



NEWS RELEASE

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LANDMARK PARTNERSHIP UNVEILS NEW TOOLS, RESOURCES FOR HEALTH CARE PROVIDERS

December 19, 2001, Washington, DC - Today, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, the American Hospital Association, the American Nurses Association and Health Care Without Harm launched a joint website and announced plans to ramp up efforts to improve environmental performance in health care.

The announcement heralds a new phase for the Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E) program, a landmark collaborative effort between the four national groups. The H2E program grew out of a Memorandum of Understanding signed in 1998 by AHA and EPA to help hospitals create healthier communities.

Launched today, the new H2E website -- www.h2e-online.org -- provides useful tools for hospitals seeking to improve environmental performance, including a comprehensive list of mercury reduction resources and a step-by-step guide to minimizing waste. A new H2E listserv provides a forum for health care professionals to discuss technical information and practical strategies for pollution prevention.

H2E also unveiled two new programs designed to encourage hospitals to get involved. The Partners for Change program gives hospitals national recognition for improving environmental performance, and the Champions for Change program recognizes organizations that promote H2E within the health care field.

Already, two regional hospital associations and a national environmental group have signed on as Champions for Change. The District of Columbia Hospital Association, the New Hampshire Hospital Association and the National Wildlife Federation have committed to work with hospitals to advance the goals of H2E.

H2E aims to enhance efforts within the health care field to minimize the production of persistent, bioaccumulative and toxic (PBT) pollutants and to reduce the volume of waste generated. H2E is committed to the virtual elimination of mercury-containing waste from the health care field waste stream by the year 2005, and to an initial goal of achieving a 33 percent reduction in all waste generated by the health care field by 2005 and a 50 percent reduction by 2010.

"The H2E program provides health care facilities with the tools, resources and national recognition for them to be real leaders in promoting environmental and human health. We invite all health care professionals to join us in this collaborative effort," said Laura Brannen, H2E coordinator for Health Care Without Harm.

"As we deliver the highest quality health care in the world, health care institutions generate a tremendous amount of waste. Our goal is to reduce the amount and toxicity of waste that comes from caring for patients."

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