



The Medical Waste Reporter



Announcements for Wisconsin's Medical Waste Generators

Reporting year 2006

Issued January 2007

More H2E Awards in 2006!

Wisconsin healthcare facilities earned seven Hospitals for a Healthy Environment awards in 2006. Congratulations to all award winners!

Receiving the coveted **Environmental Leadership Award** were **Mercy Health System** (Janesville) and **Affinity Health System** (Appleton).

Gunderson Lutheran (LaCrosse) earned the **Partner for Change Award**. **Affinity** and **Gunderson** also earned the **Making Medicine Mercury-Free Award**, as



did **St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center** (Green Bay). **Mercy Walworth Hospital and Medical Center** (Lake Geneva) earned **Partner Recognition**, and the **WI Department of Natural Resources** earned the **Champion for Change** award.

All healthcare facilities (not just hospitals) with medical waste reduction plans easily qualify for these awards. For information about the awards, visit www.h2e-online.org/awards.

~~~Mark your Calendars~~~

2/17/07 H2E Awards applications due

3/22/07 Workshop on Pharmaceutical Waste Management, Richland Center

5/14-15/07 H2E Awards Ceremony and Pharmaceutical Disposal Workshop, Minneapolis, Minnesota

To receive e-mail announcements about these and other events, see contact box on page 2.

Workshops Promote Healthcare Networking and Compliance

Seven workshops in late 2005 and 2006 enabled 251 participants to keep abreast of new state rules about mercury and hazardous waste, as well as existing rules for waste segregation and recycling.

The free workshops were informative and interactive. Participants included facilities, vendors, consultants, municipalities and DNR. The networking helped participants to address common problems, such as properly managing pharmaceutical waste.

Jan Path, Kim Wilson, Ron Van Schyndel, Candy Thompson, Jim Burton and Judy Mackessy shared how their facilities have eliminated mercury. Keith Bednar and others demonstrated how his facility segregates waste. Charlotte Smith, Barb Bickford and Michael Cavanaugh explained the complex issue of pharmaceutical waste. Deb Pingel, Jack Annis, Chris Lilek, Randy Case, Steve Brachman and Barb Bickford presented information about regulations and waste minimization.

Six hospitals and a technical college hosted these workshops. It's not hard to plan or host these events. To volunteer, contact Barb Bickford of DNR (see contact box, p. 2).

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Mercury → *Reduction* ← **News**

Hospital Collects 825 Thermometers

In May 2006, St. Mary's Hospital in Green Bay held a mercury thermometer exchange. Participants were given digital thermometers in exchange for their mercury thermometers.



“What a positive event it turned out to be for St. Mary’s,” remarked Corrine Vercauteren, Director of Environmental Services. “I would be happy to share ideas with any facility considering such an event.”

For more information, contact Corrine at (920) 498-4597 or cvercaut@stmgb.org or visit www.stmgb.org in a month or so.

Getting Hg Out of Wastewater

Chapter NR 106, Wis. Adm. Code, requires all wastewater treatment plants to meet the state’s water quality limit for mercury, 1.3 ng/l. If your local plant’s effluent doesn’t meet the limit, it must implement a "Mercury Pollutant Minimization Program" (PMP). And if you, a sewer user, have historically used products containing mercury, you must certify that you are implementing mercury "Best Management Practices" (BMPs).

Hospitals must implement the mercury BMPs recommended by the American Hospital Association and H2E (see next article). Dental offices must follow the American Dental

HOW TO CONTACT DNR STAFF:

Medical waste questions and e-mail announcements about medical waste:

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Mercury questions:

Randy Case, Mercury Reduction Coordinator
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Email: charles.case@wisconsin.gov

DNR Web site: <http://dnr.wi.gov>

Association mercury BMPs (see www3.uwm.edu/Dept/shwec/dental/dental.cfm) and install a wastewater dental amalgam separator.

Many hospitals and dental offices are already implementing these practices. Those that have not will need to do so within 2 years of the date their local Mercury PMP Plan was submitted to DNR. To find out your deadline, contact your local wastewater treatment plant.

Earn Awards By Meeting Mercury Wastewater Criteria

The mercury reduction criteria adopted by your local wastewater treatment plant are identical to the criteria for H2E’s Making Medicine Mercury Free Award.

To earn the H2E award, facilities must have achieved the following:

- established a facility policy statement on mercury;
- established a mercury management policy that includes protocols for safe handling, mercury spill clean up procedures, disposal procedures, education and training of employees about facility protocols, and a process to regularly review progress on mercury use reduction and elimination;
- implemented an Environmentally Preferable Purchasing (EPP) policy statement;
- replaced patient mercury thermometers;
- replaced all or majority (75%) of mercury blood pressure devices and have a replacement plan and phase out timeline in place for total elimination;
- replaced majority (75%) of clinical devices (bougies, miller-abbott tubes, dilators, etc.). Inventoried remaining devices and have a plan in place to substitute non-mercury devices;
- implemented program to recycle fluorescent lamps;
- implemented battery collection programs;
- inventoried and labeled all mercury-containing facility devices (switches, thermostats, etc.) and have a plan in place to substitute non-mercury devices;
- replaced B5/Zenkers stains with non-mercury substitute;
- inventoried mercury-containing lab chemicals with plan in place for substitution; and
- inventoried all lab thermometers - replaced at least 75% with total phase-out plan in place.

If you have to meet all the above criteria anyway, why not get the prestigious award too?

Managing and reducing pharmaceutical waste

Want to stop flushing drugs because it's bad for the environment, not to mention possibly illegal? Looking for a way to improve your medical waste reduction plan or your "environment of care"?

Even if you don't have an on-site pharmacy, access to an incinerator or access to a reverse distributor, you can do a lot more than you think.

