

Clinic Grants Program 2024-2025

List of Program Descriptions and Outcomes - "Environmental Sustainability" Focus Area



In their End of Project Reports, many clinics expressed a strong interest in learning about the projects completed by other clinics. Below is a comprehensive list of Environmental Sustainability descriptions and outcomes, as reported by the clinics.

References to specific names of clinics or individuals have been removed for privacy.

Exploring Prescriptions for more Environmentally Responsible Inhalers

Description

We looked at current prescribing of inhalers for asthma and COPD for all of the clinic physicians - researched, the environmental impact and the effect on the environment.

As a team we decided to approach our patients and try to switch them to more environmentally responsible and sustainable alternative medications. We posted information on our website and created information for patients about making a change of their inhalers.

All the physicians at the office approached our eligible patients at scheduled appointments - both in person and virtually. We were usually able to have the inhaler switched to a more environmental option. We used the Cascades Inhaler information as handouts for patients.

Outcomes Achieved

We had handout materials prepared and updated our website information with regard to negative environmental issues related to inhalers and other known environmentally unfriendly medications.

All of the physicians in the practice reviewed their prescribing data and discussed with patients to switch to DPI's. We encouraged patients to properly dispose of their inhalers by returning them to the pharmacy so they do not end up in a landfill.

To reduce the prescribing and use of metered-dose inhalers Physicians reviewed medications and successfully reduced the use of metered-dose inhalers linked with negative environmental impact in approximately 85% of patients. All of the physicians were involved with this project.

One unexpected result was that one provider had ambivalence with participating and needed encouragement to join. It had been expected that everyone would be very keen to implement the change. Patients were very motivated and open to the discussion which was a little unexpected as we thought that there would be more pushback from patients regarding changing long-term medication.

Developing a Sustainable Prescribing Manual

Description

Develop manuals/policies aimed at promoting environmentally sustainable prescribing practices. Goal is to create detailed manual with quick reference guides to help colleagues and staff understand and implement sustainable prescribing methods. Physicians will create the materials and distribute to other physician as well as staff in the clinic, we will also have a training sessions with physicians and staff.

Outcomes Achieved

A comprehensive Sustainable Prescribing Manual was developed. Education session for healthcare providers and clinic staff on sustainable prescribing practices. Reduction in environmental impact of prescribing practices.

Policy Development for Sourcing Sustainable Supplies

Description

Creation of internal policy that we have been finding and procuring suppliers and supplies for low waste, sustainable products. Mainly used with staff time and resources calling different suppliers all across Canada.

Outcomes Achieved

Internal policy. Found a new supplier for paper towels. Better disposal techniques. New dressing packs found, which are disposable.

Developing Environmentally Responsible Prescribing Practices

Description

Create in-house manuals and reference cards that aim to integrate environmentally responsible prescribing practices into our practices. These guides will offer practical advice on selecting greener medications, managing the disposal of unused pharmaceuticals, and reducing waste. All materials will be shared with our team digitally. We will have training sessions as well for the clinic staff.

Outcomes Achieved

1. Sustainable Prescribing: Created digital guides for greener medication choices.
2. Digital Resources: Digitally shared materials reduced paper use, increasing staff engagement.
3. Medication Disposal: Established effective disposal procedures and educated patients.
4. Staff Training: Training improved staff confidence and collaboration.

Implementing Environmentally Sustainable Practices

Description

We sought improvement in Environmentally sustainable practices in our clinic:

1. Office Policies: - Laundry Policy: We updated our Laundry policy to reflect our choice to use linens and non-disposable fabric gowns for both patient encounters and staff cleaning practices. This involved office inventory, referencing resource materials on the CPSBC Website relating to Health/Safety for cleaning policies.
2. Recycling Policy: We created a new office policy to sort office waste, emphasizing our clinic's wish to minimize disposable items and created a new office station for sorting waste into appropriate types/containers. This involved consultation with the building waste information resources. Staff education: we hosted a lunch to update/educate staff relating to these new policies and sought input for improvement. Staff also suggested patient poster information relating to office commitment to minimize table paper use.
3. MDR reprocessing review: Our office recently completed this CPSBC mandated audit cycle in Autumn 2024. This was actually done 'outside' of the parameters of

the grant, but we did develop internal cleaning practices during this process that aligned with our goals of using minimal waste and eco-friendly cleaning products (as much as possible).

