



The Medical Waste Reporter



Announcements for Wisconsin's Medical Waste Generators

Reporting year 2007

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Congratulations, Wisconsin 2007 H2E award winners!

Environmental Leadership Award

Gundersen Lutheran, La Crosse
St. Mary's Hospital Medical Center, Green Bay

Sustained Environmental Leadership Awards

Affinity Health System, Appleton
Mercy Hospital – Mercy Health System, Janesville

Partners For Change Award

Luther Hospital, Eau Claire
Mercy Walworth Hospital & Medical Center –
Mercy Health System, Lake Geneva
Wheaton Franciscan Healthcare – All Saints,
Racine

Champions For Change Award

PharmEcology Associates, LLC, Brookfield



All healthcare facilities (not just hospitals) with medical waste reduction plans easily

qualify for one or more of these awards. Those who have eliminated the use of mercury qualify for the H2E Making Medicine Mercury Free award.

For information about the awards, visit www.h2e-online.org/awards.

In this issue:

WI H2E award winners	1
WI sustainable healthcare group forms	1
Epinephrine salts are not P042 waste	1
Environmental initiatives for healthcare	2
ADA updates BMPs for mercury waste	2
Mercury amalgam recycling	2
Green building partnership	3
Healthcare food waste impacts environment	3
Pharmaceutical waste update	4
New resources	4
How to contact DNR staff	2

Wisconsin Group Forms to Foster Environmentally Sustainable Healthcare

Wisconsin healthcare facilities and others have joined forces to address environmental issues in healthcare.

This yet-to-be-named group will assist Wisconsin healthcare to operate sustainably by collaborating to improve the health of our communities and environment.

The founding meeting was held on December 7, 2007, at a Group Health Cooperative HMO clinic in Fitchburg (near Madison). Nearly 30 people attended the meeting in person and by phone, from medical facilities, waste companies, H2E, UW Extension's Solid and Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC) and DNR.

The group will meet quarterly. The next meeting will be in March at St. Joseph's hospital in Marshfield.

For its first year, the group will focus on networking, pharmaceutical waste reduction and gathering data about healthcare facility waste.

The 2008 meetings will be supported by an EPA grant (see article on p. 2) and SHWEC.

People on DNR's technical assistance email list will receive notice of this group's activities. To join the list, see the contact box on p.2. To learn more about the group, email wi-h2e@uwm.edu.

NEWS FLASH! Epinephrine Salts Are Not P042 Listed Waste

DNR has adopted EPA's interpretation that epinephrine salts are not included in the P042 hazardous waste listing. DNR has added four caveats. For more information, go to <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/Business.html> and scroll down to "Epinephrine."

Wisconsin's Environmental Initiatives for Healthcare

Wisconsin has undertaken four environmental initiatives for healthcare. The initiatives are: to start a statewide organization similar to the national Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) program (see p. 1); 2) to promote pharmaceutical waste reduction; 3) to develop a pilot student internship program for healthcare; and 4) to audit 10 facilities for pollution prevention opportunities.

"We want to help Wisconsin healthcare facilities reduce waste, eliminate the use of mercury and adopt greener practices," remarked Steve Brachman of UW Extension's Solid & Hazardous Waste Education Center (SHWEC), who applied for an EPA grant to fund these initiatives.

"Healthcare facilities that are environmentally proactive lower their costs, reduce staff turnover and experience better patient outcomes," Brachman added.

The grant funded workshops in managing and reducing pharmaceutical waste in 2007. The internship program will place four student interns in healthcare facilities during the summer of 2008. Waste assessments will be done by SHWEC staff.

"The EPA is very interested in the results of this grant," Brachman noted. "We will show people how to use the H2E Data Tool and survey facilities about how they have improved the environment."

For more information, contact Steve Brachman at 414-227-3160 or wi-h2e@uwm.edu.

HOW TO CONTACT DNR STAFF:

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

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<http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/>

Mercury questions:

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dnr.wi.gov/org/caer/cea/mercury/program.htm

Mercury → Reduction ← News

ADA Updates Recommendations for Managing Mercury Waste

The American Dental Association (ADA) has updated its best management practices for the disposal of dental amalgam waste to include the use of separators.

Amalgam separators are collection devices installed in dental office plumbing to capture and remove at least 95 percent of solid waste particles before they enter the sewer system. The use of separators will allow greater recycling and reduce the amount of amalgam, which contains mercury, entering wastewater treatment plants.

Dental amalgam is a silver-colored alloy made from mercury, silver, copper and tin that dentists have used for generations to fill decayed teeth. Once the most commonly used filling material, amalgam has been surpassed in popularity by tooth-colored composites.

Dental offices using ADA best management practices already capture about 80 percent of waste amalgam. Adding separators would increase the amount of captured amalgam to at least 95 percent.

Source: ADA News Release, 10/2/07

Wisconsin Mercury Elimination Programs Enable Hg Recycling

Wisconsin communities implementing the state's mercury pollutant minimization rules (ch. NR 106, Wis. Adm. Code) have seen a substantial increase in the use of amalgam separators.

"By using separators, dental clinics can collect nearly all of their mercury amalgam wastes and recycle them," remarked Randy Case, DNR's mercury reduction coordinator. "These wastes formerly went down the drain."

Case reports that many dental offices now use the separators in Green Bay, the Milwaukee area, Kenosha, Neenah-Menasha, Madison, Racine, Merrill, Eau Claire and Superior.

Mercury reduction efforts will spread to other communities as their wastewater permits are renewed over the next several years.

