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## **Sustainability and Healthcare Workshop #2 explores solutions to healthcare industry's environmental footprint**

- *Healthcare industry is the second most intensive user of energy in the commercial sector*
- *Produces more than 5.9 million tons of waste annually*
- *Purchases more than \$106 b worth of chemicals and chemical products each year*
- *Increasingly studies demonstrate improved patient recovery when exposed to increased sunlight, fresh air, and non-toxic healing environments; plus staff turnover, injury and illness is reduced*

(PITTSBURGH, PA) – Sustainable Pittsburgh's Champions for Sustainability (C4S), in partnership with the Sustainable Healthcare Planning Committee, is hosting "Improving Healing Environments: Strategic Environmental Solutions" on Thursday, July 21. This program, the second of a 5-part workshop series focused on sustainability in the healthcare industry, will take place at the Fairmont Hotel in Downtown Pittsburgh from 7:30 am until 3:00 pm.

"Among the 3E's of Sustainability - environment, equity, and economy - this program in particular is more focused on the environmental 'E,' because of the strategic benefits that come from being smarter about managing environmental issues," says Matthew Mehalik, Ph.D., Program Manager at Sustainable Pittsburgh. "Of course, smarter management of environmental issues leads to better economic performance."

"Improving Healing Environments: Strategic Environmental Solutions" features interactive, solutions-oriented work sessions with healthcare experts related to energy, waste, infection control/green cleaning, and green building operational areas.

According to the US Environmental Protection Agency, "[Hospitals are] major employers, with healthcare comprising approximately 16% of the national and regional economy. Hospitals operate all day everyday, making their environmental footprint large in many communities. Hospitals generate approximately **7,000 tons per day of waste**, including infectious waste, hazardous waste, and solid waste."

Here in southwestern PA, the breadth of the healthcare industry's footprint is substantial. It is one of the largest employers in southwestern Pennsylvania with more than 50,000 individuals employed by UPMC, over

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13,000 at West Penn Hospital, and nearly 21,000 Highmark employees statewide. Add to that the number of people employed at clinics, doctor's offices, and equipment suppliers (think: tubing, beds, fixtures, software and more), and one can begin to grasp the kind of impact this industry could have on the community if more sustainable practices were observed.

**Karen Wolk Feinstein, Ph.D., President and CEO of the Jewish Healthcare Foundation,** is the featured plenary speaker on July 21. She explains, "The healthcare industry is extremely important to the regional economy in southwestern PA. We need to be smarter in controlling costs and improving the quality of care, and that includes safe and sustainable practices that go beyond what happens in the doctor's office. 'Green' practices are a part of the change that needs to be incorporated in how we look at the entire health care field. This includes changes in how we think about how we perform our roles. In Pittsburgh and at the Jewish Healthcare Foundation, we have a great deal of experience and evidence to share about that kind of transformation."

Following is a listing of the workshop leaders:

#### **Energy Workshop: Operational Strategies for Saving Energy**

- Drew Chidester, Senior Director, Energy and Environmental Engineering/Affairs, UPMC (Confirmed)
- Sam McMahon, System Energy Coordinator, UPMC (Confirmed)
- Shanti Pless, US DOE (Pending)

#### **Operational Strategies for Reducing Healthcare Waste**

- Angela Garcia, Deputy Director, Global Links (Confirmed)
- Ned Eldridge, CEO, eLoop, LLC (Confirmed)
- Judith Focareta RN, MEd, Coordinator, Environmental Health Initiatives, Magee-Womens Hospital of UPMC (Confirmed)

#### **Green Cleaning/Infection Control Workshop**

- Janet Stout, Specialty Pathogens (Confirmed)
- Mary B. Swanson, Senior Environmental Scientist, Green Seal, Inc. (Confirmed)

#### **Healthcare Facility Green Building Workshop**

- Marc Mondor, evolveEA (Confirmed)

The cost for the event is \$105 for Sustainable Pittsburgh/C4S members and \$125 for non-members. Coffee and lunch are included. Students receive a special admission rate. Those who stand to particularly benefit from participating in this program include healthcare operations and facilities directors, and members of the region's business and nonprofit leadership in healthcare.

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“It would be difficult to discover another event anywhere else in the country that offers the levels of expertise that this event provides that addresses key sustainability topics,” said Matthew Mehalik.

The “Improving Healing Environments” series is designed to expand the policy and practice of sustainability in the healthcare industry. The emphasis for each event involves articulating the health outcomes, healthcare benefits, and the business case for sustainability in the healthcare field. The programs will also focus on sharing best practices, resources, examples, and how to get started.

Future programs in the series will focus on such topics as: Sustainability Standards and Regulations for Healthcare on October 6, 2011; Sustainable Product and Service Procurement on November 3, 2011; and Information Management for Sustainability and Healthcare on December 1, 2011.

More details and registration is available at [www.C4SPgh.org/healthcare2.html](http://www.C4SPgh.org/healthcare2.html). For more information, individuals may contact Matthew Mehalik, Ph.D., at (412) 258-6644; [mmehalik@sustainablepittsburgh.org](mailto:mmehalik@sustainablepittsburgh.org). A review of the first workshop, including video and slides, is available at [www.C4SPgh.org/healthcare1.html](http://www.C4SPgh.org/healthcare1.html).

**Champions for Sustainability** is southwestern PA’s central resource for businesses that seek sustainable solutions. A program of Sustainable Pittsburgh, this network convenes to tackle issues of common interest, links solutions to suppliers and customers, consults on specific technical and operational needs, and helps to secure a competitive edge through innovation. C4S also hosts regular meetings for the region’s business sustainability coordinators.

A 501(c)(3) nonprofit, **Sustainable Pittsburgh (SP)** affects decision-making in the Pittsburgh region to integrate economic prosperity, social equity, and environmental quality bringing sustainable solutions to communities and businesses. Over the past decade, SP has proven adept at building coalitions for change on issues that get at the heart of sustainability for southwestern Pennsylvania.

The **Sustainable Healthcare Planning Committee** consists of 20 professionals from Southwestern Pennsylvania’s leading healthcare-related companies, professionals, foundations, nonprofits, and governmental organizations who provide nonpartisan guidance and insight for the C4S Sustainable Healthcare Series. The goal of this committee is to engage Southwestern Pennsylvania’s healthcare community in industry-leading sustainability practices.

*Facts featured in title are courtesy of Practice Greenhealth, [www.practicegreenhealth.org](http://www.practicegreenhealth.org).*

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