



# Commitment to Sustainability



# Message from Andrea

HealthPartners is 26,000 people strong, and we're passionate about our mission to improve health and well-being in our community. We know that a clean and safe environment is an important foundation for good health.

Hospitals and health care are among the biggest energy consumers in the country. We're open 24/7, use sophisticated energy technology such as special air flow, use large amounts of water and must purchase large orders of medical supplies and equipment.

As one of the largest health care organizations in our region, we have the responsibility and an opportunity to be good stewards of our environment. From the power sources we use, to the purchases we make, we're on a journey to implement practices across our organization that promote health by protecting the environment.

The good news is that like good health, sustainable practices often reduce costs, and that helps make health care more affordable. This report shows the progress we are making to strengthen green practices across our organization.



A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Andrea Walsh".

**ANDREA WALSH**  
President and CEO





# Improving energy efficiency

HealthPartners Neuroscience Center is the largest freestanding center of its kind in the upper Midwest. It offers the latest treatment and rehabilitation for neurological conditions – from stroke to spine injuries to dementia. When we broke ground in 2015, we had the opportunity to build the most energy-efficient facility possible. Working with Xcel Energy, we incorporated features such as:

- Automation to control temperature, air flow and lights, lights in unoccupied spaces or during off-peak hours
- Temperature and humidity control using air instead of water
- Energy-efficient lighting
- Windows and transom windows above doors to provide natural light and reduce the need for artificial lighting

**Total energy savings** \$960,000

**Gallons of water saved** 4.9 million

**Energy use for one year** 600 homes



# Investing in renewable energy

Solar energy is at the forefront of addressing climate change. Clean energy doesn't produce carbon dioxide or other greenhouse gases. And, it's renewable.

We've installed solar panels at Westfields Hospital & Clinic and in Park Nicollet clinics in Plymouth and Maple Grove. We also have subscriptions to community solar gardens that provide energy for Lakeview, Methodist and Regions hospitals and four of our clinics. These solar panels and gardens will produce enough energy for our facilities to power more than 820 homes.



# Locally grown

Fresh tilapia is on the menu for patients, visitors and team members at Hudson Hospital & Clinic and Westfields Hospital & Clinic. The tilapia is grown at a fish farm at New Richmond High School in Wisconsin. Purchasing the fish helps fund the high school's Agriscience Department. It's important because distributing food grown outside our region can add five to 17 times more greenhouse gases than food that's produced locally.\*

In 2018 our hospitals purchased more than \$2.5 million of food and beverages from local groups.

*\*Source: C.S. Mott Group for Sustainable Food Systems*



# Greener operating rooms

As much as one third of waste at a hospital comes from the operating room from things such as gloves, gowns, drapes and sponges. Bodily fluids and other biohazardous waste can also pose a danger to staff. Our hospitals and surgery centers use a device called Neptune 3 to safely dispose of bodily fluids.

## Greening the OR

- Efficient disposal of medical fluids
- LED lighting
- Customizing OR kits to avoid purchasing supplies that are not needed
- Reducing air conditioning when not in use
- Reprocessing of single-use medical devices

**2018 Savings: \$1.9 million**

## Healthy interiors

Hospitals and other health care facilities use many cleaning chemicals to prevent infection. To make the environment safer for staff and patients, about 43 percent of our budget for cleaning materials goes to certified green cleaning chemicals. Additionally, about 85 percent of our spending on furniture is for products that are free of chemicals, such as flame retardants and other chemicals of concern.



# Reducing waste

Every day hospitals generate more than 30 pounds of waste\* for each patient. In 2018, our hospitals generated half of that – about 15 pounds per patient per day.

A major source of waste is single-use surgical plastic, such as blue wrap. Hospitals and surgery centers use these products to keep surgical instruments clean and sterile. The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency estimates surgical plastic accounts for more than 19 percent of all operating room waste. In addition to surgical plastics, other materials we recycle or donate include:

- Electronics
- Excess equipment supplies and furnishings
- Materials from construction and demolition
- Organic and food waste
- Plastic, paper, glass and cans at all of our locations
- X-rays

In 2018 we kept 42,000 pounds of blue wrap out of landfills. That's equivalent to about 10 cars.

