



Best Practices for Creating High Performance Healing Environments™

Green Guide for Health Care Newsletter

October 2007

Green Building in Health Care: Making the Business Case to Achieve Sustainability Goals

BusinessWeek's October 29, 2007 [cover story](#) signals a new era for the green movement. Auden Schendler, formerly of the Rocky Mountain Institute and currently the sustainability director at Aspen Skiing Co., challenges the business community to move beyond promises of incremental improvement to enact significant measurable change. "The idea that green is fun, it's easy, and it's profitable is dangerous," says Schendler. "This is hard work. It's messy. It's not always profitable. And companies have to get off the mark and start actually doing stuff."

Health Care's Role

Over the past three years, the health care industry has publicly embraced a leadership role in moving a health-based agenda for green building and operations. "Values-Driven Design and Construction: Enriching Community Benefits through Green Hospitals," a white paper sponsored by the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and released in 2006 by the Center for Health Design and Health Care Without Harm, quotes health care executives from early adopter organizations as having identified environmental stewardship as a defining facet of leadership, excellence, and quality in the health care industry.

Health care executives remarked on the increased recruitment and patient and staff satisfaction indicators associated with the promise of a green facility:

- Lacks Cancer Center at St. Mary's Health Care, Grand Rapids, MI: "We've asked our patients how they rate the environment of the building and have seen a dramatic shift in response toward 'acceptable' and 'appreciative.' So it is with the creation of different spaces and the increase of light, and the quietness, and with all these different kinds of materials that we have created this environment."
- Dell Children's Medical Center of Central Texas, Austin, TX: "Nurses who've been in small hospitals with no access to daylight will say, 'I'd really like to go work at Children's.' We have already started getting so many calls from physicians from out of town who have heard about this project, who want to come here, that it's creating a difficulty because we only need so many heart surgeons, for example."

However, an increasingly informed public has begun to pressure health care providers to provide continuous, measurable improvements in their environmental performance. As Kaiser Permanente's John Kouletsis is quoted in "Values-Driven Design and Construction": "Once the stakeholders . . . are educated about what's going on, the demand increases internally to drive improvement."

The health care industry recently responded to this demand with the launch of the Global Health and Safety Initiative (GHSI) on October 17, 2007, a sector-wide partnership convened by Kaiser Permanente of leading health care systems, group purchasing organizations and non-profit organizations committed to advance innovations at the intersection of patient, workplace, and environmental safety. Over the next year, GHSI partners will combine forces to start moving the health care sector as a whole towards a safer, healthier, environmentally responsible model through research, sector-wide data collection, and educational initiatives.

Several articles and white papers published over the past year have addressed the expanded scope of the business case for green facilities. Increasingly, executives are moving beyond the question of whether to incorporate green principles into facility design, construction, and operations to how best to leverage their positions as providers of health, major players in the U.S. economy, and organizations with significant purchasing power to accelerate market transformation.

