



# Maryland H2E News Roundup



July 2010



## Environmental Excellence in Health Care A Showcase of Best Practices

### Call for Abstracts—MD H2E Conference

Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (MD H2E) is accepting abstracts on environmental programs developed, implemented, and tracked at health care facilities. Abstracts showing quantifiable results and subsequent presentations that facilitate discussion are of particular interest. Selected abstracts will be presented **November 18, 2010 at the Environmental Excellence in Health Care Conference** at the University of Maryland School of Nursing, Baltimore, Md. Preferred themes for abstract presentations are:

**Best Practices in the Operating Room:** Topics may include fluid management; single-use device reprocessing or remanufacturing; regulated medical and solid waste reduction; blue wrap, plastics, or other recycling efforts; prevention and reduction efforts through process improvement or other innovative practices.

**Best Practices in Environmentally Preferable Purchasing:** Topics may include developing criteria for vendors, working with group purchasing organizations, case studies, examples of product substitution or other innovative practices.

**Best Practices in Managing Hazardous Pharmaceutical Waste:** Topics may include defining and assessing regulatory issues, developing and implementing a hazardous pharmaceutical waste management program, tracking and monitoring a hazardous pharmaceutical waste program or other innovative practices.

**Best Practices in Sustainable Building and Energy:** Topics may include designing and constructing a sustainable or LEED-certified facility, using the Green Guide for Health Care, energy conservation case studies, purchase and/or installation or use of renewable energy or other innovative practices.

**Best Practices in Sustainable Food:** Topics may include purchase of local, sustainable meat and protein, balanced menus initiatives, and other cost-effective and climate change strategies; launching a hospital garden; reducing sodas and other sugar-sweetened drinks; eliminating the use of bottled water and Styrofoam; using the *Green Guide for Health Care* or other innovative practices.

**Guidelines:** Abstracts are limited to 250 words; Include the first author's name, credentials, title, organization name, phone number, mailing address, and e-mail address.

**Deadline for submission:** [Friday, August 20, 2010](#). Early submission is encouraged.

#### Notification

First authors only will be notified by September 10, 2010

First authors of accepted abstracts will be granted free registration to the full conference.

#### Submit abstract as an e-mail attachment to:

[mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu](mailto:mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu) Attention: Joan Plisko

## Sustainability in Healthcare: A Roundtable Conversation

Thursday, July 22nd, 9 - 11 a.m.

Maryland Hospital Association, 6820 Deerpath Road, Elkridge, MD 21075

Join your peers and MD H2E staff for a roundtable conversation on sustainability in healthcare. Please come prepared to share your facilities' experiences and offer suggestions to others. To facilitate conversation, **please submit any questions you may have to [mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu](mailto:mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu) by July 15th.** Space is limited, please RSVP, priority for hospital employees. RSVP to [mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu](mailto:mdh2e@son.umaryland.edu)



## CALL FOR EXHIBITORS

Thursday, November 18, 2010; 7:30 a.m.-3:45 p.m.

University of Maryland School of Nursing, Baltimore, Maryland

This conference is expected to bring more than 300 regional and national health care professionals, environmental industry experts, and educators together to learn and network where the common purpose is to create a healthier and more sustainable environment for hospital staff, patients, and communities.

Topics to be covered include purchasing environmentally preferable materials, implementing actions to reduce climate change impacts, developing and implementing an integrated waste management program and purchasing and promoting sustainable foods. To enhance the event, there will be an opportunity for exhibitors to set up tables to display information about their company's products and services.

**Exhibiting Fee:** \$325

**Benefits to Exhibitors:** Company name, logo, and Web site address listed in the conference program; Receipt of participant list following the conference; 6' draped table and two chairs; Internet connection if requested.; Electrical set-up if requested.

### Process to Exhibit

Space is limited and preference is given to vendors whose products and services are aligned with the mission of Maryland H2E. Our goal is to provide participants with exhibits that represent the wide spectrum of sustainability services available to health care. Interested vendors must follow the following process:

- Complete application by September 10, 2010.
- You will be notified about your acceptance by September 24, 2010.

If your organization is accepted to exhibit, you must submit payment in full within 14 business days of notification.

