

The Eleven-Year Journey of Manila Doctors Hospital in institutionalizing Climate Change Mitigation Actions



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ABSTRACT: Total wellness cannot be achieved without recognizing the importance of responsible environmental stewardship. Tertiary hospitals are an energy-intensive sector. Therefore, it must set an example on how to manage its energy consumption and waste in a way that can significantly decrease the carbon footprint. For the past eleven years, the Manila Doctors Hospital has followed a model that not only reduces waste thereby supporting the hospital management's infection prevention program and cost-saving initiatives but, at the same time, can earn from its recyclables program. The Corporate Social Responsibility Office utilizes proceeds from the recyclables program for communities affected by climate change and in the provision of healthcare services in underserved areas.

Background

The management of Manila Doctors in 2006 established the Environment and Waste Management Committee (ENVICOM). The ENVICOM and the Corporate Social Responsibility Office (CSRO) as a contributor to the hospital's good governance created a comprehensive environmental program in response to the growing challenges of climate change. This is also in fulfillment of its Social Vision and adherence to the three environmentally focused principles of the United Nations Global Compact (UNGC) that Manila Doctors as an active member is expected to integrate into its policies and daily operations as an active member. The three UNGC Principles on Environment states that: Principle 7: Businesses should support a precautionary approach to environmental challenges; Principle 8: Undertake initiatives to promote greater environmental responsibility; and Principle 9: Encourage the development and diffusion of environmentally friendly technologies.

Methodology and results

There are four components: (1) Engagement (2) Reduction (3) Source and (4) Response. For **ENGAGEMENT**, the objective is to involve both the internal and external stakeholders in implementing, sustaining and replicating the hospital's climate mitigation actions and policies. For **REDUCTION**, the objective is to decrease the carbon footprint of the hospital operations through energy conservation, reduction of waste, sustainable recycling and introduction of renewable energy. For **SOURCE**, the establishment of an environmentally responsible supply chain. **RESPONSE** pertains to the utilization of the savings from the **REDUCTION** efforts including the proceeds from the recyclables for various projects that respond to emerging health and socio-economic needs brought about by climate change. One key element is the inclusion of different organizations (Manila Doctors Corporate Social Responsibility Circle of Partners or CSR Circle of Partners) in the implementation. These include non-government organizations, people's organizations, local government units and even private companies/corporations.

ENGAGEMENT comprises of the institutionalization of policies and procedures that support the precautionary

approach to environmental challenges initiated by the top management. This is regularly audited by the Quality and Risk Management Office (QRMO), sustained participation of the whole internal community both the medical and non-medical personnel, and replication by our external stakeholders of the hospital initiatives that promote greater environmental responsibility. For REDUCTION, the output can be measured through the savings in terms of energy (in kilowatt per hour), in terms of peso value (monetary), and in terms of reduced carbon emission. Moreover, the income from the recyclables project generated from the hospital wastes is also measured and added in the measurement of results. For SOURCE, identified outputs include partnering with suppliers that also promotes environmentally responsible technologies and has no record of violating any of the environmental laws of the country and sourcing from local farms that do not use petrochemicals and composting food waste and for RESPONSE, the measurement is based on the number of individuals and families served funded by the proceeds from the recyclables project.

ENGAGEMENT. According to WHO, 85% of the total amount of waste generated by healthcare activities is general, non-hazardous waste. The remaining 15% is considered hazardous material that may be infectious, toxic or radioactive. Every year an estimated 16 billion injections are administered worldwide, but not all of the needles and syringes are properly disposed of afterward. Healthcare waste contains potentially harmful microorganisms, which can infect hospital patients, healthcare workers, and the general public. Health-care waste in some circumstances is incinerated, and dioxins, furans, and other toxic air pollutants may be produced as emissions.

