GREEN HEALTH CARE CASE STUDY:
Coastal Health Alliance

About Coastal Health Alliance

Twenty-seven years ago physician Mike Witte, MD, together with a group of committed residents founded a clinic in Point Reyes Station with the mission of providing care to all in need regardless of their ability to pay. Now the Coastal Health Alliance (CHA) operates three community health centers in Pt. Reyes Station, Stinson Beach, and Bolinas, providing primary health care services at a sliding fee scale for those of limited income.

www.coastalhealth.net

Why Go Green?

Coastal Health Alliance embraces the culture of a green community health clinic, one that promotes health for people in the community, sustains natural resources, and provides a healthy work environment. Through a Networking for Community Health Grant, awarded by Community Clinics Initiative, Coastal Health Alliance partnered with Teleosis Institute to offer the innovative Green Health Care Program. Teleosis helped CHA form the EverGreen Team, a dedicated group of staff including the executive director, medical director, several clinical providers, site managers, and front office staff.

Solid Waste Reduction and Recycling

RECYCLING:
The EverGreen Team implemented a comprehensive recycling program for paper, cardboard, bottles and cans, plastics, batteries, electronics, fluorescent lamps, ink and toner cartridges. Using the Teleosis Institute’s waste tracking tool, CHA assessed a recycling rate of 25% of their solid waste, which is well above the national average for health care facilities.

ELECTRONIC MEDICAL RECORDS:
CHA switched to Electronic Medical Records (EMR) at the end of 2009 which continues to have a significant impact on solid waste reduction in their clinics. All patient charts, lab reports, hospital records, faxes, and billing are electronic. The anticipated reduction of 4.5 tons of paper will save over $5,400 annually and 108 trees every year! In addition to reducing paper, EMR significantly reduces the need for ink and toner cartridges. Throughout the process of upgrading computers for EMR, old computers and monitors were donated or recycled as e-waste.

Environmental Excellence Award

In May 2010, CHA received the prestigious Clinic Partner for Change Award at the annual CleanMed Conference. CHA was one of the first clinics in the country to receive this award from Practice Greenhealth, a national membership organization consisting of over 1000 hospitals in the United States. These competitive awards are given to health care institutions for outstanding programs that reduce the facility’s environmental footprint.

Coastal Health Alliance aspires to be a leader in sustainable health care. We commit to limiting our impact on the earth, fostering healing for ourselves, our community, and the environment of West Marin.
Green Pharmacy Program

Coastal Health Alliance is committed to providing environmentally safe medicine disposal, accepting unused and expired medicines from their patients and the community. The Green Pharmacy Program at CHA has been operating for three years.

Healthy People, Healthy Communities

CHA partnered with the Point Reyes Farmer’s Market to promote local health services and healthy foods available in the community. This collaboration, called “Healthy People, Healthy Communities” was launched in June 2010 with a Food as Medicine panel discussion. During weekly farmer’s market events in the summer, CHA staff will continue offer free health screenings, safe medicine disposal drop off, as well as information on health and nutrition.

Leadership Training and Staff Education

CHA’s greening project included education for all levels of staff: health providers, administrators, and support staff. Teleosis Institute offered a series of onsite and online training seminars encouraging employees to serve as strong environmental advocates within the larger health care community.

Green Building Projects

CHA is committed to creating a green workplace:

- Clinics are painted with non-toxic, low-VOC paints
- Flooring is recycled rubber with a non-toxic, water based adhesive, and it does not require chemical cleaning or waxing
- Natural lighting includes skylights, solar tubes, and carefully placed windows to let light in where it’s most needed
- Bolinas clinic has photovoltaic solar panels, double pane windows, motion sensor lighting, centralized drinking water filter system and an instant hot water heater
- Energy efficient lighting and EnergyStar equipment are used in all the clinics
- Toilets are low flow (1.6 gallons per flush), as well as low flow aerators in bathroom sinks (2.2 gallons per minute)
- Drought tolerant landscaping requires little to no irrigation

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

The Teleosis Institute’s Green Health Care Program is a custom-tailed 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!