Please visit our website to download the exhibitor application:

<http://nursing.umaryland.edu/events/environmental/november/exhibitor-interest.htm>

## Join MD H2E's LinkedIn Group!

MD H2E now has a LinkedIn group! LinkedIn is geared toward professionals, giving them an opportunity to network with others who have similar interests and occupations, across the country and around the world. If you are already on LinkedIn, search for Maryland Hospitals for a Healthy Environment. Otherwise, first create an account and then search for us! We welcome all to join. Find us at:

<http://www.linkedin.com/groupInvitation?groupID=2350340&sharedKey=3BF6ED4FD0D8>

## The Secret of GBMC's Earth Day Success

GBMC's first Earth Day celebration on April 22, 2010 was a smash hit, with estimated attendance of 800. More than 20 employees, who volunteer with the hospital's multidisciplinary Green Team, contributed to planning, promoting and staffing the "farmer's market" themed celebration.

Employees were asked to bring special recyclables---and did. "People aren't always sure how to dispose of items that may contain hazardous chemicals, so they appreciated this service," says **Michael Forthman**, GBMC's Vice President of Facilities and Support Services and executive sponsor of the Green Team. "And our team was thrilled to collect 133 pounds of batteries, 77 cell phones, 6 printers, 5 computers and 104 pairs of eyeglasses for recycling."

The Green Team offered eligible staff members the option to donate \$5 in exchange for the ability to wear jeans to work on Earth Day. The fundraising effort yielded a grand total of \$825, which was donated to Herring Run Watershed Association.

Participants in the Earth Day Celebration browsed through booths calculating their carbon footprints, learning about using rain barrels and native plants in their landscapes, buying recycled goods from the gift shop and discovering the benefits of a vegan diet. All employees and volunteers also received a reusable Green Team cup, which entitles them to a discount on fountain drinks and coffee in the hospital's Dining Room.

"The high level of participation at this first-year event shows just how much the Green Team's creativity and hard work paid off," says Mr. Forthman. "We're hopeful that the Earth Day enthusiasm will help as we launch our new Farmer's Market and continue with energy curtailment measures throughout the summer."



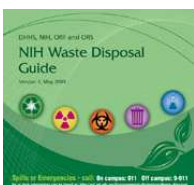
## Compost Use at Levindale & Courtland Gardens

LifeBridge Health is closing the loop! In May, two LifeBridge facilities began receiving compost to use in therapeutic patient activities. Dee McGuire, Horticultural Therapist at Levindale Hebrew Geriatric Center and Hospital, and Jamilah Bashir, Therapeutic Recreation Manager at Courtland Gardens Nursing & Rehabilitation Center, each received a truckload of compost from Envirelations, the company that manages LifeBridge's food waste. LifeBridge composted more than 100 tons of organic waste from food prep and patient trays in 2009. Composting allows minerals and nutrients to be recycled from food and plant waste and the material biodegrades, rather than being trapped in a landfill, which is designed to prevent leaching and decomposition.

Horticultural therapy is recognized as a practical and viable treatment with wide-ranging benefits for people in therapeutic, vocational, and wellness programs, and has been practiced since ancient times.



## NIH Waste Disposal Guide



<http://orf.od.nih.gov/Environmental+Protection/Waste+Disposal/>

Do you know what kind of container can store Hydrofluoric acid? Find out in the NIH Waste Disposal Guide, along with how to dispose of general, chemical, multihazardous, radioactive, and medical pathological waste and NIH recycling.

## Maryland General Hospital is 'Moving to Greener Heights'

Maryland General Hospital is pleased to announce that it is moving forward with a new sustainability program, 'Moving to Greener Heights.' The program's new logo was rolled out in April and the green team met for the first time



on June 23. EVS Director Anthony Dixon led the group and departments from throughout the hospital were represented at the inaugural meeting. MD H2E's Environmental Health Coordinator, Denise Choiniere, MS, RN, was on hand to give a brief presentation about the importance of environmentally responsible practices to the health of nurses, other hospital staff, and patients.

'Moving to Greener Heights' is making operational progress, too - the loading dock at Maryland General is scheduled to undergo renovations at the end of June in order to better support waste separation. This project will begin June 28 and will be completed July 2.

## Garrett County Memorial Hospital Gets In Full Swing

MD H2E travelled across the Eastern Continental Divide to visit Garrett County Memorial Hospital at the beginning of July. Located in idyllic Oakland, MD, in the Appalachian mountain region, this 56-bed facility has a green team that is building momentum. Employees filled the room as MD H2E presented, and lively conversation followed, focused on alternative energy sources, recycling sharps containers, and purchasing local meat. We



look forward to a continued relationship with the great people of Garrett!

