

## Recycling Single Use Device Reprocessing in Canadian Hospitals

### Grand River Hospital, Ontario



**Initiative Goal:** Cost savings and waste reduction for Grand River Hospital (GRH).

#### Benefits

**Environmental:** Through a partnership with a private organization, many single use devices (SUD's) are now being collected on site to be recycled and diverted from the landfill.

**Financial:** This free partnership is reducing the hospital's carbon footprint and waste costs as well as a creating a new source of funding for equipment purchases.

Currently accumulating company credits towards the purchase of equipment.



Max Kan, Environmental Services Supervisor and Waste Lead

#### Administration

Through the customized service model, there is no additional cost to the hospital as their partner manages all of the collection, disposal and shipping processes.

#### The Issue

Debbie Richarz, Director of Food and Environmental Services, and Max Kan, Environmental Services Supervisor and Waste Lead (pictured above), learned about a no-cost opportunity to partner with a third party to reduce their carbon footprint. This free program was fully customized to maximize waste diversion through the collection of single use devices (compression sleeves, laparoscopic sealers, ultrasonic scalpers, trocars, etc.) throughout the hospital. "Our OR team has always been interested in ways to reduce waste generated by their service and were therefore keen to participate," said Max. In a study conducted by The University of Western Ontario, it was stated that 20-33% of waste generated by hospitals is generated through procedures in operating rooms.

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#### Sustainability Strategy Implemented

In late summer of 2017 Grand River's environmental service team met with their OR Team to propose the new program. Grand River quickly gained buy-in and, following a short in-service provided by their partner, posters and recycling bins were placed in their soiled utility rooms, and hamper stands were positioned on patient's floors to initiate collections.

#### Implementation process

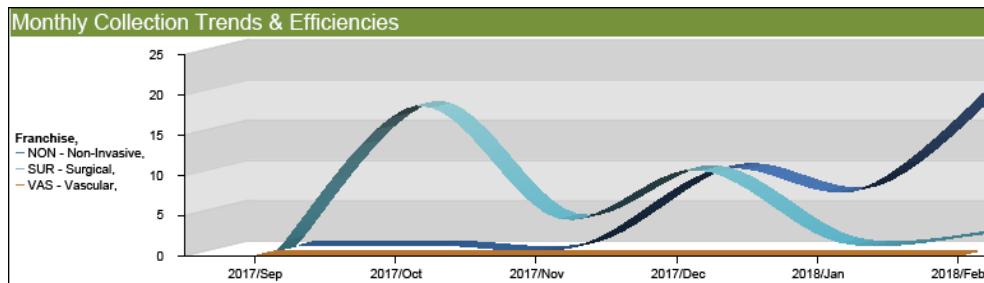
The process involved was simple to implement, so much so that in November, 2017 GRH successfully expanded their efforts through the addition of supplementary hamper stands in the OR and PACU to increase collections of compression sleeves which has

further added to the amount of waste being diverted on a monthly basis. These compression sleeve hampers are located in their OR and surgery rooms. SUDs are generated/collected only from OR rooms. While the hamper collection bin and recycling bins exist as two separate programs. Through this implementation GRH's partner has collected both general waste destined for landfill and biomedical waste.

### Tracking Progress

Since September 2017, Grand River Hospital has diverted 1,302 lbs. of garbage from landfill and reduced their waste costs by \$1,990 and established \$1,000 in company credits towards the purchase of equipment. This equipment includes repurchasing SUDs or an option to purchase other products i.e. mattresses/beds.

Customized analytics are provided quarterly, allowing for detailed documentation of on-site waste diversion and collection rates as depicted below.



### Challenges and Lessons Learned

Engaging the stakeholders early in the process and providing in-services to the staff to answer questions and concerns was key to the success of the program, and created immediate buy in and interest in the program. Finally, having Grand River's partner provide a physical presence on the unit in the first week's post-implementation was key to their success. On-going and regular follow-ups have ensured that the program remains dynamic and that collections continue to increase as they maintain commitment to being an environmentally conscious organisation.



### Canadian Context

The third-party reprocessing industry emerged in the U.S. and Germany approximately two decades ago in response to the growing cost of healthcare, including "single-use" devices and because third-parties have experience with reprocessing techniques. Canadian hospitals however are reaching the initial stages of exploring single use device reprocessing services. Partnership for reprocessing devices has potential for hospitals, such as Grand River, to assist in reducing their reliance on having waste removed, incinerated and discarded to the landfill.

### Contact information

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The Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care  
Coalition canadienne pour un système de santé écologique