

North Coast Clinics Network GREEN RESOURCE GUIDE



"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtfully committed citizens can change the world. Indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." -- Margaret Mead

Why Green?

In the United States, 35 to 45 percent of the waste stream and 20 percent of the energy consumption is commercial in origin, resulting in over 50 billion dollars spent by businesses each year.

Committed to reducing its contribution to these harsh realities, NCCN and its network members pledged to implement three key green strategies: environmentally friendly cleaning products, efficient electrical and water systems, and innovative recycling programs. With funding from the Health Resources and Services Administration, the Network set out to create a healthy, sustainable environment for their businesses and, most importantly, for the communities they serve. Now, over 300 clinic employees and over 55,000 patients at network clinics have a safer and healthier environment in which they work and visit.

This ever-evolving guide showcases the successful endeavors of the Network and offers an array of green practices and considerations for health care organizations looking to become more eco-conscious. Join us in putting the green back into health care.

About North Coast Clinics Network

In 1992, a lunchtime group of clinic directors and administrators began holding regular, informal meetings to explore ways to work together and partner in order to effectively deliver health care services for the region's underserved population. The North Coast Clinics Network (NCCN) evolved from that group and has become an effective consortium of community health centers encompassing the rural, isolated area of Humboldt, Del Norte and Trinity Counties. Composed of five clinic corporations with thirteen safety-net provider sites, including twelve FQHCs and a Family Planning Clinic, the Network provides quality primary medical, dental, and mental health care services for all ages and income levels regardless of ability to pay.

For more information about NCCN's Green Initiatives, contact:
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REUSE - REDUCE RECYCLE

Although the United States has about 5% of the world's population, we consume about 25% of the world's energy. This startling fact reveals the importance of employing the green strategy of reuse-reduce-recycle to reduce waste and save energy. Serving a third of the population on the North Coast, NCCN and its network members work on a daily basis to mitigate our environmental impact through active and conscious waste reduction strategies.

Reuse:

- Open Door Community Health Centers (ODCHC) utilizes dry erase markers and laminated forms at their front desks to gather pertinent patient information for check-in.

Reduce:

- Six Rivers Planned Parenthood posts small signs on each programable office thermometer to remind staff of efficient heating and cooling temperatures.
- Through the purchase and use of a high speed energy efficient hand dryer, Mobile Medical Office will see a substantial reduction in paper towels waste for years to come.

Recycle:

- All NCCN members have successfully implemented comprehensive recycling programs for paper, plastics, and e-waste at their clinic sites.
- Redwoods Rural Health Center partnered with the Humboldt Waste Management Authority to develop waste disposal guidelines and a waste recycling program for their clinic.
- In partnership with the local Water Districts, Humboldt County Waste Management Authority, the Cities of Arcata and Eureka, and the Teleosis Institute, ODCHC started a green pharmacy program whereby patients and residents could safely dispose of unused or unneeded medications on-site at its clinics.



North Coast Innovation

- **Virtually Paperless Meetings:** NCCN works on a daily basis to significantly reduce and/or eliminate paper from meetings by posting digital materials on-line and utilizing email, video-conferencing, projectors, and Power-Point.
- **Virtually Paperless Practices:** Saving patients and providers time, travel, and money, telehealth technology at NCCN member clinics is bridging providers to an extended peer network and patients to needed quality care. Reduction in travel time and resources has demonstrated not just green savings but has created access for hundreds--even thousands--each year.

By late 2011, all NCCN member clinics will have implemented an Electronic Health Records system, bringing their practices further into the digital world. Leaving paper behind, these health centers will work diligently to bring quality healthcare to those in need on the North Coast.

Other Waste Reduction Ideas

- Utilize "smart" power surge protectors
- Purchase personal, reusable Klean Kanteens for staff
- Use screen savers to communicate reminders to staff
- Print double-sided whenever possible
- Buy recycled office supplies and toner cartridges
- Buy rechargeable batteries and battery chargers



WATER & ELECTRICITY CONSERVATION

Only 0.3% of the world's water supply is available for the population to share for agricultural, residential, manufacturing, community and personal needs. For personal needs alone, the average person uses 80-100 gallons of water a day.

Unfortunately, while the supply of water remains constant, the demand for fresh water continues to increase. These realities highlight the importance of water conservation techniques in the workplace in order to create cost savings and reduce water consumption and waste.

On average, commercial establishments dedicate 20-30% for lighting. In addition, a significant portion of the energy used for lighting is wasted on obsolete equipment, inadequate maintenance, or inefficient use.
- Redwood Energy Coast Authority



Understanding the importance of energy efficiency, NCCN member clinics worked with the Redwood Coast Energy Authority and Pacific Gas & Electric to assess their energy usage and implement these partners' recommendations. As a result of their green endeavor, member clinics have seen significant savings on their energy bills each month.

