

Norfolk General Hospital / Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home (Simcoe, Ontario)

Norfolk General Hospital and Norfolk Hospital Nursing Home (NGH/NHNNH) consists of a 121- bed community hospital and an 80- bed nursing home. The facility had its waste minimization efforts recognized by the Recycling Council of Ontario with a Honourable Mention Award in 1998 and 1999. In 1995, NGH/NHNNH received the Outstanding Achievement in Energy Management Award given by the Task Force on Energy Management in Health Care Facilities in Canada. Other initiatives include a new waterless Medical Air and Medical Vacuum system that reduces energy demand and eliminates the use of water.

Waste Minimization Program Development

A Waste Management Committee (later renamed the Environmental Committee) was first created in 1991. Later that year, NGH/NHNNH began participating in the regional recycling program covering the following items: cans, glass, fine paper, newspaper, styrofoam and plastics. In 1992, confidential waste, and corrugated cardboard recycling began, resulting in a reduction of incinerator use by 48 hours per week. In October 1993, the incinerators were shut down. Additions to the program have included food composting, kitchen oil, laser printer toner cartridges, and articles such as, soup cauldrons, IV poles, and linens for Third World.

The food-composting program was implemented in October 1994. The food waste from the Nutrition and Foodservices Departments' kitchen, as well as food waste returned on patient trays, is fed into a garburator along with paper napkins, paper towels, milk cartons, and cardboard. The waste is shredded and emptied into 64-gallon tubs. The waste is then taken to a plant and recycled into high-protein feed supplement for animals.

Lesson Learned

Simcoe (100 kilometres south of London), home to NGH/NHNNH, is not a major urban city centre, presenting a major challenge for the waste minimization program to access companies involved in recycling. NGH/NHNNH is often faced with no available service or elevated costs as a result of distance. In response, NGH/NHNNH's strategy has been to network with its peers and stay abreast of different programs available to source out new programs and/or companies.

Benefits

Environmental: NGH/NHNNH, proud of its waste minimization efforts, is an advocate for the pollution prevention approach. With the two incinerators shut down in 1993, all associated emissions were eliminated. According to a 1990 Facility Emissions report, Environment Canada verified the following emissions from the two former NGH/NHNNH incinerators: 74 kg of sulphur dioxide, 171 kg of nitrogen oxides, 1,733 kg of carbon monoxide, 84 kg of volatile organic compounds and 95 kg of particulate. Furthermore, the food-composting program avoids the problems associated with land filling such as odours, pests and vermin while controlling the spread of diseases and weeds from waste. NGH/NHNNH remains committed to improving upon the existing 40% waste diversion rate by focusing on all aspects of its waste management program.

Economic: With the expansion of the waste management program, the average cost per tonne of managed waste has been declining since 1996. Reduced overall fuel consumption was realized with the shutdown of the incinerators and the money saved has been used in aiding the hospital's waste

management program. Based on an average fuel cost of \$0.30/M³ the annual fuel savings attributed to not running the incinerators total approximately \$32,000. As has been proven in many instances, solving problems after they have arisen is always more expensive than preventing them. Waste minimization is worth the effort!

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