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For 104 years and counting, we have provided the highest-quality health care possible to our patients and the community. We have pioneered new procedures to save our patients' lives and incorporated technologies to facilitate their journeys. We have researched new medicines, developed innovative treatments, and used music, art and spiritual care to help them heal more fully.

We put the patient at the center of everything we do, and part of that commitment means doing the same for our planet. We have long concentrated on the environment, but we have now established a dedicated Office of Sustainability to focus our commitment. This systemwide effort — led by Edward Jones as the executive sponsor and Jason Fischer as our inaugural director of the Office of Sustainability — will accelerate how we can work toward real change. You can learn more about the new office by clicking [here](#).

Many of you have made great progress with sustainability efforts at Houston Methodist. Here are a few examples:

- Facilities transitioned most offices and spaces to LED lights, which ensures electricity use remains low when offices are not in use.
- The Research Institute started recycling lab supplies through grassroots efforts.
- Environmental Services partnered with our waste solution provider to use containers that divert more plastic away from waste streams.
- IT digitized documents to reduce our paper use.

The Office of Sustainability will continue this work and will collaborate with key functional areas such as Supply Chain, Environmental Services, Facilities and Human Resources. For example, the new office will centralize recycling efforts, which is something that many of you have asked about for a long time — including Zach Smith, a clinical engineer at Houston Methodist Hospital.

Zach and his colleagues who work on medical devices began a concerted effort to recycle paper via hospital-provided shred boxes. Zach says that being more mindful about our impact on the environment helps us better care for our patients:

“When you look at statistics about the health care sector’s emission levels, you see the levels are alarming. Therefore, it matters when a hospital recognizes that and tries to mitigate harm. We need to care for patients from a broader perspective because the scope is much bigger than the patient’s bedside. If we are caring for patients from a holistic standpoint and becoming greener, then we can say that we care for patients not only at the bedside but also everywhere they go.”

Extending our patient care to how we interact with the environment is the natural next step, but this may seem like a reach to some of us. We may view environmental sustainability as a daunting challenge to tackle for another day, but it is a present issue. The health care sector is responsible for about 8.5% of all greenhouse gas emissions in the U.S., and the effects from these emissions lead to [roughly 98,000 deaths](#) each year. To put that into perspective, preventable medical errors account for roughly 44,000-98,000 fatalities in the U.S. annually.

We have a sacred duty to protect our patients’ health. For me, that responsibility extends to our relationship with the environment. We have already seen positive results through our Office of Sustainability. The team at Houston Methodist The Woodlands Hospital diverted 64,188 pounds of food waste from the landfill through composting measures.

We can each make small changes in our daily lives that have a big impact on our environment. What are some ways you can protect the environment at work? Please click the feedback button below to share your thoughts. Our environmental sustainability efforts may not only shield our patients’ health today but can also safeguard our community well into the future.

Marc L. Boom, M.D.

President

Chief Executive Officer

Houston Methodist

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