospital

SUSTAINABILITY SERVICES

The onsite WM Project Manager then helped implement the following steps to assist the hospital in achieving their waste reduction and sustainability goals:

- Review and revision of medical and pharmaceutical waste procedures
- Consideration of a number of waste treatment and hauling options
- Development and implementation of a clear, concise communication plan
- Optimal container placement and the use of good signage
- Progress tracking to measure success
- Training, education, and continuous communication with the staff
- Publication of success stories and acknowledgement of staff for their contribution in achieving their environmental goals

The Green Outcome - An Award-Winning Program

Having an onsite waste management expert at Alaska Regional Hospital meant that one person was always available to address staff questions and concerns, perform regular audits to maintain compliance and see the program rollout through completion. This solution was not only cost-efficient, but also helped the hospital achieve its waste-related goals and make its program a success. With its new training program, the hospital is set up for sustainable success with their ongoing waste disposal and compliance needs.

In recognition of its achievements, Alaska Regional Hospital has earned the Greenhealth Partner for Change Award for three years in a row (2014, 2015 and 2016) and also received the Making Medicine Mercury Free and Greening the OR awards in 2016.

Benefits

WM helped Alaska Regional Hospital achieve significant savings while improving overall health of its facility. The WM Project Manager continues to be involved with the program, looking for new opportunities for improvement and new goals to set.



Regulated Medical Waste: Reduced from 20% of total waste in 2012 down to 11% in 2013



Recycling: Achieved a 24% recycling rate as a percentage of the total waste in 2015, a 9% increase from 2013



Pharmaceutical Waste: Diverted 4,280 lbs. of hazardous pharmaceutical waste from entering the water supply in 2015



Construction Waste: Diverted 514 tons of construction and demolition waste from construction projects in 2015 (80% of overall construction waste)



Cost Efficiency: Reduced waste management costs by 20%



Compliance: Maintained compliance with state and federal regulations

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