

Follow the Supply Chain to a Greener Future

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By Cindy Juhas

Sustainability is a hot topic for many businesses, and with **hospitals contributing 8 percent of the total national carbon footprint** the healthcare industry has increasingly championed sustainable practices. However, despite broad support within hospitals and healthcare facilities, the implementation of sustainable practices across the board can be difficult especially when it comes to equipment purchasing.



Decision-makers often endorse sustainable policies, but a misalignment between policy-makers and the professionals who negotiate and execute purchasing is all too common in the industry. While healthcare supply chain professionals are experts at juggling client needs, if sustainability has not been made a top priority, the green products they should be sourcing can lose out to other considerations such as size, price and maintenance concerns.

These missed opportunities can impact patients and facility staff in both great and small ways, and the power that supply chain managers wield in reducing environmental harm – as well as increasing the longevity of a product lifespan, which can prove more profitable over time – should not be overlooked.

By collaborating with the supply chain, finding the right equipment to reduce carbon emissions and increase the recycling and repurposing of materials can be easy. The **American Hospital Association** recently debuted its **Sustainability Roadmap for Hospitals** as a resource for healthcare leaders who wish to prioritize sustainability. The roadmap includes guides and information on how to effectively collaborate with supply chain professionals to prioritize sustainability.

Two of the most common areas of such collaboration are the day-to-day policies and the selection of regularly used products.

Hospitals can go green with repurposing and recycling policies. Non-invasive devices as well as furniture and some equipment can be repurposed during renovations for use in a new or updated facility. Many companies offer reprocessing programs that allow facilities to recycle certain single-use items and allow the company to repurpose its own materials for future products or uses.

Biomedical technicians are experts in equipment validation, product assessment, verification and valuation. These skills are of great assistance when facility operators want to evaluate their products and identify which ones can be repurposed or upgraded.

From low-emission refrigeration systems to eco-friendly chair upholstery options, many manufacturers are increasingly focused on providing sustainable products. In addition to the array of sustainable equipment options, utilizing direct-to-site delivery and turn-key logistics can reduce waste. Supply chain professionals are well-versed in manufacturer selection and service offerings. Empowering those professionals to include green delivery criteria in their selection of partners can increase the return on investment for sustainable practices.

Cindy Juhas is the Chief Strategy Officer of CME Corp. CME is a national distributor of healthcare equipment representing over 1,400 manufacturers and 1.2 million items including a wide array of sustainable products and services. Along with providing the equipment, CME also offers unique services including logistics, warehousing, assembling, staging, delivery, and installation of equipment for new facility and equipment replacement projects. Learn more at cmecorp.com.

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