

HealthPartners Park Nicollet



Hannah Brady
Environmental Engineering
Northwestern University

Company Background

HealthPartners is an award-winning integrated health care system based in Bloomington, Minnesota, with a team of 22,500 people dedicated to a mission of improving the health of members, patients and the community. The organization cares for more than one million patients with more than 50 primary care clinics, 750 primary care physicians, and six hospitals in Minnesota and Wisconsin.



“This project gave me the opportunity to gain experience and confidence in a business setting using skills learned in the classroom. In addition to developing project management and communication skills, I was able to make a positive impact on the environment and the company.” ~HB

Project Background

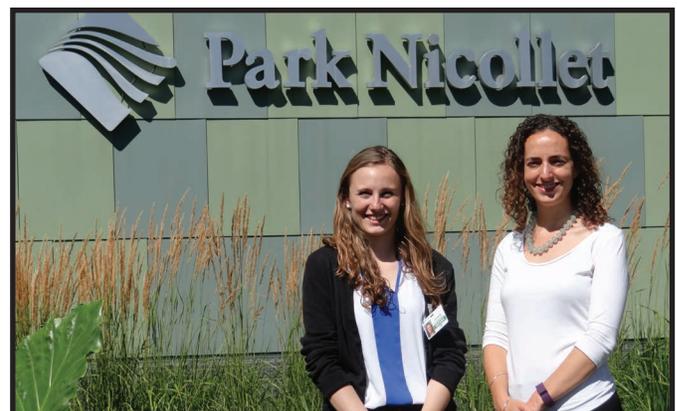
This project focused on three clinics in the HealthPartners organization: Park Nicollet clinics in Shakopee, St. Louis Park and Wayzata. HealthPartners has focused many sustainability efforts on hospitals, so this project was developed to increase sustainability efforts in clinics. Many types of waste are produced at Park Nicollet Clinics, including solid waste, regulated medical waste (RMW), RCRA hazardous waste, pharmaceutical waste, universal waste, construction and demolition debris (C&D), recyclables and organics. This project focused on ways to decrease solid waste generated and divert solid waste through recycling.

Incentives To Change

In 2015, HealthPartners received Practice GreenHealth’s System for Change Award, presented to healthcare systems with advanced sustainability programs. They are motivated to continue improving and expanding their current sustainability programs to meet their Sustainability Goals 2020, which were created to “demonstrate green

business practices that are cost effective and improve health.” The goals include reducing waste generated, developing and improving access to the sustainability program, and reducing paper use by 10% over a 2014 baseline.

Additionally, HealthPartners has conducted several waste sorts at clinic facilities that indicated there are opportunities to increase recycling rates. Waste sorts are used to determine the composition of waste – trash, recycling, and organics – generated by a facility during a specific time period. The waste sorts indicated that on average, 21% of the material in the trash was recyclable. Additionally, organics were separated during the waste sorts to gauge the opportunity to introduce organics recycling.





Solutions

Implement Waste Stations & Education

Implementing waste stations will provide equal access to trash and recycling, encouraging recycling and engagement with the disposal process. Placing waste stations in centralized locations with consistent signage, sizing, and coloring, as well as increasing recycling education using a PowerPoint presentation, desk-side cheat sheet, and break room poster, will increase familiarity and decrease confusion about the recycling program. At the Wayzata Clinic location alone, this could divert 9 tons of recyclables from going to landfill annually.

Implement Organics Recycling Program

Similar to a traditional recycling program, implementing an organics recycling program diverts materials like food waste and paper towels from landfill or incineration. Waste sort results showed that, on average, 50% of waste is compostable at clinic locations. By implementing an organics recycling program, 15 tons of organic material could be diverted annually at the Wayzata Clinic location alone.

Default Printers to Duplex

Defaulting printers to print on both sides of a sheet of paper (duplex printing) can theoretically reduce paper use

by up to 50%. A trial at the Shakopee Clinic demonstrated that paper use could be reduced by 17% over 2013/2014 baseline usage. Annually, this would result in half a ton of paper saved at the Shakopee Clinic. Additionally, because only about half of the printers at the clinic were capable of duplexing and included in the trial, paper savings at the clinic could be increased to 27% if all paper was printed on duplex-capable machines.

Install Hand Dryers Whenever Possible

Paper towel waste was a large portion of the organic (compostable) material found in waste sorts. Installing hand dryers in public restrooms reduces paper towel use at the source. Additionally, one study found that paper towels have a global warming potential three times larger than that of high-efficiency hand dryers when considering the entire life cycle of both hand drying methods. High-efficiency hand dryers can only be installed in public restrooms and not in patient care areas due to hygiene concerns. However, if all public restrooms at the St. Louis Park Campus were retrofitted with high-efficiency hand dryers, this would eliminate the use of 3 tons of paper towels annually.



Recommendation	Clinic Location	Annual Reduction (lb)	Annual Savings	Status
Implement Waste Stations and Education	Wayzata	18,000	\$2,500	Piloting
Default Printers to Duplex	Shakopee	1,000	\$1,000	Piloting
Implement Organics Recycling Program	Wayzata	42,000	\$200	Recommended
Install High-Efficiency Hand Dryers	St. Louis Park	14,000	\$15,400	Recommended