- a. By institutionalizing and strictly implementing waste management guidelines coupled with regular hospital-wide internal audits, the hospital has successfully prevented cases of infections and injuries to patients and hospital personnel due to improper waste handling.
- b. Every unit in the hospital is engaged in the hospital's energy conservation and recycling efforts. Proper waste segregation is part of the standards of hospital risk management. Conservation of resources and energy like "Share-A-Ride" by the Facilities Management Department (FMD) monitors and synchronizes the trips of those who request the use of the various hospital vehicles, so instead of one person using one vehicle, FMD is able to arrange one vehicle for at least three personnel going to three different external meetings. The result is savings on fuel, time, personnel (driver) for the hospital. For the public lessening the number of vehicles competing for road space. Members of the internal community and patients including their relatives are also expected to use stairs when going up or down the third level of the hospital except for the PWDs, Senior Citizens with ailments and patients whose health might be compromised.
- c. Both our adopted community and school are implementing ECOSAVERS: Recycling for extra earnings.
- d. The Hospital is also working with its external partners in

creating clean and green spaces in the City of Manila.

For the **REDUCTION** programs, since 2007, Manila Doctors Hospital has continually sought ways to make its hospital more environmentally friendly. There are several needs and priority areas identified by ENVICOM and CSR, and corresponding solutions were undertaken to address these including:

- a. Awareness campaign in the proper handling of hazardous wastes according to the Philippines' Department of Environment and Natural Resources standards.
- b. For non-hazardous wastes, Manila Doctors implements the 3R principle: Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. Recycling became one of the hospital's main projects, and the recyclables are sold to an accredited supplier/provider. 60% of the proceeds go to the department for their team building and other activities, while 40% goes to the CSR programs.
- c. The hospital eradicated the use of Styrofoam.
- d. LED lights have replaced all conventional bulbs, and solar-powered lamps were also installed to light the hospital premises.
- e. The hospital has its own compost bins to produce organic fertilizers being used for the plants around the hospital.
- f. In 2008, the hospital joined in the World Wildlife Fund Philippines (WWF) Earth Hour initiative. Manila Doctors turning-off non-essential lights twice a month.
- g. In 2015, the Pediatrics department started using recycled IV plastic bottles as a substitute for the transparent dressing that proved to be effective in avoiding IV burns and cost efficient for both the patients and hospital.

By minimizing wastes, the hospital does not burden the patients with unnecessary charges.

For REDUCTION projects, from 2008 – 2016, the hospital saved a total of 21, 577.59 Kilowatt-hours, 9.72 in terms of carbon emissions and Php244, 458.28 or \$5,432.00 in terms of peso value. The recyclables program was able to generate a total of Php5,057,212.84 (\$112,382.50) from 2006 to 2016. The hospital-wide waste management program spearheaded by the Infection Prevention and Control Office resulted into zero infection of patients due to improper waste handling which in turn helped the hospital in avoiding medico-legal cases, which can affect the hospital financially.

Promotion of green practices coupled with responsible segregation and disposal of wastes are vital in ensuring the safety of patients and employees. According to the World Health Organization, "Health-care waste contains potentially harmful microorganisms which can infect hospital patients, healthcare workers and, the general public. Other potential infectious risks may include the spread of drug-resistant microorganisms from health facilities into the environment." Through the different ENVICOM programs, the hospital ensures that the risk for these infections does not affect not only the patients but also the general public.

SOURCING. By conducting business with suppliers practicing similar environment protection principles, the hospital is creating a green and sustainable supply chain. It also forces companies seeking accreditation as a hospital supplier to look

at their own environmental policies. Our FMD conducts on-site visits to validate the environmental practice of our suppliers. In expanding our facilities, the management also insisted on having an energy efficient building.

RESPONSE. With the 40% of the proceeds generated by the recyclables program allotted for CSR, Manila Doctors identifies priority projects that significantly benefit individuals and communities gravely affected by climate change and those who are marginalized in accessing quality healthcare. These projects include:

- a. The conduct of medical and surgical missions in provinces where there is no hospital and scarcity of healthcare professionals.
- b. Support the needs of financially challenged patients from island provinces and from far-flung areas in need of critical Ophthalmology, Otorhinolaryngology and Gynecological surgeries.
- c. Provision of alternative livelihood for fisher folk families affected by climate change.
- d. Provision of basic farming tools for farmers devastated by typhoons.
- e. Provision of food packages, hygiene kits and solar lamps for areas affected by natural and human-made disasters.