Start by reading "**Managing Pharmaceutical Wastes, a 10 step Blueprint for Healthcare Facilities in the United States.**" It's current, it's practical and it's excellent. (See p. 4)

The following suggestions may help reduce the environmental impact of pharmaceuticals:

- move to unit dosing for all medications in your facility;
- return all medications eligible for credits and rebates to a reputable reverse distributor;
- return all dispensed unit dose drugs for cancer and chronic diseases to the WI Cancer Drug Repository dhfs.wisconsin.gov/bqaconsumer/cancerdrugreposy.htm ;
- label all medications for use at home so they can leave with the patient;
- limit the quantity prescribed until you are sure the patient will use a medication routinely;
- whenever possible, choose alternatives to medications that have mercury in them;
- have visiting nurses and hospice bring all home patient medications back to the hospital for proper disposal;
- do NOT flush pharmaceuticals unless DEA doesn't allow other options; and
- incinerate all unwanted pharmaceuticals. (NOTE: Hazardous waste drugs must go to a hazardous waste incinerator; all others can go to an infectious waste incinerator.)

To learn more about managing pharmaceutical waste, come to the events in "Mark Your Calendars!" on page 1, or visit the Healthcare Education Resource Center, www.hercenter.org or H2E at www.h2e-online.org. At the H2E site, click on "teleconferences" to listen to the pharmaceutical teleconferences in May 2006 and on Friday, January 12, 2007.



What about medication samples?

The best option is to not allow them in your facility, period. Educate your doctors about the fact that free samples are like free kittens; caring for them *is expensive*. You must either research each

and every one to see if it is a hazardous waste or not, or you need to assume they all are hazardous waste and pay high disposal fees.

Disallowing samples may not work for you. Other options are: 1) insist the drug representatives take them back; 2) insist that doctors take **ONLY** the samples they **KNOW** they will dispense; and 3) bill the doctors for disposal of the samples they accept, either up front or at time of disposal.



SHWEC Offers Technical Assistance

The UW Extension Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC) provides free technical assistance to businesses and institutions. SHWEC faculty may even be able to visit your facility to identify and manage hazardous wastes.

SHWEC faculty are advisors, not enforcers, and are not going to report any violations found.

David Liebl serves southern and southwestern WI, Steve Brachman serves southeastern WI, and Jack Annis serves northern WI. To obtain contact information, go to www3.uwm.edu/Dept/shwec/ and click on "faculty."

SHWEC's website offers publications on recycling and waste management, such as "**The Basics: A Guide to Wisconsin Environmental Regulation**" regarding hazardous waste, air and wastewater, and the "**Hospital Waste Reduction Checklist**" which augments ch. NR 526, Wis. Adm. Code, the state's medical waste rule.

In addition, SHWEC offers short courses on timely topics, such as the October 2006 course on medical waste treatment technologies.

WANTED: Used Linens and Textiles

Opportunity Development Centers (ODC), a central Wisconsin non-profit, accepts used linens and textiles to produce a quality, gently used product for re-use. Besides reducing waste and saving landfill space, ODC employs people with significant disabilities.

ODC's employees wash, repackage and sell underpads, blankets and towels through Goodwill and the pet industry, where they are selling like hotcakes for use in pet cages.

ODC recently received a DNR grant to increase the project, so it can now accept more donations of used linens and textiles. Donations are tax-deductible.

For more information, contact Carol Ulrich at 715/424-2730 or culrich@odcinc.com

NEW RESOURCES

To learn about the latest resources throughout the year, join DNR's medical waste e-mail list (see contact box, p. 2).

Compliance Assistance

Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) continues to improve. This frequently updated site offers an e-mail discussion forum, teleconferences and "ten step guides" about electronics, HIPPA and recycling, medical waste reduction and MUCH more. www.h2e-online.org

US EPA's **Healthcare Environmental Resource Center** presents basic plain English information about EPA's environmental regulations & links to state regulations. www.hercenter.org

The **Sustainable Hospitals Program** provides technical support for selecting products and work practices that reduce occupational and environmental hazards, maintain quality patient care and contain costs. www.sustainablehospitals.org/

DNR's **Waste & Materials Management Publications** are now searchable. dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/publications/

Recycling

Wisconsin's Recycling Quick Reference Guide tells who must recycle, what can be recycled and what materials are prohibited from disposal, along with other useful tips, facts and figures.

dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/recycle/reference.html



WasteCap Wisconsin's **Construction and Demolition Training Video** can educate workers on what can and cannot be recycled

and how to avoid contamination in recycling dumpsters. www.wastecapwi.org/video

Pharmaceutical Waste

Managing Pharmaceutical Wastes, a 10 Step Blueprint for Healthcare Facilities in the United States is available at www.h2e-online.org, click on hazardous materials, materials of concern and pharmaceuticals.

The American Society of Health-System Pharmacists updated its **Guidelines on Handling Hazardous Drugs** in June. www.ashp.org/ Search for "hazardous drugs", click to the Guidelines.

NIOSH Hazardous Drug Alert lists hazardous drugs www.cdc.gov/niosh/docs/2004-165/#sum

Florida has posted a **List of Pharmaceuticals That Are Potentially Hazardous Wastes When Discarded**. Go to www.dep.state.fl.us/ and in the upper right corner, search for "pharmaceutical"

Wisconsin DNR's **Guidance for Collecting Unwanted Household Pharmaceuticals** is available at dnr.wi.gov/org/aw/wm/publications/aneupub/WA1024.pdf

Design, Construction & Operation

The **Green Guide for Health Care** integrates enhanced environmental and health principles into the planning, design, construction and operations. Version 2 is due out this month. www.gghc.org

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