GCMH President Don Battista, left, with Green Team Participants

## MD H2E Welcomes Our Newest Participant!



FREDERICK MEMORIAL HEALTHCARE SYSTEM

The MD H2E team made a trip to Frederick Memorial Hospital on June 22<sup>nd</sup> to speak with a group interested in getting their green team running. MD H2E provided an overview of available resources, and a discussion ensued revolving around where to start – the low hanging fruit at Frederick Memorial. Talk turned to waste and recycling, light bulbs, water usage, and Styrofoam. It was a great first meeting between the two groups, and MD H2E looks forward to a close partnership! Thank you to FMH for hosting and taking the time to engage with MD H2E.

## Innovations at Western Maryland Health System

MD H2E traveled to Western Maryland Regional Medical Center in Cumberland recently, visiting their new facility and speaking with their green team. It was an exciting trip. The new building has many great features. In the kitchen, Western Maryland has a waste pulper, which grinds up food waste



with water recycled through. It then squeezes out the water, leaving a dry pulp. The Medical Center has also been innovative with their furniture choices – most of their new furniture is 90% recyclable. The chairs shown can be sent back to the manufacturer and taken apart for recycling.

The Western Maryland green team divides into subcommittees, which each tackle a different area of greening the hospital. One proposed idea during MD H2E's visit was to discontinue the daily use of charting. This would save 4 hours of work per day, and \$8,000 per year. We saw a lot of great ideas being put into practice at Western Maryland, and encourage them to keep on innovating!

## Baltimore Medical System Opens Nation's First LEED Platinum Certified, Federally Qualified Health Center

<http://www.prnewswire.com/news-releases/baltimore-medical-system-opens-nations-first-leed-platinum-certified-federally-qualified-health-center-97060959.html>

BALTIMORE, June 24 /PRNewswire/ -- "It's the healthiest building in the unhealthiest part of the city." That's how Baltimore Medical System (BMS) president and CEO Jay Wolvovsky describes the newly-opened 32,000-square-foot Highlandtown Healthy Living Center. For the 22,000 patients who will receive primary care there, the Highlandtown Healthy Living Center is a prominent and physical illustration of BMS' core belief that a healthy environment contributes to healthy living.

The Highlandtown Healthy Living Center meets the U.S. Green Building Council's Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) qualifications for a Platinum rating, the highest level of certification. The Highlandtown Healthy Living Center will be the first Platinum Federally Qualified Health Center in the country.

"We are using the environmentally-friendly and LEED-required elements of the Healthy Living Center to educate our patients about how they can improve their health through their physical space," said Wolvovsky.

"For example, we don't hang curtains in the windows of the center in order to illustrate the importance of sunlight, and to remove a trigger for asthma that our patients might find in their homes," said Wolvovsky. "When they see our staff using environmentally-safe cleaning products, they can more easily make the connection to what products they might use at home."

The Center's staff is trained to explain features to patients as they wait for appointments and are escorted to one of the Center's 51 examination rooms. They are invited to explore the health benefits of being outdoors by visiting the Center's terrace garden off the waiting room and the street-level rain garden, which captures and filters rain water.

## President's Cancer Panel: Environmentally Caused Cancers Are 'Grossly Underestimated.'

The President's Cancer Panel [on May 6th] strongly urged action to reduce people's widespread exposure to carcinogens. The panel advised President Obama "to use the power of your office to remove the carcinogens and other toxins from our food, water, and air that needlessly increase health care costs, cripple our nation's productivity, and devastate American lives." Environmental exposures "do not represent a new front in the ongoing war on cancer. However, the grievous harm from this group of carcinogens has not been addressed adequately by the National Cancer Program," the panel said in its letter to Obama that precedes the report. "The American people – even before they are born – are bombarded continually with myriad combinations of these dangerous exposures."

In its letter, the panel singled out bisphenol A, a chemical used in polycarbonate plastic and can linings that is unregulated in the United States, as well as radon, formaldehyde and benzene.

The report recommends raising consumer awareness of the risks posed by chemicals in food, air, water and consumer products, bolstering research of the health effects and tightening regulation of chemicals that might cause cancer or other diseases.



