

Saint Francis Care earns second Energy Star label

Premier member Saint Francis Care, Hartford, CT., recently earned its second Energy Star designation, putting it in an elite group of U.S. hospitals that have successfully implemented green building programs.

The 617-bed medical center is among the fewer than 1 percent of U.S. hospitals that have earned the prestigious Energy Star label; Saint Francis earlier earned an Energy Star in 2003. Only 54 of the nation's nearly 6,000 hospitals have earned the EPA designation – and nearly half of those (24) are VA medical centers and other government facilities.



Energy Star is a government-backed program that helps businesses and consumers protect the environment through superior energy efficiency. The EPA launched an Energy Star energy-performance rating tool for hospitals in 2001, giving hospitals the opportunity to benchmark their energy performance against that of other hospitals on a nationwide scale of 1 to 100. Hospitals that qualify in the top 25 percent of the market are eligible to display the Energy Star.

According to *Healthcare Financial Management* magazine, EPA estimates that hospitals use more than twice as much energy per square foot as office buildings, and as a group, consume almost 50 billion kilowatt hours of electricity and spend almost \$3 billion each year on electricity alone. If hospitals improved their energy efficiency by an average of 30 percent, the annual electricity bill savings would be almost \$1 billion, and 11 million fewer tons of carbon dioxide would be emitted – equivalent to taking 2 million cars off the road.

“The Energy Star label is further proof of Saint Francis Hospital and Medical Center’s commitment to high-quality management practices and is consistent with our designation as a Top 100 Hospital in the country by Solucient,” said Robert Falaguerra, vice president, Facilities Support Services and Construction.

Buildings that earn the Energy Star use about 35 percent less energy than average buildings. Since receiving its first Energy Star label in 2003, Saint Francis became the first hospital in Connecticut to install its own 200 kilowatt fuel cell, saving the facility approximately \$35,000 per year. Funded through a \$1.5 million grant from the Connecticut Clean Energy Fund, the fuel cell supplies critical electricity to select areas of the operating room and heat recovery to the facility’s boiler system.

Falaguerra said Saint Francis’ commitment to energy efficiency is institution wide. All energy management issues are addressed and reviewed by the hospital's president, executive vice president, and buildings and grounds committee. The hospital’s Energy Team consists of an energy manager, the directors of engineering from both hospital campuses, the director for clinical engineering, and the mechanical and electrical foremen. The team follows a comprehensive master plan for energy management, which was developed in 1995 and is

updated every two years. Falaguerra said all new construction and renovations performed since the development of the Master Plan have incorporated energy-efficient system designs.

Recent energy-related renovations at Saint Francis include:

- Installed energy efficient systems in the patient care tower, the Saint Francis/Mount Sinai Regional Cancer Center, Rehabilitation Hospital of Connecticut, and the Burgdorf/Fleet Health Center, the cost for which was partially offset by energy grants from Connecticut Light and Power.
- Retrofitted or replaced more than 12,000 fixtures in both campuses with new, efficient electronic ballasts and T8 and T10 bulbs.
- Outfitted all fans in major buildings with variable frequency drives (VFDs), which control the rotational speed of an alternating current electric motor by controlling the frequency of the electrical power supplied to the motor. Saint Francis also uses VFDs for its major cold water, hot water, and chilled water pumping systems.
- Replaced six old, inefficient chillers with new, highly efficient centrifugal or absorption units. Resulting in projected savings of approximately \$150,000 per year.
- Replaced all old steam traps and motors with new impulse traps and high efficiency motors.

About Energy Star

EPA started the Energy Star program in 1992. To date, the EPA has awarded the Energy Star to more than 3,200 buildings for their energy efficiency. These buildings represent more than 575 million square feet, save an estimated \$600 million annually in lower energy bills, and prevent almost 11 billion pounds of greenhouse gas emissions, equal to emissions from almost 900,000 vehicles. The top performing buildings for 2006 include about 320 supermarkets, 320 office buildings, and 200 K–12 schools. Almost 90 banks, courthouses, financial centers, hospitals, hotels, and — for the first time — dormitories also earned the Energy Star, the most recognized national symbol for energy efficiency.

With interest in energy efficiency growing, Energy Star offers easy-to-use tools and guidelines that can help building owners and managers in the United States realize significant energy and dollar savings. Last year alone, American consumers and businesses, with the help of Energy Star, saved \$12 billion and prevented greenhouse gas emissions equal to those from 23 million vehicles. For the complete list of buildings, by state, go to <http://www.energystar.gov>.

Note: Portions of this article were adapted from the U.S. EPA Energy Star Web site.

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