



Green Initiatives:

A Group Effort at Finger Lakes Health

The business of caring for people is a highly energy-intensive business. According to the U. S. Energy Administration, hospitals are third only to food service and food sales in terms of consumption of energy per square foot. When coupled with the massive quantities of water and extraordinary quantities of waste, impacts to the environment from healthcare can be staggering.

To meet this challenge head on, Finger Lakes Health has embraced sustainability programs since the 1980s and continues to ramp up its efforts each year through recycling, waste reduction initiatives, and energy efficient capital planning.

Everyone is familiar with the blue bin program used for paper, cardboard, glass, plastic, and other recyclables. Just last year, our organization kept approximately 230 tons of materials out of our local landfills using this system. In addition, electronic waste recycling, including computers, monitors, cell phones, televisions, and non-alkaline batteries amounted to 13 tons, up nearly 5 tons from the previous year.

Hazardous waste is part of daily life for members of our medical and housekeeping staff. Their diligence in follow-

ing proper protocols ensures contaminated materials are disposed of properly. In 2012, approximately 150 pounds of pharmaceutical waste was collected and shipped by a licensed hauler for incineration, eliminating the risk of these medications entering and affecting the Finger Lakes watershed. Utilizing our community sharps disposal program, local residents dispose of approximately 200 pounds of needles each year free of charge.

With our eye on the future, we collaborate with the NY State Energy Research and Development Authority on energy conservation strategies. We strive to reduce energy consumption by making significant investments in HVAC systems, energy efficient windows, and lighting upgrades. Using aerators and motion-operated faucets, low-flow toilets, and replacement of water-operated cooling units, we have dramatically improved our water conservation. In planning all capital investments, including our "Journey to the Best" project, we consider the carbon footprint of each decision made.

Our commitment to "going green" is a group effort. As one of the largest employers in our area, we take pride in being a champion for reducing the environmental impact we have on our community.