Read the full article at: <http://www.environmentalhealthnews.org/ehs/news/presidents-cancer-panel>

Full report available: [http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/pcp08-09rpt/PCP\\_Report\\_08-09\\_508.pdf](http://deainfo.nci.nih.gov/advisory/pcp/pcp08-09rpt/PCP_Report_08-09_508.pdf)

## Health-Care Industry Needs Sustainability Managers

<http://www.environmentalleader.com/2010/06/10/health-care-survey-finds-industry-needs-sustainability-managers/>

Environmental Leader/June 10/ — Three out of four survey respondents think hospitals need a sustainability manager, according to a survey of health-care professionals attending the “Energy, Economics & Environment: Making the 3Es Work Together in Healthcare” seminars during the first half of 2010.

The survey conducted by Corporate Realty, Design & Management Institute, finds that many organizations have yet to create a sustainability manager job position, which means that health-care facilities do not have individuals who have a facilities or energy-related background.

The report’s authors said this has led to a focus on recycling and waste management programs, instead of energy and water efficiency projects. It also means that sustainability is becoming a core competency of facility professionals in other industries instead of the health-care sector, according to the report.

In several regions, utilities offer millions of dollars in rebate and incentive funds but too often hospitals fail to tap this funding source or they approach the utility too late to receive any money, say report authors.

As an example, one utility health-care segment manager cited a hospital that buys bus passes for employees but has not replaced its older T12 fluorescent lamps with more efficient lighting.

The report finds that cost is the biggest factor in all purchasing decisions. Nearly 80 percent of respondents said “initial cost” takes precedence in the final selection of equipment and materials on recent projects.

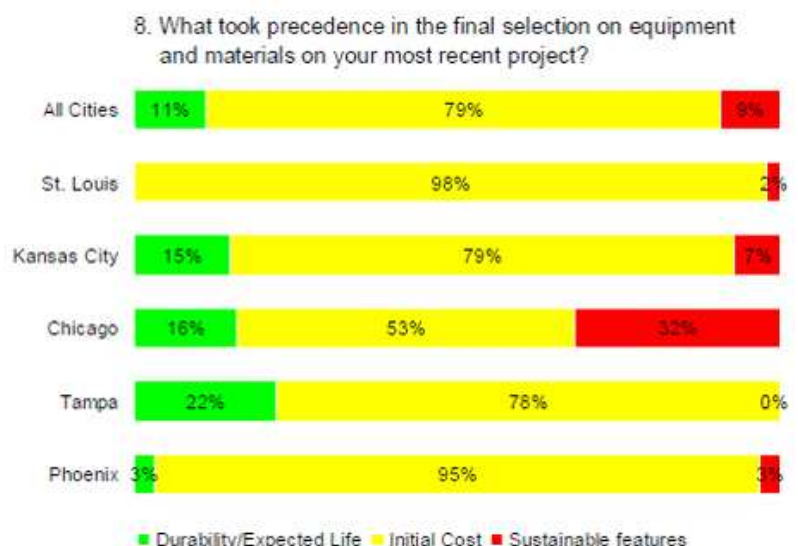
Another key finding shows that when installing or specifying energy-saving technology, the biggest concern is that the technology won’t deliver the projected performance, according to 70 percent of respondents.

“If you haven’t had a retrofit in the past 5 to 7 years, do it now. You’ll get on average a 12-14 percent improvement. Fluorescent technologies are incredible. There are better control systems. LEDs are economical for hard to service areas,” said Brian Weldy, vice president of Sustainability for IFMA Healthcare Council and vice president of Facilities for HCA, in the report.

Reliability of infrastructure is another big concern according to 64 percent of respondents. However, the report also finds that in Chicago, nearly 80 percent of respondents said regulatory pressure was their biggest concern, indicating regional differences, according to the authors.

As another example, in the Midwest, more than 60 percent believe that health care is implementing sustainable solutions as effectively as or better than other industries. In the cities of Phoenix and Tampa, 70 percent said they are doing worse than other industries.

Based on different projects across the nation, health-care facility upgrades are taking different routes to sustainability.