Two units in the hospital, ENVICOM, and CSRO, are the primary program implementers but all the other units participate extensively in all of these efforts especially in infection control, proper waste management and recycling. As a result, the recycling efforts have yielded substantial amounts instrumental in funding some of the hospital's vital CSR programs.

The hospital's external community is also part of these projects in terms of implementation. Manila Doctors works with the United Recyclers Organization of the Philippines (UROF) as the primary partner for the collection of recyclables. The CSRO Circle of Partners primarily coordinates with the beneficiaries of the projects funded by the recyclables project and is instrumental in helping the hospital expand its reach in terms of its climate change mitigation initiatives and the provision of healthcare in underserved areas.

Conclusion

The program benefits both the hospital's internal and external stakeholders. First, the reduction projects can ensure that the hospital complies not just with the statutory waste management practices, but also with globally accepted climate change mitigation practices. This guarantees the safety of the hospital's patients, their families, doctors, and employees. Next, through the proceeds coming from the reduction programs, Manila Doctors can reach out to more families in the countryside where the impact of climate change has affected both the livelihood and health of communities.

The project is replicable, scalable and sustainable especially for hospitals in developing countries. Investing in more environmentally friendly business practices enables the hospital to contribute to environmental sustainability and climate change mitigation actions. In the process, the hospital was also able to engage various partners like our adopted community by training

them in producing products from recyclable materials that are sold commercially, helping them augment their family income. The hospital's adopted school and community were trained on recycling, and Manila Doctors connected them with its partner UROF who buys the materials and recycles them for different purposes. These partnerships widen the circle of awareness and simultaneous actions leading to sustainable results.

Biography

Before joining Manila Doctors Hospital in 2013, **Ms. Jill S. Alvarez** implemented various human development programs in the areas of health, gender and livelihood with multilateral organizations, local government units, and non-profit organizations. Her experience includes working with the most impoverished communities in both the urban and rural areas of the Philippines.

Mr. Ren L. Reyes joined Manila Doctors Hospital in 2000 and held various positions before being promoted as Head of Facilities and Management Department (FMD) in 2017. Mr. Reyes is also the Environment and Waste Management Committee (ENVICOM) chairman and has led his team in the integration of green engineering practices in the hospital.

References

1. World Health Organization and Health Care Without Harm. 2009. *Healthy Hospitals, Healthy Planet, Healthy People: Addressing climate change in healthcare settings*. Discussion draft. Available from http://www.who.int/globalchange/publications/climatefootprint_report.pdf?ua=1
2. United Nations Global Compact. 2000. Ten Global Compact Principles for Businesses. Available from <https://www.unglobalcompact.org/what-is-gc/mission/principles>
3. Manila Doctors Hospital. 2001. Infection and Prevention Control Office Guidelines in handling hazardous and toxic waste.
4. Manila Doctors Hospital. 2005. Environment and Waste Management Committee (ENVICOM) Guidelines on Handling non-hazardous waste.
5. Manila Doctors Hospital. 2010. Guidelines on Releasing and Utilization of Recyclables Income.

RECOGNITIONS

1. Anvil Award for Excellence given by the Public Relations Society of the Philippines: 2011 and 2013
2. Candidate Master Award in different instances for Zero Waste Olympics for Businesses by the Philippine Business for Social Progress in 2015 and 2016
3. International Hospital Federation finalist for the Dr. Kwang Tae Kim Grand Award 2017

FIGURE 1: CLIMATE IMPACT MITIGATION ACTIONS: AN ELEVEN-YEAR JOURNEY OF MANILA DOCTORS HOSPITAL IN INSTITUTIONALIZING CLIMATE CHANGE ADAPTATION



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