4. Lighting: I also referenced the Vancouver Division resource on environmental practices. The section there relating to replacing lighting with LED bulbs seemed sensible. We purchased and replaced the "pot lights" in our clinic with LED bulbs. The grant experience was helpful.

Outcomes Achieved

1. Clinic policy: revision and development of Laundry Policy and Recycling Policy
2. Inventory and review of single-use items, laundry and cleaning products
3. Purchase and organization of a recycling station within our back office area
4. Educational Lunch for clinic staff: discussing this project, changes, and seeking input for other efficiencies and patient-facing posters to decrease paper (and other) waste in our clinic
5. Review of MDR cleaning process and agents used
6. Replacement of clinic lights with LED bulbs.

Paper Waste Reduction & Sustainably Sourced Paper Products

Description

Putting into policies and teaching around the use of paper and sustainable products that we use on a daily basis at the clinic enter prevent waste of materials that are used in the clinic. Cost used were spent on staff training conducted by the manager and myself, and also to come in on Sundays for teaching. Explaining how to use much less paper and look for much better resources, along with the disposal and sheets for the Medical couches and paper towels that are used.

Outcomes Achieved

- Much less use of paper for printing
- More sustainable recycling of paper.
- Found resources for recycled table paper
- Found resources for recycled paper towel.

- Better training of staff in sustainability.

Patient Education on Environmental Issues

Description

Installation of message boards and frames to post information on climate change and health and benefits of being in nature.

Outcomes Achieved

Positive feedback from patients who are looking at the materials.

Paper Towel Reduction & Low-Energy Light Installation

Description

Install hand dryers and replace old lights with LED.

Outcomes Achieved

I installed hand dryers and changed the old lights to LED.

Improvements to Reduce Water & Energy Usage (1)

Description

Capital Improvements to help reduce environment burden.

Outcomes Achieved

Installed new low flow faucets & LED lighting.

Improvements to Reduce Water & Energy Usage (2)

Description

Replace all lighting to LED Lightings and low flow faucet

Outcomes Achieved

The replacement to LED Lights and low flow faucets it will have a positive impact on the environment as it requires less energy to produce and operate. Therefore, it will reduce

cost on the energy and water bills as well, it enhanced safety and low UV and heat emissions. We will monitor the future months billing to compare the cost savings. LED lighting has longer a longer lifespan than the traditional bulbs with less maintenance and replacement cost.

Installation of Energy Saving Devices

Description

Air exchanger/occupancy light sensors

Outcomes Achieved

Decrease using energy.

Changing Incandescent Light Bulbs to LED

Description

Change my incandescent light bulbs to LED

Outcomes Achieved

Reduction of Environmental Impact/Greener Energy use.

Upgrading Light Fixtures to LED

Description

Switched and installed the hardware to power efficient LED lights and ballasts in the six examination rooms, two bathrooms, three storage rooms, MOA work areas and long hallways.

Outcomes Achieved

We expect to see a reduction in our monthly electrical bill costs as well as a lower replacement cost for LED lighting being replaced less frequently over time. As in most projects of this nature, we do not expect to recoup initial installation costs until months or a year later due to capital costs.

Hot Water Tank Replacement

Description

Replace the previous aging hot water tank to a new more efficient model.

Outcomes Achieved

Our office has replaced the previous aging hot water tank to a new more efficient model. This has made our office more energy efficient and more friendly to the environment.

Exam Room Upgrades

Description

Installation of new flooring for clinic rooms, LED lighting, sinks in the clinic rooms with new soap dispensers and paper towel holders.

