

Helping the Environment While Saving Money for Our Hospitals

By Rich Feczko

These days, nearly every US hospital has programs in place to support sustainability – whether it's in the products they sell, those they use or the buildings where they work. At Crothall Healthcare, our sustainability commitment is paying off after several years of investment. We're not just helping protect the environment, but we're also saving money for our clients.

In 2011, we pledged our commitment to sustainability by earning the CIMS-GB (Green Building) certification from ISSA, the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association. At that time, approximately 22 percent of Crothall's expenses were considered "green" – the amount we spend on products, equipment and other goods. Today, after a concerted effort to implement our sustainability program, I'm proud to report significant progress on a number of fronts.

For starters, Crothall now spends approximately 45 percent of our budget on products, equipment and other goods – a massive increase in only five years. Next, we have demonstrated that we can optimize our sustainability solutions to generate significant savings for hospitals – while helping them achieve their sustainability goals. Our sustainability journey has been powered by a four-tiered approach to environmental responsibility:

Utilization of Sustainable Products. To clean and sanitize hospitals nationwide, we purchase sustainable chemicals. For example, after a period of evaluation and testing, we worked with Tersano, a company based in Ontario, Canada, to use its sustainable cleaning products. According to the company, its product saves millions of gallons of chemicals each year from going into drains or landfills. Our decision to use this product enabled us to streamline and replace four to five different surface-cleaning solutions, thereby cutting our expenses while helping the environment.

By collaborating with product manufacturers such as Tersano, we've adopted a "best in class" approach for sustainable solutions that include micro fiber products, Green Seal multi-functional product and equipment, as well as equipment and solutions approved by the Carpet and Rug Institute.

Optimizing Methodology: Using sustainable products is only part of the process needed to operate efficiently within sustainable standards. In 2010, Crothall began to take methods that would optimize efficiencies and employ them throughout our hospitals.

A good example is the use of sustainable products in the everyday care of hospital floors can extend the floor's appearance while reducing labor costs.

At the University of Massachusetts Memorial Medical Center, Crothall's use of the floor care product Ultra Shield has improved the floor's glossy look throughout the hospital while significantly reducing labor costs and product purchases.

Infrastructure:

Our approach to managing sustainability has been recognized multiple times by ISSA, the Worldwide Cleaning Industry Association, for our comprehensive assessment of green cleaning operations. We've achieved this recognition by developing standards for Environmental Policy & Recycling Guidelines, Consumable Performance Standards, Sustainable Equipment Performance and Measurement.

Measurement:

Crothall works closely with several hospitals to achieve significant performance outcomes, such as reducing the waste stream and recycling initiatives.

Here are two good examples:

- At Florida Hospital Waterman in Tavares, Fla., we've helped develop and implement programs to reduce hazardous materials in the waste stream while also improving recycling methods. As a result, a whopping 31 tons of trash has been recycled annually.
- At Mercy Health in Youngstown, Ohio, approximately 87 percent of chemicals purchased for cleaning were sustainable, far surpassing the hospital's goal of 65 percent. We also worked with the hospital to purchase vacuum cleaners and carpet extraction equipment that are approved by the Carpet and Rug Institute "Green label" & "Seal of Approval"; purchase floor equipment that has vacuums and other devices to capture fine particulates and purchase automated scrubbing machines that optimize cleaning fluids and only use tap water.

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