



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

May 19, 2009

**Contact:** Eileen Secret, APR

866-998-0007

[esecrest@practicegreenhealth.org](mailto:esecrest@practicegreenhealth.org)

## **Nation's Hospitals Make Great Strides to Go Green**

### ***Practice Greenhealth Reports Results of Member Survey on Sustainable Practices***

Many of the nation's health facilities are undertaking extensive efforts to reduce their environmental footprints. According to a member survey released today by Practice Greenhealth, more than 90 percent of member hospitals have implemented measures to improve energy efficiency; almost 80 percent are making efforts to reduce the use of hazardous chemicals and materials, and more than 60 percent have implemented waste reduction plans.

Practice Greenhealth is the nation's leading membership and networking organization for institutions in the healthcare community that have made a commitment to sustainable, eco-friendly practices. Member hospitals are at varying stages of greening their operations to reduce health facility-generated pollutants and reduce the health care sector's impact on climate change.

"Our members are dedicated to improving the health of their patients, their staff, and their community, while protecting the environment," stated Bob Jarboe, executive director of Practice Greenhealth. "They are making tremendous progress, and are very dedicated to achieving their goals, and it is appropriate on Earth Day for us to recognize this tremendous undertaking by the health care sector."

According to the Practice Greenhealth survey, more than 50 percent of survey respondents had established programs to reduce the amount of regulated medical waste. More than 50 percent used the *Green Guide for Health Care* or LEED certification for green building, renovations and operations. Almost 50 percent were using an environmentally preferred purchasing program, which helps identify products meeting environmental requirements.

Only 39 percent of facilities reported that they had implemented a program to reduce their pharmaceutical waste, a growing disposal problem for hospitals and communities. Only 31 percent stated that they had begun a water conservation program.

While most facilities were trying to be more energy efficient, most were not able to report that they purchased clean energy. Only three facilities stated that they purchased clean energy and only 12 percent stated that they generated any energy on-site.

"While we celebrate the transformation of hospitals, we recognize that there is more the health care sector can do," stated Jarboe. "We especially need to improve our record in the purchase and generation of clean energy, and that is an area we are seeking to make great strides in improving."

Practice Greenhealth provides a number of tools for health facilities, including the Healthcare Clean Energy Exchange, which is a web-based reverse-auction platform co-sponsored by group purchasing organization Premier, Inc, that allows hospitals in deregulated states to purchase clean energy on the open market. The organization also offers an Energy Impact Calculator, which helps facilities calculate the health costs of the pollution associated with the generation of the energy they purchase. Most recently, Practice Greenhealth launched Greenhealth Tracker, a waste data tracking tool designed for healthcare use, to help facilities implement comprehensive waste management programs. The organization also offers sustainability management training classes through a partnership with Johnson & Johnson; webinars on sustainable health care topics; a variety of publications and resources, including an extensive website on sustainable healthcare operations; and consulting services. Practice Greenhealth recently formed a partnership with the Teleosis Institute to develop similar programs for private practices and clinics.

More than 700 of the nation’s hospitals are Practice Greenhealth members, including Cleveland Clinic, Catholic Healthcare West, Kaiser Permanente, Ascension Health System, Cedars-Sinai Medical Center, Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center, MedStar Health System, Catholic Health Initiatives, the entire Veterans Health Administration system, and the U.S. Army Hospital System (MEDCOM). Practice Greenhealth members also include group purchasing organizations, businesses; associations and other organizations with an interest in sustainable healthcare.

The Practice Greenhealth survey was conducted in the Fall of 2008. Almost 13 percent of all member facilities responded to the survey. This is the first time the organization has conducted a survey of this nature, an activity it plans to repeat each year to measure progress.

Practice Greenhealth bestows Environmental Excellence Awards each year to members with outstanding programs in eight areas. This year’s awards will be presented at CleanMed, the nation’s premier conference for environmentally sustainable healthcare, on May 19 in Chicago, IL.

For more information on Practice Greenhealth, visit [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org).

###

**Actual Survey Results**

Percentage	Activity
93.2	Implement measures to improve energy efficiency
79.7	Implement measures to reduce hazardous chemicals and materials
64.4	Implemented waste reduction program
57.6	Implemented medical waste reduction plan
55.8	Use Green Guide for Healthcare or LEED for renovations, building and operations
47.5	Implemented an Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Program
39.0	Implemented a medical waste reduction program
30.9	Implemented a water reduction program
12.3	Generate energy onsite