USGBC/GGHC Partner to Help Healthcare Build Green

In a move that underscores the importance of greening the healthcare industry, the U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) and the *Green Guide for Health Care* (GGHC) have entered into an agreement to foster best practices and ensure the health care industry has the tools and resources it needs to build green.



Green hospital buildings are healthier for patients, doctors and nurses, use less energy and water and enhance environmental quality.

"The healthcare industry is by far one of the more important sectors that can benefit from the practice of green building design and construction," said Rick Fedrizzi, President, CEO & Founding Chair, USGBC. "Patients in green hospitals have greater emotional well-being, require less pain medication and other drugs, and have shorter hospital stays."

Following four years of close collaboration, USGBC and GGHC signed a memorandum of understanding in September 2007 agreeing to work together on the development of tools, educational programs and other activities to support green health care building.

USGBC and GGHC will: a) jointly develop health care-related resource materials, education and training events; b) jointly identify a prioritized research agenda; and, c) continue to collaborate on developing future health care-related green building tools.

USGBC will administer the LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for healthcare certification process. GGHC will continue to empower the health delivery industry to take a leadership position in green building and operations. As such, the *Green Guide* will continue to develop the next generation of GGHC tools.

For more information, visit www.gghc.org or www.usgbc.org.

Reprinted with permission from the *Green Guide for Healthcare newsletter*, November 2007 issue

Healthcare Food Waste Impacts the Environment

Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) estimates that 10 percent of hospital waste is food waste. **How much food does your facility discard every day?**

In a recent article,* Cable News Network (CNN) noted that:

- 5 percent of American's leftovers could feed 4 million people for 1 day
- Disposing of food waste costs the U.S. \$1 billion a year
- Rotting food releases methane, a more potent greenhouse gas than CO₂
- Methane can be harnessed to create clean energy for heat, light and fuel

CNN adds, "Methane, the gas food waste produces, traps 23 times as much heat in the atmosphere as the same amount of CO₂, the EPA says. And landfills are the place you will find most of it -- landfills account for 34 percent of all methane emissions in the U.S."

"If Americans cut their food waste in half, it would reduce the country's environmental impact by 25 percent."

– Univ. of Arizona, quoted by CNN 10/2/07

Here are some ideas** for reducing the environmental and social impacts of food waste.

- Buy fresh local foods with a minimum of packaging;
- Offer meals-on-demand and *a la carte* options;
- Donate fresh unwanted food to local soup kitchens or food pantries;
- Compost food and other organic waste onsite (e.g., vermicomposting) or send it to off-site composting facilities;
- Donate extra food to farms for animal feed;
- Purchase recycled napkins and compostable dishware for "take-out" and, if possible, washable dishware and utensils for patients and cafeteria use;
- Recycle kitchen cans and bottles.

* "All About: Food Waste" by Rachel Oliver, CNN WORLD, Asian Edition, October 2, 2007

** From "[Healthy Food in Health Care A Menu of Options](http://www.noharm.org)" Healthcare Without Harm, www.noharm.org.

NEW RESOURCES

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

Safety Compliance

Healthcare facilities can easily find free resources on the OSHA Web site related to training, record keeping, reporting and posting requirements here: www.osha.gov/dcsp/compliance_assistance/quick_starts/health_care/index_hc.html

Laboratories

Best Practice Guides and Technical Bulletins contribute to **energy efficiency and sustainability in laboratories**. Check them out at: <http://www.i2sl.org/resources/toolkit/bpg.html>

Energy Conservation

Energy Star offers free online training for rating the energy performance of hospitals and medical office buildings. To register, go to: energystar.webex.com

Pharmaceutical Waste Update

DNR has posted information about managing and reducing pharmaceutical waste for households and non-households, at <http://dnr.wi.gov/topic/HealthWaste/>

DHFS has released guidance (DQA Memo 07-008) for **Medication Return, Donation, and Disposal for Assisted Living**, i.e., community based residential facilities, adult family homes, residential care apartment complexes and nursing homes. DNR's [pharmaceutical waste resources](#) page has links to these documents.

Minnesota's Technical Assistance Program (MnTAP) offers ideas for reducing pharmaceutical waste from patient care settings at mntap.umn.edu/health/pharm.htm

In 2007, Wisconsin's pharmaceutical waste workshops were based on H2E's *Managing Pharmaceutical Wastes, a 10 Step Blueprint for Healthcare Facilities in the United States*, available at www.h2e-online.org (click on hazardous materials, materials of concern, pharmaceuticals). The SHWEC pharmaceutical waste webinar will be posted on the SHWEC website in 2008.

LaCrosse County has opened a permanent site to collect unwanted medications from households and Very Small Quantity Generators (VSQGs). Visit the county's household hazardous waste website to learn more: www.co.la-crosse.wi.us/solidwaste/HHM/

Over 30 collections were held statewide for unwanted household pharmaceuticals in 2007. Here is a list of upcoming events: www4.uwm.edu/shwec/pharmaceuticalCollection/viewRecords.cfm. If you do hold a collection, please document your results for the benefit of others by sending a message to steve.brachman@ces.uwex.edu.

A toolkit for collecting unwanted household medications is available at: www.iisgcp.org/unwantedmeds/

To learn more about our state's pharmaceutical waste collection programs, see Mary Kohrell and Steve Brachman's summary presentation at: pantherfile.uwm.edu/brachman/public/Wisconsin%20pharmaceutical%20programs2.ppt

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