Water Conservation Techniques

- Automatic sensor faucets
- Faucet aerators
- Dual flush valves
- Low-flow toilets
- Efficient showerheads
- Energy star washing machines
- Tankless water heaters

Electricity Conservation Techniques

- Compact fluorescent bulbs and LED signs
- Energy efficient electronic ballasts
- Motion-sensored lights and/or switches
- Window film and/or laminate
- Solar tubes, panels, and/or skylights

Potential Benefits of Workplace Water Conservation

- Lower Water Bills
- Reduced water heating and appliance costs
- Less demand on water supply infrastructure
- Less water processed by treatment plants

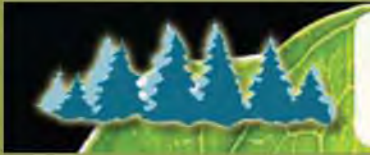
Conservation Partner

The Redwood Energy Coast Authority can help you assess, plan, and implement energy saving solutions that reduce energy consumption and create a more energy efficient business. Check out their website for programs, resources, and tools at <http://redwoodenergy.org/>



Look for the Water Sense or Energy Star seal when purchasing water or energy efficient products. These seals identify EPA tested and certified products. These seals may also qualify your business for rebates through PG&E.





GREEN CLEANING



We use dozens of cleaning products every day. However, some of these products can present several health and environmental concerns. They may contain chemicals associated with eye, skin, or respiratory irritation, or other human health issues. The concentrated forms of some commercial cleaning products are classified as hazardous, creating potential handling, storage, and disposal issues for users, as well as severe impacts on water, soil, and air quality. Thus, with a bit of careful consideration and incentive, implementing a green cleaning product program can reduce these human health and environmental concerns, creating a safe and healthy workplace.



In 2009, NCCN member Southern Trinity Health Services (STHS) assessed their cleaning supply inventory and initiated an organizational change to improve the health of its patients and staff. Now, 100% of this rural, federally qualified health center's cleaning supplies are green.

Other Green Cleaning Ideas

- Purchase in bulk and re-use containers
- Use biodegradable sponges or microfiber cloths
- Use microfiber mops for cleaning floors
- Buy CRI Certified Vacuums with HEPA filtration

Potential Benefits of Using Green Cleaning Supplies

- Enhanced employee productivity
- Increased employee health
- Reduced absenteeism
- Conserved water and energy
- Increased building valuation

Environmental Attributes To Look for on Labels

- Green Seal Certified
- Minimizes exposure to concentrates
- No ozone depleting substances (i.e. chlorofluorocarbons-CFCs)
- Reduced or no volatile organic compounds (VOCs)
- Reduced bioconcentration factor (water soluble)
- Reduced flammability
- Reduced or no added dyes (except when added for safety purposes)
- Reduced or fragrance-free
- Reduced or no skin irritants
- Reduced packaging
- Recyclable packaging
- Recycled-content in packaging

Green Seal Certified cleaning supplies:

- Spartan
- Grainger
- Green works
- Simple Green



GREEN BUILDING & MAINTENANCE

Community health centers are expanding each year to meet the needs of the underserved. The North Coast Clinics Network is no different as its clinics lead the way in green building. Over the last three years, NCCN clinics have improved their facilities: purchasing eco-friendly, and energy-efficient products, adding skylights, solar tubes, and installing window laminate, all with the goal to create a healthy environment for their patients and staff. Currently, one member, Open Door Community Health Centers, is laying plans to complete a LEED certified new access point that will double its capacity to serve residents on the North Coast. Bringing green health care to the North Coast, ODCHC and network members are creating environmental sustainability in their clinical practices for the good of the community.

Landscaping Techniques

- Plant native, drought resistant greenery
- Use organic soil, compost, and mulch
- Apply only eco-friendly pesticides
- Set up drip irrigation or utilize rain barrels
- Utilize recycled construction materials, such as brick, clay, wood, and metal

Pest Control

Common pesticides can have negative effects not only on the natural environment but also human beings as well. Instead of using these harmful chemicals, try these eco-friendly alternatives our clinics have found safe and effective:

- Borax or Boric Acid (i.e. Terro)
- Clove or Peppermint Oil



Conceptual site plan for ODCHC's new health center

Green Construction Considerations

- Non-toxic, low VOC paints, stains, and finishes, etc.
- FSC Certified Recycled/Reclaimed or sustainable lumber
- FSC Certified flooring, linoleum, and carpet
- Energy efficient lighting, water, and ventilation systems
- Community gardens, walking trails, and/or playground

Environmental Benefits

- Enhance and protect ecosystems
- Improve air and water quality
- Reduce waste streams
- Conserve and restore natural resources

Economic benefits

- Reduce operating costs
- Expand markets for green product and services
- Improve occupant productivity
- Optimize life-cycle economic performance

Social benefits

- Enhance occupant comfort and health
- Heighten aesthetic qualities
- Minimize strain on local infrastructure
- Improve overall quality of life



The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) has created a green building rating system, LEED for Healthcare. The rating system is meant to guide the design and construction of both new buildings and major renovations of existing buildings. Check it out on-line.