- "Creating the Environmental Imperative in Healthcare: Ten Steps for Healthcare Executives," due to be released by Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) in November 2007 outlines a roadmap for senior level management committed to setting an agenda in support of environmental excellence and following through with concrete results. The "Ten Steps" cover topics such as incorporating environmental stewardship in the organization's community health mission, supporting the creation of infrastructure supportive of environmental programs, establishing a baseline for performance, tracking environmental performance metrics, and messaging progress out to the surrounding community. (Hospitals for a Healthy Environment, due out Nov. 2007, <http://www.h2e-online.org>)
- *Building Design + Construction* magazine's 2007 "Green Buildings Research White Paper" includes a survey of a scientifically drawn sample of users of the *Green Guide for Health Care* compared with a smaller sample from *Modern Healthcare* magazine's readership. The white paper reviews the level of activity in green building within the health care market, the motivations behind pursuing green design principles, and perceptions associated with the cost and benefits of green building. (*Building Design and Construction* magazine, due out Nov. 2007, <http://www.bdcnetwork.com>)
- McGraw-Hill Construction published the *Construction Health Care Green Building SmartMarket Report* in 2007, which reviews both measured and perceived economic indicators on the costs, benefits, and future trend of green building in health care. The *SmartMarket Report* can be purchased for \$149. (McGraw-Hill Construction, <http://construction.ecnext.com/>)
- "FacilityCare's 2006 Operations Survey: New Construction, Renovation And Going Green" published in the November 2006 edition of *FacilityCare* magazine reviews the results of a poll of 250 hospitals around the U.S. 82% of the polled facilities are already in the process of planning or researching a construction project, indicating robust activity in the sector. Of particular note, 81% of the 250 facilities polled are actively addressing sustainable design in some way. 12% rate it as a top priority for their organization. (*FacilityCare* magazine, Nov. 2006, <http://www.facilitycare.com>)
- "Values-Driven Design and Construction" (cited above) lays out a position voiced by a group of executives from 15 health care facilities that green building in health care is fundamentally tied to their organizations' mission to "first, do not harm." As a mission-driven industry, many health care systems have committed to reduce their environmental footprint in facility construction and operations as part of their community stewardship program. In other words, green building is aligned with mission and integral to defining high quality health care facility design, not viewed as a construction "add on." ("Designing the 21st Century Hospital," including six white papers, is available as a free download on the *Green Guide for Health Care's* website, <http://www.gghc.org>)
- "The Cost of Green Revisited", a 2006 update of the original 2004 survey by Davis Langdon, construction cost consultants, compared ambulatory care buildings and confirmed their initial thesis with a health care specific database – that is, that there are low-cost and high-cost green buildings, and that the sustainable building features in LEED® certified projects are not the major driver in the overall construction cost. Other factors, such as program specifics, local economy, and construction market factors are impacting costs more significantly. (Davis Langdon, <http://www.davislangdon.com>)

News

1. **Join us on Friday, November 2 from 1-2:30 ET for the next GGHC/H2E (Hospitals for a Healthy Environment) Green Building webinar: Introduction to the Pharos Project.** A subscription is required to access H2E webinars. Visit <http://h2e-online.org/subscribe/index.htm> for more information.
2. **Submit proposals for the 2008 roster of H2E and GGHC webinars by November 15!** We are currently accepting proposals for both **teleconference topics** and **individual presentations**, including the Green Building "How To" Series and the H2E Green Operations Series. Submit green building proposals to info@gghc.org and green operations proposals to janet.brown@h2e-online.org.
3. **Preview of LEED for Health Care workshop offered at GreenBuild (Chicago, IL) on Tuesday, November 6.** For more information, visit <http://www.greenbuildexpo.org>.
4. **CleanMed 2008 announces a call for presenters and posters!** Deadline February 11, 2008. CleanMed is the Global Conference on Environmentally Sustainable Health Care. May 20-22, 2008 at the Hilton Pittsburgh. For more information, visit <http://www.cleanmed.org>.
5. **Building Design + Construction magazine's 2007 "Green Buildings Research White Paper"** includes a survey of a scientifically drawn sample of users of the *Green Guide for Health Care* compared with a smaller sample from *Modern Healthcare* magazine's readership. Visit <http://www.bdcnetwork.com> in November 2007 to download a copy.
6. **Purchase a printed copy of GGHC Version 2.2 at the GGHC Online Store!** Visit <http://www.gghc.org> to access the *Green Guide's* online store or to download a free, PDF digital copy.
7. **Download the GGHC September 2007 Quarterly Report, GGHC Version 2.1 Pilot Report and Technical Briefs!** Visit <http://www.gghc.org> to access these valuable tools for project teams interested in targeting the most effective green strategies for the health care industry. The Tech Brief project was generously funded by the Merck Family Fund and NYSERDA.
8. **Register your project with the Green Guide for Health Care!** *Green Guide* website registrants can register projects at no charge by logging onto www.gghc.org and following the prompts on the **Project** web page. Project registration is fast and easy and grants up to 14 project team members access to GGHC online tools such as checklists and a peer-to-peer Forum open only to *Green Guide* registered project teams.
9. **Share your vision for the critical issues affecting health care environments in the future!** Click [here](#) to participate in a national survey hosted by The Center for Health Design's Coalition for Health Environments Research (CHER).
10. **Support the Green Guide for Health Care!** Visit the **Supporters** section of the *Green Guide* website for information on how to support our work. All donations to the *Green Guide* are tax deductible to the fullest extent of the law.