

# Partnering for Sustainability

## The Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care

By Linda Varangu and Kent Waddington

**Greening a health care** organization is not something that can be done in isolation; it takes collaboration and partnerships with governments, community groups, professional associations, environmentally-focused private sector companies and not-for-profit health care organizations such as the Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care (the Coalition), of which CHES is a founding member.

Founded in Ottawa in 2000 by representatives from some of Canada's largest health care associations and environmental groups, the Coalition works collaboratively to raise awareness of sustainable health care issues and to help increase the capacity of health care organizations and their staff or members to address the sector's many environmental issues.

The Coalition is very proud of its ten-year relationship with CHES and the successes it has had in the areas of environmental education, awareness and outreach which includes the development of CHES's first environmentally-focused trade show feature, the Green Park, the newly minted Inspire Green initiative, bilateral participation on planning committees, and being co-signatories on a national joint position statement



spelling out a new commitment to creating an environmentally responsible Canadian health sector.

Green Park was developed with Coalition help three years ago as a specialty sustainability component of the National Trade Show and Education Forum to showcase vendors whose products/services reflect a corporate mission to support the health and well being of people and the planet. As hospitals embrace environmentally responsible health care service delivery they are seeking now more than ever to find "green" suppliers to assist them in fulfilling their health care commitment.

Vendors in the Green Park set themselves apart from their competitors by demonstrating commitment to informing the public about the sustainability aspects of their products/services thereby helping purchasers make more environmentally-informed decisions.

Inspire Green is a newly developed educational opportunity for CHES Trade Show exhibitors not exhibiting in the designated Green Park but yet who have something green to share with show attendees.

It focuses attention on emerging green products and services that offer a distinct environmental benefit to Canada's health services sector by lessening the harmful environmental impact upon staff, patients, and our communities. Inspire Green will be introduced at the 2010 Whistler Conference. This effort compliments the Coalition's Green Product and Service Directory, which will be designed to promote these types of products and services to the health care community through the Coalition's web site. Interested vendors should contact Donna Dennison at [ddennison@eventsmgt.com](mailto:ddennison@eventsmgt.com).

Following an invitation by the Coalition in 2009, CHES executive embraced the opportunity to join thirteen national organizations representing all areas of the health sector, in crafting the Joint Position Statement—Toward an Environmentally Responsible Canadian Health Sector. The Statement is an unprecedented show of commitment and support for the adoption of sustainable health care practices from Canada’s major health service organizations including CHES and the Coalition.

The three Calls to Action imbedded in the statement include:

- We call on governments and policy-makers at all levels to understand and address links between health and the environment and to incorporate these links into policy decisions through legislative and budgetary actions.
- We call on all health care organizations to pledge to minimize the negative impact of their activity on the environment and to seek solutions to existing barriers.
- We call on individuals working in the

health sector to both model and advocate for environmentally responsible approaches to delivering health care without compromising patient safety and care.

CHES President Michael Hickey confirmed CHES’s environmental commitment at the time of the document’s release saying “Members of the Canadian Healthcare Engineering Society have worked tirelessly throughout the past decade to blend environmentally sustainable health service delivery practices with day-to-day operations at hundreds of health care facilities across Canada. We are succeeding in lowering health care’s ecological footprint and are proud to work in partnership with the most influential health care organizations in Canada to achieve that goal. Together we commit to creating the sustainable health service environment needed to preserve our natural environment for future generations.”

Quite simply, partnering for sustainability works. Visit [www.greenhealthcare.ca](http://www.greenhealthcare.ca) to learn how you can

become part of this national greening initiative.

The Canadian Coalition for Green Health Care (CCGHC) is an alliance of committed Canadian health service organizations, associations and environmentally focused partners providing an active vehicle for enabling positive ecological change within the Canadian health care landscape. It is dedicated to encouraging the adoption of resource conservation and pollution prevention principles and effective environmental management systems, without compromising safety and care, which protects human health and reduces the Canadian health care system’s ecological impact. ■

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