\*Source: HealthTrust



# Reducing single-use plastic

Single-use plastics such as bottles, straws and coffee stir sticks are used only once before they are thrown away or recycled. Plastic is made from petroleum, which is difficult to recycle. After many years, it breaks down and releases chemicals that can make their way into our food and water supply.

We're replacing plastic bottles across our organization with cans and dispensers for healthy beverages, like fruit-infused water. We've also replaced plastic stir sticks with wood. In three years, we reduced sales of single-use plastics by 25 percent (2016-2018).



# Safely disposing of medication

Safe disposal of unused medication is important because it can:

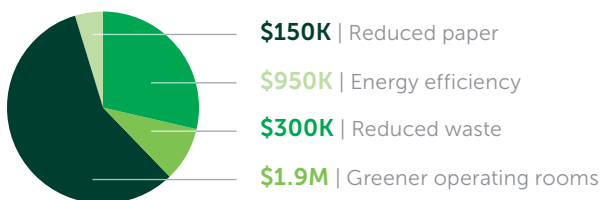
- Prevent accidental poisoning of children and pets
- Avoid the misuse of medication that could lead to addiction or death
- Prevent chemicals from ending up in lakes, rivers and water systems – most waste water treatment plants cannot remove prescription drugs

Kiosks in 25 clinic pharmacies and hospitals collected 11,000 pounds of medication (2017-2018).



## Sustainable practices reduce costs

2018 Cost Savings: \$3,300,000



2017 Energy Cost Savings: \$300,000

Total Cost Savings: \$3,600,000

## Telemedicine's impact on sustainability

242,000 encounters

2.4 million miles saved

113,000 gallons of gas saved

210 cars taken off the road

HealthPartners online clinic, **virtuwell**®, treats more than 60 common conditions without the need to travel to a traditional medical clinic. In 2018, we provided about 100,000 treatment plans.





# Protecting and restoring the environment

During the construction boom following World War II, Minnehaha Creek near Methodist Hospital was straightened to make way for new development. This led to this stretch of creek becoming the most polluted along its 22-mile stream.

About 20 years ago as Park Nicollet was preparing to expand the Methodist Hospital campus, we partnered with the Minnehaha Watershed District to restore the creek and its surrounding wetlands.

## Audubon Sanctuary Hospitals

Amery Hospital & Clinic is one of only 34 properties worldwide that is certified as a Monarch Waystation. Amery and Westfields Hospital & Clinic are the only hospitals in the world to be certified as an Audubon International Sanctuary.

Community gardens at HealthPartners hospitals in Wisconsin (Hudson Hospital & Clinic, Amery Hospital & Clinic and Westfields Hospital & Clinic) provide fresh, local fruits and vegetables to members of our local community.



## Awards

HealthPartners is proud to receive the highest honors from the nation's leading organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care. Practice Greenhealth's Top 25 and Circles of Excellence awards recognize green practices in our organization and our hospitals. In 2019, the executive sponsor of our sustainability program won Practice Greenhealth's Visionary Leader award.

The Wisconsin Business Council recognized Westfields Hospital & Clinic, Hudson Hospital & Clinic and Amery Hospital & Clinic with its Green Masters award for their commitment to sustainability. The Green Masters honor is the council's highest level of recognition for this organization.

HealthPartners is the only health system in Minnesota to join the Health Care Without Harm Climate Council. We are the only health system to sign the We Are Still In pledge. We Are Still In is a bi-partisan coalition of public and private organizations that support climate action to meet the Paris Agreement.





952-883-6000 | [healthpartners.com](http://healthpartners.com)

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Founded in 1957, HealthPartners is the largest consumer-governed, non-profit health care organization in the nation. HealthPartners serves more than 1.8 million medical and dental health plan members nationwide. The care system includes more than 1,800 physicians, eight hospitals, 55 primary care clinics, 23 dental clinics, 22 urgent care locations and numerous specialty practices in Minnesota and western Wisconsin. HealthPartners also provides medical education and conducts research through HealthPartners Institute.

For more information, visit [healthpartners.com](http://healthpartners.com).

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