Outcomes Achieved

The low formaldehyde emission flooring is helping patients who suffer with allergies and is helping with the air quality. The low cost energy efficient lighting and greater lumens is helping physicians examine patients and cutting the costs of electricity. The easy access to soap and water in the exam rooms are helping in the efficiency of the clinic and is much better with respect to hygiene as compared to hand sanitizer.

Adoption of Self-Assessment Recommendations

Description

I based my project on the Environmental Sustainability Tool that you kindly provided to us last year and which I completed in December.

There were six sections to the tool

1. Energy - For this section, I was able to engage my staff on improving practices to save energy. For example, the staff now turn off their computer monitors when they leave the office rather than wait for the computer's own power settings to do this. All the lights are turned off when the last person leaves, of course. One area of our office gets a bit cold in the winter months so we have a small portable heater there. I exchanged this for a more energy-efficient model. All the lighting in the office has been changed to more energy-efficient LED bulbs. I have also engaged the owner of the building about tinting our windows and installing automatic, self-regulating thermostats.

2. Water - For this section, I found one leaky faucet in the office and replaced the o-ring to get a tight seal. I have also engaged the building owner about installing motion-sensor faucets. These faucets are already installed in the building's common areas so I am hopeful that the owner will agree to installing similar faucets in all of the doctors' offices.

3. Waste - For this section, I again engaged our staff on the proper disposal of waste. We have separate bins for recyclables, general waste, and organic waste. Of course we already have an EMR in place to reduce the use of paper but we can still improve on this. I am presently researching and considering a switch to e-faxes which will help greatly with the amount of paper that is generated by pharmacies requesting prescription refills. Another place we have improved upon is on the cups in our office. Many patients ask for a cup of water while they are waiting for their appointment. We now use compostable cups for this purpose.

4. Sustainable Procurement - For this section, I have engaged with pharma reps who come to see me about their sustainability practices. Some companies are better than others but I have found that simply asking the question puts pharma companies on notice that this is an important topic for physicians and patients. I have also engaged with our medical supply company, about their sustainability practices. I am happy to report that they are very aware of this and have implemented several policies to reduce their carbon footprint.

5. Transportation - For this section, I can report that I now pick-up one of my part-time staff on my way to work resulting in a small car-pool. In the summer months, I bike to work about 90% of the time. I have also resolved that my next vehicle will be an electric vehicle.

6. Staff Engagement - For this section, I have engaged my staff on several, informal occasions to discuss what we can do better as an office. Energy efficiency, water efficiency, waste disposal, and transportation have all been improved.

7. Climate Resilience - For this section, my staff and I have created an earthquake plan, an extreme heat plan, and a power outage plan. Interestingly, we felt the recent earthquake on Vancouver Island quite readily in our office and for a moment or two, thought we might need to initiate our plan! Extreme heat events should be manageable with the air conditioning in the building. We have made a list of vulnerable patients who may benefit from "cooling off" in our building should a dangerous extreme heat event occur. Our office building has a back-up generator in case of a power outage.

Outcomes Achieved

I really do feel we have made some strides in improving our environmental sustainability practices. The staff is certainly more engaged and much more self-aware and conscious of their decisions and practices. One thing I learned about this project is that there is an initial capital investment to improve sustainability, but that this investment will be recuperated over time, eventually leading to savings. Many of the savings, however, will be a benefit to the building owner, not to me or my staff. Any energy, water, or waste efficiencies benefit the landlord who pays the utility bills. That is unfortunate. Still, I do feel we are doing our part in a more collective responsibility to the planet. We need more people to get engaged in sustainability. Young people seem to have this mind-set but older people do not. And since I have an older practice now that I am getting older, my next project will be to engage patients in sustainability practices.

Thank you for giving us the Environmental Sustainability Tool as a guide to reflect on our behavior. This project was an opportunity to make some valuable improvements as without the funding that goes along with it, I do not know if I would have put in the energy (no pun intended) to look at our office through the lens of environmental sustainability.

Installation of Accessible & Environmentally Sustainable Flooring

Description

Installation of environmentally-friendly flooring material that is safe for people who use mobility devices, strollers, and other aids.

