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Washington State Department of Ecology Hospital Project Initiatives

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Introduction:

Washington State Department of Ecology's (Ecology) Hazardous Waste and Toxics Reduction Program (HWTR) determined that the state of Washington hospital's hazardous waste management and compliance concerns were not being adequately addressed.

In 1997 and 1998 a hospital pilot project was conducted to determine if it was feasible to implement a full blown hospital project. The environmental concerns noted included, but were not limited to, hazardous wastes being misidentified as municipal solid wastes, non-permissible wastewater discharges or non-allowable air pollutant emissions; biomedical wastes co-mingled with municipal solid waste; less than desirable levels of material reuse and recycling or implementation of pollution prevention options; and incinerators not in compliance with current standards (all hospital incinerators have been closed since the pilot project). In 1998, Ecology had dwindling budgets and did not have resources to do such a time intensive project. Though it was tabled, the need for the hospital project was known and planned to occur in the future.

In 2004 and 2005, a hospital project plan was reintroduced. A team was organized statewide and designed a plan of action. Currently, Ecology's HWTR section managers are deciding to what extent the project will be funded and implemented.

Hospital Project Initiatives:

Development of the guide: Best Management Practices for Hospitals-

During the summer of 2004 through the winter of 2005, hospital waste management research was gathered to develop a hospital best management practices (BMP) guide. Most of the research was compiled through the use of the internet. The type of information gathered included:

- ❖ Environmental management concerns in hospitals
- ❖ Hospital self audit checklist
- ❖ Hospital Do's and Don'ts
- ❖ Pollution Prevention opportunities and options
- ❖ Proper waste management and compliance methods
- ❖ Ecology fact sheets that pertain to hospitals
- ❖ Website resources and pollution prevention product vendors
- ❖ Dangerous Waste (Hazardous Waste) in hospitals/non permissible air pollutants

During the winter of 2005, the draft hospital BMP guide was written by me and two interns. During the spring of 2005, approximately 20 scientists and engineers reviewed and commented on the document. The comments were incorporated into the guide and it was sent to Ecology's headquarters for edit and styling. The guide will be printed and available soon. We hope to have the guide available electronically in the near future.

The hospital best management practice guide is intended to be used by the hospitals as a reference. The printed guide will be placed in binders. It will be divided into sections using tabs. Different sections can be pulled out and copied when needed. The vendor, website resources and the dangerous waste lists will be periodically updated.

Ecology Hospital Project Scoping Team:

Future hospital project initiatives being considered-

In the fall of 2004, an Ecology multi-program (hazardous waste, solid waste and water quality) hospital project scoping team was organized. The hospital project scope of work options were introduced by team members. The following options are still being discussed and considered by program managers to be added to program planning for the next biennium:

- ❖ Becoming a Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) Champion
- ❖ Conducting a Mercury-free Hospital Campaign
- ❖ Distribute hospital BMP guide (draft completed) to hospitals
- ❖ Develop a hospital information website
- ❖ Provide hospital technical assistance visits
- ❖ Host workshops and hospital information roundtables in regions
- ❖ Decide if water quality wastewater discharge permitting should be required

In Conclusion:

Ecology management team members will be deciding the level of the hospital project activities by June of 2005. Washington State Department of Ecology is divided into four regions. The hospital project will be delivered to hospitals at different levels depending on the availability funds and staffing in each region.

NEWMOA: ACHIEVING MERCURY REDUCTION IN PRODUCTS AND WASTE

Abstract of Presentation

Laura Brannen
Hospitals for a Healthy Environment
www.h2e-online.org

Session Title: Status and Barriers to Implementing a Mercury-Elimination Plan in Healthcare

Why Bother?

- AHA/EPA Goal to Eliminate Mercury in health care
 - Medical waste incinerators are major source of mercury
 - New York Academy of Sciences Report
 - National Resource Council (NRC) Report
 - AMA, ANA, APHA resolutions
- Ethical responsibility/Mission Statement
 - Patient/Employee satisfaction
 - FDA and state fish consumption advisories
- State and local regulations
- Community Relations -Press coverage and awards

What's Working - Implementation Strategy

Discussion of Successes

- Moving markets
 - Thermometers. Today, you cannot buy a mercury thermometer...
- Education – both institutional education AND in the community. Today we think differently about mercury. Ten years ago, when a mercury thermometer broke, it was swept up and put in the red bag...
- Incinerator Closures: In 1995 there were over 5000 incinerators, today there are less than 100.

Obstacles to Mercury Elimination

- Mercury is still considered the *Gold Standard*
- Clinicians are still trained on mercury devices
- Cost of replacements
- Mercury in Chemicals
- Purchasing Obstacles
- Old habits

Clinical Sources

- Sphygmomanometers
- Thermometers

- Barometers
- Bougies, cantor tubes
- Pharmaceutical Preservatives

Facilities Management

- Light Bulbs
- Switches
- Thermostats
- Batteries, electronics

Chemicals

- Laboratory chemicals
- Pharmaceuticals
- Cleaning chemicals

Providing resources for proper management...

Priority Is Elimination!

- Education
- Segregation
- Labeling
- Spill Response
- Monitoring
- Removal
- Record keeping

Mercury – Data Collection Tool – down load at www.h2e-online.org/mercury
Assess Mercury in the Facility

Tracks Hg Removed and What Remains – walk through tool

H2E National Awards criteria:

- Making Medicine Mercury Free
- Award Application Check List
- Mercury Elimination Policies
- Mercury Management Policy
- Clinical
- Facilities
- Chemical – pharmaceuticals, lab and cleaning chemicals
- Environmentally Preferable Purchasing Policies

Next Steps???

■ Fully engage the broader community (regulators and P2) to encourage the facilities to participate. That means the facilities that have yet to fully engage and those that simply need to wrap it up. Support legislation to ban mercury.

H2E Resources/Guidance

Awards Process:

www.h2e-online.org/programs/award/index2004.htm

Mercury Recyclers – www.h2e-online.org/tools/hg-recy.htm

Consultants – www.h2e-online.org/tools/consult.cfm

Vendors – www.h2e-online.org/tools/vendors.cfm

Mercury Backgrounder – www.h2e-online.org/tools/mercury.htm

List serve: www.h2e-online.org/programs/list.htm

Universal Waste Guidelines – www.h2e-online.org/tools/univwaste.htm

10 steps to bulb recycling – www.h2e-online.org/tools/univwaste.htm#flu

Mercury Elimination Plan – www.h2e-online.org/pubs/mercurywaste.pdf

Fish Advisories – www.h2e-online.org/tools/merc-oth.htm#fish

Other Mercury Resources

- Massachusetts Academic & Scientific Community Organization – www.masco.org
- U.S. Food & Drug Administration - www.cfsan.fda.gov
 - Health Care Without Harm's Fast Facts - http://www.noharm.org/library/docs/Going_Green_The_Mercury_Problem_-_Fast_Facts.pdf
 - Making Medicine Mercury Free Resource Guide - http://www.noharm.org/library/docs/Going_Green_Making_Medicine_Mercury_Free.pdf
 - Measuring Blood Pressure Accurately – <http://www.noharm.org/mercury/sphygmo>
 - American Medical Association – www.ama-assn.org

Need Help?

- Hospitals for a Healthy Environment
www.h2e-online.org
800/727-4179
- Partner Coordinator Janet.brown@h2e-online.org 718/636-1168
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