

Wisconsin Pharmacies Going GREEN

Skipping the Bag: Madison VA Finds Creative Way to Reduce Plastic Use

Contributed by: Nate Menninga, Clinical Pharmacy Specialist

The increasing problem of plastic pollution in our world was highlighted during the 2018 Earth Day Expo at the Madison VA. This launched an evaluation of our facility's use of plastic, which resulted in a bulletin outlining four easy ways to use less plastic at work. Three of them highlighted areas we are all familiar with: using reusable water bottles, keeping dinnerware at work, and using reusable bags or skipping the bag altogether at the facility's store. A more out-of-the-box idea requiring collaboration across all departments within our facility was to reduce the number of trash bins kept in workspaces with the goal of reducing the 1.2 million plastic trash liners used each year by 5%. For example, instead of having four trash bins for four desks in a single room, there would be only one trash bin in a central location. It was estimated that this would result in \$3000 of savings annually and allow our Environmental Services department to save two hours emptying trash bins daily. It has also had the added benefit of forcing us all to get up out of our chairs and meet our daily step goals!

GHS Environmentally Friendly Shippers

Contributed by: Loren Carrell

Gundersen Health System has been committed to decreasing waste and diminishing our carbon footprint for years. Over the past decade we have invested in multiple renewable energy sources such as wind farms and solar panels. We also built a biomass boiler, which converts natural gasses such as methane into steam at a very high rate of efficiency. With these investments, Gundersen became the first health system to become energy independent and has remained off the grid since October 2014.

Two years ago, as the pharmacy was reviewing validated shipping containers, our supply-chain department notified us of a company called GreenCell. They manufacture shipping containers made from corn that are biodegradable and environmentally friendly. This allows our pharmacies to avoid using Styrofoam, which lasts forever in landfills when discarded. Given our system's focus on conservancy, we brought them in for validation. The results have showed the products are stable past 24 hours and we have had several patients comment on the convenience of not having to ship the containers back to us.

I would encourage other pharmacies to investigate this option but would share a couple tips. First, make sure that you do your own studies with them. There is a specific way container need to be packed and it helps ensure your pharmaceuticals are being shipped appropriately. Second, I would include handouts with the packages and communicate with your patients if you make the change. Early on we had a few that didn't realize the foam dissolves in water and were concerned that throwing them away would cause more waste in the environment.

Overall, the experience with these shippers has been a great opportunity for the Gundersen Pharmacy Department to help contribute to our organization's focus on waste reduction and use of renewable resources.



JPSW is Going GREEN

by Megan Grant, Nick Friedlander, 2020 PharmD Candidate, Amanda Margolis PharmD, MS, BCACP



The *Journal of the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin* has decided to make one issue a year the GREEN issue. As you read on the adjacent page, many pharmacies are doing their part to make a positive impact on our planet. We are doing our part to save a few trees and continue their great work to reduce our environmental footprint. The March/April issue of *JPSW* will be the green issue every year. Interested in going all green? You can opt out of the mailed version of *The Journal* in your PSW account. Go to pswi.org and login to your online account. In your user account under "Account Actions" on the right hand side of the screen, choose the "privacy and Journal Subscription" link. On the next page, un-click the option to "include me in the physical mailing of *The Journal*". This will take you off the mailing list. You can always access the PDF and digital version of *The Journal* on the Journal archive page on our website.

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