



# AMH Surgical Team is Up to the Recycling Challenge

- Many of the supplies and tools used in Surgery and Day Surgery are enclosed in flexible plastics to keep them sterile and protected.
- Flexible plastic is generally not accepted by traditional recycling programs because it can catch in sorting machines and is typically too dirty after transport for recycling. So, how does a facility avoid sending these plastics to landfills?
- At Aspirus Medford Hospital, **Surgical Services Registered Nurse Billie Schilling** is championing an eco-friendly initiative to confront this issue as part of Aspirus Health's Sustainability Initiative and our local Green Team.

**Since July 2020, AMH's Surgery and Day Surgery teams have collaborated to collect and recycle just over 300 pounds of flexible plastics with the goal of recycling them into a park bench.**

# Environmental Sustainability Recognized



- Aspirus Medford is one of five Aspirus Health hospitals recently honored with Practice Greenhealth's 2021 Environmental Excellence Award for our achievement and innovation in health care sustainability.
- Aspirus hospitals receiving the award are:
  - Aspirus Riverview Hospital
  - Aspirus Langlade Hospital
  - Aspirus Medford Hospital
  - Aspirus Stevens Point Hospital
  - Aspirus Wausau Hospital
- **Three years into our program, Aspirus Health has realized energy savings of \$1,068,307 and a carbon reduction of 13,209 MtCo2 (metrics tons of carbon dioxide).**
- **Additionally, Aspirus Health has installed 940 kilowatts of rooftop solar to support our pursuit of clean and sustainable energy.**
- Practice Greenhealth is the nation's leading organization dedicated to environmental sustainability in health care. The Environmental Excellence Award recognizes facilities that continuously improve and expand upon programs to eliminate mercury, reduce and recycle waste, source products sustainably and more. Winning facilities must demonstrate we are recycling at least 15 percent of our total waste, have reduced regulated medical waste, are on track to eliminate mercury, and have developed successful sustainability programs in many areas.



# Aspirus Awarded for Green Efforts

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- Ali Wolf, System Director of Sustainability, and Sid Sczygelski, SVP Finance/CFO/Sustainability Oversight Committee Chair, were awarded the 2020 Renewable Energy Catalyst of the Year award from RENEW Wisconsin for being driving forces behind Aspirus' sustainability initiatives and achievements.
- It's Aspirus' goal to reduce our energy use by 50% and our carbon footprint by 80% by 2030.
- Specifically, at AMH, we are recycling surgery blue wrap plastic, composting food from our cafeteria and using all-natural products such as lemon juice and vinegar to clean our kitchen.





# Climate Champion: Stephanie Dulak, Aspirus Wausau

- Congratulations to **Stephanie Dulak, RN, Manager of Aspirus Wausau Hospital's emergency department**. She was presented with a Climate Champion award by the System Sustainability Oversight Committee.
- Stephanie earned the Climate Champion honor for identifying and leading a project to reduce the amount of waste the emergency department generates by replacing single-use, disposable EKG leads with reusable ones. EKG leads are attached to patients' chests for use in monitoring the electrical activity of the heart. Rather than throwing out these leads after each patient, the reusable EKG leads are thoroughly cleaned and then reused.
- This project allows the emergency department to:
  - **Cut down on its landfill waste by about 14,400 pounds a year.**
  - **Save \$46,000 in supply costs a year.**
  - Avoid carbon emissions associated with transporting supplies for delivery or disposal.
- In recognition of Stephanie's remarkable efforts, five trees were planted in the Superior National Forest in her name.



# Big Recycling Win for Aspirus Keweenaw

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In December 2021, Aspirus Keweenaw Hospital added a single-stream recycling dumpster to its campus.

This June, the hospital celebrated as its recycling vendor – **Waste Management** – emptied this dumpster for the first time, hauling away **1.44 tons of recyclables**. That's about the same weight as a Toyota Corolla!

Items placed in the dumpster include a mix of recyclables from hospital operations (kitchen, maintenance and more), the hospital cafeteria's recycling bin, and employees' homes.

# All-Electric Vehicle Added to Fleet

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- We added our first all – electric vehicle (EV) to Aspirus' fleet of company vehicles in Wausau on November 30. It is being used to transport lab specimens between Aspirus' testing center in Wausau and regional lab.
- The EV can travel up to 259 miles on a full charge and produces zero direct emissions of air pollutants and greenhouse gases. The EV is better for the environment and cheaper to own and operate than a gas-powered vehicle.
- We plan to transition our fleet to alternative fuel, including fully electric vehicles, at a rate of 3-5 per year as market available increases.
- Adding the EV to our fleet supports our Aspirus Sustainability Initiative and helps move us toward achieving our goal of reducing our system's carbon footprint and energy costs.



# Reduce Waste & Reuse

- Reuse: Reusing means using an object or resource material again for either the same purpose or another purpose without changing the object's structure. Reusing is better than recycling because it saves the energy that comes with having to take it apart and put it back together.
- Through system sustainability efforts, in fiscal year 2021, Aspirus was able to reduce its carbon footprint.

**Metric tons of carbon saved:  
7,491 MTCO<sub>2</sub>e**





# Reduce Waste & Reuse

- Reduce: The average person in the United States produces nearly 4.5 pounds of trash per day, adding up to over 1,600 pounds of trash per year.
- Reducing waste or living a zero-waste lifestyle can help conserve the planet's most valuable resources while decreasing pollution. As climate change continues to impact our lives, we must take every action possible to curb these effects and protect our planet and our health!
- Through system sustainability efforts, in fiscal year 2021, Aspirus made a huge impact on waste reduction!

**Waste diverted from landfills: 565,620 lbs**