## Sign Up Now for the Buy Local Challenge from July 17<sup>th</sup> -25<sup>th</sup> & Be #1 in Employee & Community Participation



### Food Service & Employees Can Participate:

1. Food Service can sign up to serve at least 1 food from a local farmer each day from July 17<sup>th</sup>—25<sup>th</sup>
2. Employees & Community Members can sign up to eat at least 1 food from a local farmer each day from July 17<sup>th</sup>—25<sup>th</sup>. Community Members can include patients, visitors, family members and local residents.

### Hospitals will be recognized as leaders in the following categories:

1. Each healthcare facility whose food service department serves at least 1 food from a local farmer each day from July 17<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>.
2. The facilities with the highest percentage of employees that take the Buy Local Challenge by pledging to eat at least 1 local food a day from July 17<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>.
3. The facilities with the highest number of employees and community members that take the Buy Local Challenge by pledging to eat at least 1 local food a day from July 17<sup>th</sup> - 25<sup>th</sup>.
4. Those facilities that serve not only local foods but also local AND sustainably produced foods, especially 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified foods (i.e. USDA Certified Organic local foods, USDA Grass-fed local foods, rBGH-free local foods, Certified Humane Raised and Handled local foods, etc). Honorable mention will be given to those facilities that serve local and sustainable foods that are not 3<sup>rd</sup> party certified.
5. Food service and hospital farmers' markets and CSAs can report the total dollars spent on local foods for Buy Local Week. This amount will be aggregated and reported as total dollars spent on local foods by healthcare.

We encourage you to include local & sustainably produced eggs, dairy products, seafood, poultry & meat. Ask your distributor for their local food list and/or buy direct from local farmers. Both types of purchasing count.

The leading health care facilities from the categories listed above will be recognized for their efforts by being announced in a press release to the media, the Governor's Office, the Maryland Department of Agriculture, and reported in the Maryland Hospital Association's newsletter, the US EPA Region 3 Newsletter, both MD H2E newsletters, and on the Buy Local Challenge website.

**Send Us Your Pictures, Videos & Stories** about how you participated in the Buy Local Challenge. Include quotes from your employees, patients, executives and community members.

### **Sign-Up Sheets, Resources & Marketing Tools:**

<http://e-commons.org/eh-tools/buy-local-challenge> marketing tools for health care/

### **To Register:**

<http://www.buy-local-challenge.com/challenge.asp>

Be Sure to List Your Hospital's Name So You Are Counted !!

**For More Information: Contact Louise Mitchell**

**410-706-1924 or [Lmitc001@son.umaryland.edu](mailto:Lmitc001@son.umaryland.edu)**



## Companies, hospitals move away from toxic material

<http://edition.cnn.com/2010/HEALTH/05/26/abandoning.pvc/>

**David S. Martin, CNN** -- Worried about toxic waste and chemical exposure, more and more companies and hospitals are moving away from polyvinyl chloride.

PVC is used in everything from home siding, pipes and flooring to school supplies, car interiors and packaging, electrical cords and medical tubing. But making or burning PVC waste produces dioxins, cancer-causing chemicals that are among the most toxic substances known.

"Our concerns about the ways in which PVC can be disposed of, burned for example ... caused us to begin eliminating PVC from our products," Hewlett-Packard's Tony Prophet said. The computer giant launched its first PVC-free notebook computer last year.

Microsoft, Honda, Wal-Mart, Target and Nike are among other large corporations moving away from polyvinyl chloride, said Mike Schade, the PVC campaign coordinator for the Center for Health, Environment and Justice.

"There's been a major market shift away from PVC in just about every major sector of the economy," Schade said. Allen Blakey of the Vinyl Institute, an industry trade group, said the move to other plastics is misguided.

"Some of them may feel they can find a better material than PVC. What we find is, they often don't go very far before coming back and finding PVC was the best material after all," Blakey said.

More than 12 billion pounds of PVC are produced in the United States annually, according to Blakey.

The Center for Health, Environment and Justice and other environmental groups are trying to persuade companies to find alternatives to PVC because of dioxins.

Dioxins are a family of chemicals now thought to be toxic at parts per trillion, which is less than a single drop in a backyard pool.

The risks of dioxin became known after Vietnam, where dioxin was an unwanted impurity in the chemical defoliant known as Agent Orange. In the decades after the war, soldiers who handled Agent Orange were more likely to develop a range of cancers and, possibly, Parkinson's disease, diabetes, hypertension and heart disease.

Blakey of the Vinyl Institute said dioxin emissions in PVC production are way down.

