

## Premier scorecard provides important “green” snapshot for Saint Francis



### *In most hospitals, the success of implementing environmental initiatives depends heavily on their ability to monitor and track progress every step of the way*

Hartford, Conn.-based Saint Francis Care, the largest Catholic hospital in New England, has a long track record of successful projects aimed at improving environmental health—from programs for environmentally preferable purchasing, comprehensive waste reduction and recycling and hazardous chemical reduction, to air, water and energy conservation efforts, for which the facility earned a prestigious Energy Star designation from the EPA in 2006.

Through it all, the 617-bed medical center has done an equally impressive job documenting its progress. One tool that helped significantly, the “Executive Scorecard on the Environment,” came at a fortuitous time in 2005.

“We had just formed a green committee and were looking for a good benchmark tool to use when we learned about the scorecard,” said Robert Falaguerra, system vice president, Facilities Support Services and Construction. “The timing was perfect. We were looking at all the issues. Even though we already had a number of environmental programs such as recycling and waste reduction in place, we wanted to keep the momentum going and continue with our progress.”

Offered by the Safety Institute of Premier, the Executive Scorecard is a short assessment tool for CEOs to rate their organizations’ pollution prevention, material purchasing and waste management/reduction programs. The assessment and scorecard results can help hospitals prioritize their

goals and action plans while providing valuable information to their governing board, sponsors and communities.

Premier developed the tool in collaboration with Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) and Health Care Without Harm to help healthcare organization leaders perform a high-level assessment on environmental initiatives, including green buying practices, waste reduction and pollution prevention initiatives.

After downloading the tool from the Safety Institute Web site, a team of senior managers from various hospital departments were introduced to the scorecard and asked to provide input. “The staff was extremely receptive to the process,” said Chris Hartley, senior vice president of Planning and Facilities Development.

“Of course, it really helped that we already had champions in place at the time,” Hartley added, noting the exhaustive work Falaguerra and his staff had done in the areas of waste management, as well as the successful mercury reduction and elimination efforts led by Mary Inguanti, who was system director of pharmacy at the time and now serves as the facility’s vice president of operations and quality projects.

“We’re never satisfied with where we are and our constant focus is on improving our efficiencies,” Hartley added. “The scorecard came at a good time because we had

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just launched a major hospital renovation project and it raised a lot of important issues for us such as how best to manage new waste streams. It really motivated and challenged us to improve even more than we already had.”

#### **HOW THE TOOL WORKS**

The scorecard measures 50 different policies or opportunities in:

- ▶ Environmentally preferred purchasing;
- ▶ Recycling and reuse;
- ▶ Solid waste reduction;
- ▶ Regulated medical waste reduction;
- ▶ Mercury elimination;
- ▶ Hazardous waste reduction;
- ▶ Computers and electronics;
- ▶ Facilities and environment; and
- ▶ Publicizing success.

Next to each action item, the facility checks one of four columns indicating their level of progress, from “not yet implemented” to “fully implemented.” A final score in each of the four areas is weighted depending on the type of progress made. For example, “not yet implemented” is weighted by a multiple of one and “fully implemented” policies or actions are weighted by a multiple of four.

#### **SCORECARD RESULTS**

A year after beginning the process, the hospital was pleasantly surprised, improving its score two complete rating levels. In fact, Saint Francis scored 185 total points out of 200 at the end of 2006, giving it the highest rating of excellent. Among the scorecard items Saint Francis had fully implemented were:

- ▶ Use of environmental criteria in all purchasing decisions, including the purchase of mercury-free items and environmentally friendly products for cleaning and housekeeping activities;
- ▶ General and chemical recycling programs;
- ▶ Establishment of an environmental committee or “green team” to design, implement and manage the waste reduction program;
- ▶ Programs for solid, hazardous and regulated medical waste reduction;
- ▶ Established protocols for safe handling, clean-up and disposal of mercury, as well as replacement of mercury thermometers and other mercury-containing devices;
- ▶ Recycling programs for fluorescent bulbs, batteries and other hazardous materials;
- ▶ Programs for recycling outdated computers/electronics;
- ▶ Water and energy conservation programs;
- ▶ Air pollution reduction programs; and
- ▶ An integrated pest management program.

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“The tool gave us the ability to set goals, find our score and mark areas to improve even and so on, and showed us how to assign tasks to individuals,” Inguanti said. “The scorecard gave us the structure we needed to work through the process, and Chris and Robert really challenged all of us to continue improving upon those scores.”

Hartley noted that the valuable documentation provided by tools such as the Executive Scorecard has helped the hospital in other ways as well. “We are constantly searching for ways to improve our efficiency,” he said. “All providers feel the constant pressures from many directions to prove that they’re being as efficient as possible with resources. This is particularly vital when it comes to seeking additional reimbursement from Medicare, and being able to show them how frugal you are with the dollars that you do have.”

Hartley added that the scorecard also helped the hospital complete its recent application for the H2E Environmental Awards program because it helped provide a strong snapshot of all of the facility’s environmental initiatives.

For more information about the Executive Scorecard on the Environment, as well as other tools and resources, visit the Safety Institute Web site at: [www.premierinc.com/quality-safety/tools-services/safety/topics/epp/](http://www.premierinc.com/quality-safety/tools-services/safety/topics/epp/).



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