



GREEN HEALTH CARE CASE STUDY: LifeLong Over 60 Health Center

About LifeLong

For more than 30 years, LifeLong Medical Care has served as a primary safety-net provider for underserved populations in Berkeley and Oakland, California. The Over 60 Health Center began in 1976 as an outgrowth of the Gray Panthers, a senior citizens' advocacy organization. LifeLong's mission is to provide high-quality health and social services to underserved people of all ages; create models of care for the elderly and people with disabilities; and advocate for continuous improvements in the health of our communities. www.lifelongmedical.org

Why Go Green?

LifeLong is dedicated to promoting healthy communities and providing high-quality health care. Through a Green Buildings Grant, awarded by Community Clinics Initiative, LifeLong partnered with Teleosis Institute to offer the innovative Green Health Care Program. In an effort to reduce the clinic's environmental footprint, Teleosis worked with LifeLong to establish a green team with representatives from clinic management, administrative offices, and facility operations. Green team goals: increase workplace recycling, reduce waste and conserve natural resources, foster ongoing greening efforts throughout the organization, and create leaders who serve as strong environmental advocates within the larger health care community.

Energy Conservation Program

COMPUTERS:

Committed to reducing their energy consumption and impact on global climate change, LifeLong joined the ENERGY STAR Low Carbon IT Campaign (www.energystar.gov/powermanagement). By implementing a power management program to automatically switch all computers to a low-power state when inactive (200 computers and monitors) and pledging to upgrade 20 computers and 36 monitors to ENERGY STAR qualified equipment, LifeLong's estimated annual savings is \$17,853.85 (125,292.21 kWh of energy saved). Certification and commendation were awarded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency.

LIGHTING:

LifeLong uses energy efficient lighting throughout the clinic including CFL bulbs and 2nd Generation T8 fluorescent tubes with electronic ballasts. They also instituted a formal policy to turn off lights when not in use and placed signs in restrooms and various locations throughout the clinic reminding staff to conserve.

HEATING/COOLING:

All thermostats are programmed for 78 degrees F for cooling in the summer and 68 degrees F for heating in the winter. Thermostats are also covered with a locked box to prevent employee tampering with temperature settings. Electronic time clocks on heat pumps were cut back by two hours per twenty-four hour cycle and the system is turned off on weekends. For natural ventilation and cooling, employees are encouraged to open doors and windows when feasible.

Activating Sleep Settings Cuts Computer Energy Use by 75%. Low-power mode uses only 2 to 3 watts compared to 60 to 70 watts. For organizations that leave computers on 24/7, cost savings can be as much as \$50/computer annually, depending on electricity rates.



Recycling Program & Waste Reduction

LifeLong's Green Team worked with the City of Berkeley to set up separate recycling bins for: mixed paper, cardboard, glass/plastic/aluminum. These bins are located in high-traffic areas throughout the clinic and at each workstation. Several additional measures were taken to reduce their total waste including: switching to electronic filing for payroll, billing, and purchasing; making double-sided printing and copying standard practice; recycling ink cartridges for copiers and printers; and encouraging employees to use non-disposable coffee mugs and kitchenware. The results: Over 60 Clinic achieved a waste diversion rate of 32% and have reduced their total solid waste by an average of 23% (January 2008 to September 2008).

Environmentally Preferable Purchasing

LifeLong prints all of their letterhead, envelopes, business cards, brochures and promotional materials on recycled paper with vegetable or other low-VOC inks. In addition, all of their paper products (i.e. copy paper, toilet paper, paper towels) are recycled-content and chlorine-free.

By switching the entire organization to 30% recycled-content copy paper, each year LifeLong is saving*:

- **1374 pounds of wood** (the equivalent of about 5 trees)
- **3 million BTU's of energy** (enough energy to power an average American household for 13 days)
- **418 lbs Greenhouse Gas (CO₂) emissions** (the equivalent of 21.5 gallons of gasoline consumed)
- **1,734 gallons of water** (enough water to take 101 eight-minute showers)
- **223 pounds of solid waste** (a total of 8 thirty-two gallon garbage cans of waste)

*Environmental impact estimates were made using the Environmental Defense Fund Paper Calculator www.papercalculator.org.

Green Pharmacy Program

LifeLong is committed to providing environmentally safe medicine disposal and accepts unused and expired medicines from their patients.

Employee Education

Teleosis Institute offered a series of in-service training seminars for health providers, administrators, and staff as part of the Green Health Care Program. The educational sessions focused on the interconnectedness of human and environmental health, and the role that the physical environment plays as a determinant of health. Session topics included: Leadership and Vision; Ecological Literacy and Sustainability; Creating Sustainable Medicine; and Pharmaceutical Pollution Prevention. Through these education trainings, LifeLong employees are better able to carry out and follow through on recently instituted green operations while also serving to promote overall environmental advocacy for the local community.

Green Health Care: A Model of Improved Environmental and Human Health

The Teleosis Institute's Green Health Care Program is a custom-tailored service to address environmental sustainability in clinical practice. Our leadership training and services include: Clinic Assessment, Green Team Building and Action Plans, Environmental Health Education Workshops and the Green Pharmacy Program. Teleosis is a non-profit organization dedicated to reducing healthcare's environmental footprint by developing effective, sustainable health care programs provided by professionals who serve as environmental health stewards.

Green Health Care offers practical assistance for transforming theory and research into action. Contact us to create your ideal Green Health Care Center!



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