"You know, dioxin is actually a great success story. Dioxin emissions in this country have gone down since the '60s. They're at very low levels. Even since the late '80s, they're down 90 percent or so," Blakey said.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency began requiring companies to report dioxin emissions only in 2000. Since then, EPA figures show dioxin emissions have declined 66 percent, from 218 pounds to 74 pounds in 2008, the most recent figures available.

Worries about the health effects of phthalates, a chemical additive that makes PVC flexible, prompted Kaiser Permanente hospitals to begin working with suppliers to find alternatives more than 10 years ago, said Kathy Gerwig, senior vice president and environmental stewardship officer.

"The first place we looked to get rid of PVC was in the neonatal unit. And that's because PVC medical products often contain a plasticizer called DEHP, and that can disrupt hormones," Gerwig said.

DEHP is in the phthalate family. Some research has found that phthalates mimic the hormone estrogen and could disrupt reproductive development and cause other health problems.

A study of 54 newborns in neonatal intensive care units found a connection between the use of flexible tubing and other medical products containing phthalates and exposure to DEHP. The study did not show that the exposure caused any ill health effects.

Last year, the United States banned or restricted the sale of children toys and children's products containing DEHP and five other phthalates.

On its website, the American Chemistry Council says phthalates "have a long history of safe use."

But Kaiser Permanente, the nation's largest nonprofit health plan with 35 medical facility and more than 14,000 doctors, has replaced phthalate-containing PVC in intravenous tubing, catheters and other medical equipment.

The hospital has also replaced PVC in flooring, baseboards, wall guards -- even the plastic backing on carpets.

"Typically, the products that we've replaced, it does not cost more. We found that the majority are cost-neutral. In many cases, they cost less," Gerwig said.

Despite the move away from polyvinyl chloride, Schade said, there's still plenty of vinyl waste. About 500 million to 600 million pounds of PVC are burned each year, he said.

Schade said the Center for Health, Environment and Justice is focused on getting schools to stop using PVC in construction.

"Phthalates are banned in toys, but phthalates are widespread in schools," Schade said.



Kaiser Permanente's Kathy Gerwig

## Nursing News



Katie Huffling

MD H2E would like to welcome Katie Huffling to the University of Maryland School of Nursing, where she will be the director of the Environmental Health and Education Center. A practicing nurse midwife, she has much to bring to the table. In her previous practice, Ms. Huffling developed an environmental hazard assessment tool for her patients. Meant primarily for prenatal care, the checklist is also recommended for preconception, to prevent exposures before pregnancy. Ms. Huffling has found that her tool usually identifies 2-3 exposures that patients might not have been aware of. What threats do many patients overlook? The nursery. It's important to be aware of what the crib is made of and what kind of paint is on the walls.

And what does her new position hold in store for her? "It's still in the amorphous stages...which is kind of exciting because I'll get to figure out where my strengths are and what's really fun to work on," Ms. Huffling says. She will be providing support for the Alliance of Nurses for Healthy Environments, and will be creating content for several nursing websites. "We'll be working on some videos, really using the electronic means to get the word out about environmental health and nursing." Ms. Huffling will be a great resource for nurses; we congratulate her on her work and look forward to her contributions at the Environmental Health Education Center.

## What is Maryland H2E?

Maryland H2E is a technical assistance and networking initiative that promotes environmental sustainability in healthcare. Participants include hospitals, clinics, nursing homes, and other ancillary health care providers in MD.



Our staff now includes:

- ◆ Joan Plisko, PhD, Technical Director  
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- ◆ Denise Choiniere, RN, MSN, Nursing Coordinator,  
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- ◆ Molly Englund, Communications Coordinator,  
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410-706-1849

## Practice Green Health Webinars



July 16, 1 pm (Eastern)  
**Green Construction Series:  
Re-envisioning the Traditional Hospital Prototype  
for Energy Efficiency and Human Comfort**

July 21, 1 pm (Eastern)  
**Introduction to Greenhealth Tracker**

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To Register and Purchase Webinars, go to:  
[www.practicegreenhealth.org/tools/webinars/](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org/tools/webinars/)

Access to Practice Greenhealth webinars is a fee-based service, and is one of many member benefits. You can learn more about the fees and benefits of membership by going to our website. See:  
[www.practicegreenhealth.org/community/membership/](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org/community/membership/)