Outcomes Achieved

We were able to install improved, safer, more environmentally sustainable flooring in our clinic. This makes the space safer, decreases risk of falls, is easier to walk on (often quickly), and reduces noise for those who have sensory sensitivities.

Sustainability-Focused Improvements to Devices and Practices

Description

We would like to replace all our current halogen lights in our office (both ceiling and exam table) with LED lighting and install motion sensitive switches to some of our rooms. We would like to upgrade our thermostat to an improved programmable one or a smart one (cost permitting) to more efficiently use heating/cooling. We would also like to install a low flow toilet, modify our exam room faucets to low flow. To do this we will need to get a plumber to give us a quote. We will review the way to use our office electrical

equipment such as computers, monitors and printers and ensure they are turned off or enter power saving modes when the office is closed.

Outcomes Achieved

We increased our awareness of energy use and how that can have a negative environmental impact and incurring increased costs in the long term. By reviewing our daily office work flow, current use of energy hungry devices we were able to identify and begin to replace fixtures such as lights and thermostats that were initially installed when we moved in our office >20 years ago, replacing them with more energy efficient items. An unexpected positive result was our office ended up reviewing and discussing the Green Office Toolkit for Clinicians and Office managers available from the Canadian Coalition of Green Health Care and how we can begin to implement some of its recommendations from changing the way we prescribe to ordering supplies.

Energy Audit & Improvements to Clinic Operational Practices

Description

We conducted an audit to see where we could improve first of all in terms of energy.

1. Thermostats were reprogrammed so that they were turned down on weekends and after hours.
2. Exam room is not used for a few hours. Would have lights turned off. Bathroom lights would be off until used
3. We purchased the more energy, efficient, high-end, fast autoclave MRitter9.

Water Toilet are low flush Recycle PAP - with more efficient autoclave shorter time to achieve sterilization and wrapping of speculums. No disposable speculums used.

Recycle bins in waiting room with clear signage so patients can be actively involved in recycling of paper cups, cans, and bottle bottles. Staff would check garbage cans at the end of the day to ensure recycling bins was maintained Simple things such as using recyclable cups for staff when they do a coffee run, including the paper trays are being taken back to the coffee, shops, and reused. The Whole project has empowered, both patients and staff to be more environmental conscious and it makes everyone feel like they're working together in as a team.

Outcomes Achieved

Almost all staff now have recyclable coffee, mugs, and less paper cups are coming in in the morning in the past our recycle bins were full of recycle cups by the end of the week.

More effort is being made to turn lights off when rooms are not being used. And we will talk to our electrician to see if we can put a sensor into the patient bathrooms.

Overall, the main thing for the project is that patient and staff alike have become more aware of the role and importance of environmental sustainability - every small bit counts. It's good to feel like you can make an impact. One of our patients made hand towels to decrease paper towels (individual per doc). We've created signage.

Sustainability and Accessibility Focused Improvements to Devices and Practices

Description

Our project will enhance clinic sustainability by expanding and adding exam rooms to improve patient access. We will install secure bike storage, staff changing facilities, and low-flow toilets to reduce emissions and water use. A new staff lunchroom will encourage waste reduction by supporting reusable containers and minimizing food waste. The clinic manager and HR will develop policies to integrate sustainable practices into daily operations. The project goal is to improve patient access while advancing environmental sustainability by expanding clinic capacity, promoting eco-friendly commuting, reducing water and energy use, minimizing waste, and embedding sustainable practices in daily operations.

Outcomes Achieved

The target outcome has (and will continue to) increase patient access through additional exam rooms. Now that we have more space, we have been able to recruit another family practitioner who will start ASAP. Staff retaining and sustainability/stability will be easier, as we now have a larger front desk for our MOAs and have space for another part time one (which we recruited this month), easing the workload for all. It has reduced environmental impact as more staff are bringing in their lunches and using the staff lunchroom and recycling their waste. Staff feel comfortable riding to work now that we have space to park their bikes, rather than locking it up outside of the clinic, where theft has often occurred.