What is Sustainability in Healthcare?

A systematic approach to creating an environmentally sustainable facility

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Why is sustainability important to you and your business?

Benefits of Environmental Actions

Cost savings

Operational efficiency

Risk management

Employee loyalty

Corporate commitments

Getting Upper Management Buy-in

- It is essential to obtain approval from upper level management in order to develop a successful sustainability program
- To make a strong case for going green, you must first have a draft plan in mind to prove you have done your sustainability homework
- It is important to document success stories in order to gain approval
- Highlight the competitive landscape. Do we want to be the first to develop a sustainability program? Do we need to play catch-up with competitors?
- Management must be assured that developing a sustainability program will be good for the facility and accomplish the goals of the Triple Bottom Line framework: People, Planet and Profits
- People Social Responsibility (to assure that all individuals are treated fairly.)
- Planet Protecting the Earth's natural resources/conservation
- Profit Making sure that economic successes are not limited by the pursuit of the other two values

Who are the Stakeholders?

- Business Owners and Corporations
- Board of Directors
- Employees and their Families
- Patients and Other Customers
- Vendors
- Community
- Adjacent Businesses
- Wildlife

Creating an Environmental Policy

- Following the Environmental Management System Protocol, Environmental Policies should include the following:
- A commitment to protecting the environment. This may be a simple statement stating that your facility will do all it can to keep the environment healthy OR it may specifically mention practices that protect the environment.
- A commitment to observing all laws and regulations governing the protection of the environment
- A commitment to continually improve your environmental stewardship program
- The completed policy should be signed and dated by top level management and should be displayed where employees and customers can easily see it

Sample Environmental Policy

- The University Medical Center seeks to be a better steward of the earth by creating a healthy environment for its patients, employees and community. We promise to do this by implementing an energy reduction program, water conservation program, by helping to protect air quality and by reducing the amount of solid waste generated. Our facility is also committed to setting a good corporate example of environmental stewardship.
- The University Medical Center is committed to observing all Federal, state and local laws and ordinances aimed at protecting the environment.
- The University Medical Center will continually seek to reduce its environmental footprint by looking for new and better ways to reduce its reliance on natural resources.

Examples and Outcomes

- How do you define sustainability at your healthcare facility? Economic? Environmental? Both?
- What actions have you undertaken at your healthcare facility to reduce your carbon footprint?
- What impact have your efforts to become more sustainable had on your healthcare facility? Public perception? Employee morale? Greater profit margin?

Current Recycling Landscape

- Current US recycling market condition & limitations
- What can be recycled and what can not
- What is "Wish recycling"
- How does contamination impact Environmental Sustainability
- Recycling must be Environmentally and Economically Sustainable

Plan of Action

- Obtain upper level management approval
- Assemble an environmental advisory team
- Write an environmental policy and post it for employees and customers to see
- Research markets and haulers for materials
- Perform walkthrough assessment to determine which materials are most feasible to collect and recycle
- Contract with markets
- Publicize your waste reduction program and educate employees and customers
- Tweak and baby-step your way to success
- Gather metrics and adjust program as needed (plan-do-check-act)

Green Teams Goals and Objectives

- To develop strategies that will assure that business operations have the lowest possible impact on the environment by reducing consumption of natural resources, to address social responsibility issues and to assure economic success
- To create specific objectives with measurable results around sustainability
- To identify key personnel who can take the lead with certain aspects of managing the environmental impacts of doing business
- To assign roles and responsibilities at all levels within the organization that will assure the success of the sustainability objectives
- To empower employees to help protect the environment
- To set good corporate examples of sustainability

Open Q & A

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