



THE HEALTH CARE IMPROVEMENT FOUNDATION

Building Partnerships For Better Health Care

THE CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL OF PHILADELPHIA

Best Practices

Infectious Waste Reduction

The Children's Hospital of Philadelphia (CHOP) performed audits, selected one unit at a time, and then coordinated training sessions with staff. The training touches on infectious waste disposal guidelines and some specific examples of common findings. The possibility of centralized waste is discussed, or at least the reduction in the number red cans used. Follow-up is important to answer questions and check up on the staff for the next few days after removing cans. In the event of success, an outlet for a large stock of surrendered red can donations is needed. Successful recipients have been other hospitals and relief programs. CHOP's numbers have decreased drastically from 12.08 pounds per patient day (ppd) in 2007 to 5.4 ppd year-to-date in 2009. CHOP found that another important component of the program is to adjust the number of pickups per week when the box count starts to decrease. This results in less waste, pickups, and fuel, and less materials being used.

Desk-Side Can Reduction Program

Related to centralizing infectious waste cans is desk-side can reduction. More often executed in office spaces, this has been a great savings of labor and materials. The common practice at CHOP was to have a trash can at every workstation. Each trash can that was removed equated to one liner saved, one minute less of labor per day, and the likelihood of increased compliance when paired with the "waste station". A waste station is located within proximity to a group of work stations and includes a paper recycling container, a commingled container (glass, plastics, aluminum cans), and a general waste can. As with infectious waste training, follow-up is crucial in the days following implementation in order to field questions and observe what is or is not working. Similar to red cans, a plan needed to be in place to utilize or donate small desk-side cans elsewhere. When CHOP employees noticed the impact they had with this program, they desired expanded participation. Recycling of batteries, printer cartridges, and cell phones were good places to start.

Coordinator of Sustainability and Waste Management Programs

An integral part of CHOP's rapidly successful recycling/waste program has been the assignment of a specific position for the program. Collection of all the waste data on a monthly basis for comparison and evaluation is a key responsibility. Constant training, monitoring, and encouragement are extremely important factors of success. Building relationships with individual units promotes effective participation and offers opportunities to test various recycling programs. Teamwork with Public Relations/Marketing has largely helped to reward, remind, and receive suggestions from staff.