



# Business Spotlight

## Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital

As you might imagine, a lot goes on behind the scenes to keep a large medical facility operating. What you may not realize is the comprehensive environmental stewardship efforts underway at Providence Sacred Heart Medical Center and Children's Hospital. These efforts were recently recognized when Providence was presented with the 2014 Clean Air Award by Spokane Clean Air.

The 1.7 million square foot hospital complex towers on the hill just south of downtown. What you can't see from the outside is the hospital's commitment to environmental stewardship. One of their guiding principles is that, "there is a relationship between the health of those seeking care from Providence and the well-being of the planet."

Putting this guiding principal into action are the medical center employees themselves, who serve on the internal Environmental Stewardship Council. The council establishes specific goals in the areas of waste reduction, energy use, water consumption, greenhouse gas emissions, sustainable facility design, and ecologically sound food systems. The council developed tools to measure their progress toward meeting specific goals. What Providence is doing not only has a positive effect on our environment, but it is also saving them hundreds of thousands of dollars.

To implement their goals, Providence established a "Green Team" of employees. The team has documented results including a robust waste reduction program that has saved hundreds of thousands of dollars. In 2012 they recycled 474 tons of paper & cardboard, 15 tons of batteries and fluorescent

lamps, 9 tons of cooking oil, 6 tons of electronics, 6 tons of medical supplies, and 34 tons of sharps containers. In addition, they recycled and reused 365 gallons of xylene, a harmful solvent used in laboratories, and they reprocess surgical equipment which has reduced another 6 tons of waste. Providence donated 26.5 tons of old fixtures after a recent remodel.

In the energy conservation arena, the medical center is also having great success. A lighting upgrade project alone is saving over \$150,000 per year. In their new emergency room addition/remodel they installed a high-efficiency, low maintenance fan wall supply air system. They also installed a glycol heat recovery system which extracts wasted energy from the exhaust air and uses it to pre-heat intake air.

The medical center's water conservation efforts are numerous, including specialized faucets and toilets that use less water. In a facility of this size, every flush and switch of a light makes a difference!

Now let's turn our attention to food. The medical center always gets high marks for their delicious cafeteria options. Now they also earn high marks for creating a "green" food services program facility-wide, using biodegradable products made from recycled materials. Providence also composts about 19 tons of food waste each year.

As one of the area's largest employers (over 4,000 employees) Providence has an award-winning Commute Trip Reduction program that hundreds of



their employees participate in by using alternate commute modes. Providence offers subsidies toward bus passes and ridesharing, preferential parking for carpoolers, guaranteed ride home for emergencies, showers and lockers, etc. Teleworking is also an option for some positions. Over the past five years, they eliminated 2.46 million miles and 100,000 vehicle trips. This has prevented over 20 tons of carbon monoxide pollution and 590 tons of carbon dioxide emissions from being emitted to our air. Spokane Clean Air permits and inspects equipment at the hospital complex, including boilers, generators, and ethylene oxide sterilizers. They have a good record of meeting air quality compliance requirements to minimize their air emissions. They take care to maintain and operate their equipment properly and keep good records.

Providence's dedication to improving air quality, along with their comprehensive environmental stewardship program, is to be commended. Congratulations to the management and to all of the employees of Providence!