

**Streamlining sustainability in health care risk waste management  
Gauteng Department of Health- Directorate: Health Care Waste and Occupational Hygiene  
Risk Management- South Africa**

**GGHH Agenda Goals**

- Leadership
- Waste

**Health System Goal**

- **Prioritized Environmental Health**
- **Sustainability streamlined into daily activities**
- **Research to improve policy implementation practices**

**Progress Achieved**

- HCRW Awareness events' inclusion of GGHH Presentations have led to new members joining and increased interest in sustainability;
- Presentation at extended management technical committee has resulted in buy-in from senior management at the Gauteng Department of Health (GDoH) for further roll-out of GGHH in healthcare facilities.
- Recycling of empty medicine bottles has commenced after circular sent out; pilot project to be done using GGHH member hospital.

**The Issue**

Health Care Risk Waste (HCRW) is a threat to public and environmental health. GDoH has a Green Economy initiative that was introduced in 2012 and championed by the Directorate: Health care risk waste and occupational hygiene risk management. Research is required to further clarify sustainable practices in HCRW.



**Assessment of reusable containers**

## **Sustainability Strategy Implemented**

Global Green Healthy Hospitals (GGHH) was adopted as a Green Economy initiative, and integrated into Key Performance Areas (KPA) of employees at the Directorate. Head office has a monitoring and evaluation function and therefore support is given to public health care facilities that have enrolled as GGHH members. GGHH is presented at every HCRW awareness event, championed by Environmental Health Practitioners EHPs in the Directorate. This is a tool used to encourage enrolment and also create awareness around sustainability and the effects of improper HCRW management.

Tender review processes included information on alternative treatment for the new tender, where piloting will determine cost saving. Current service providers, as part of contract management duties of the Directorate, are also encouraged to use alternative treatment sites and shy away from incineration.

Circular on the recycling of empty pharmaceutical containers was sent to institutions after comprehensive research was done on empty medicine containers, in collaboration with Pharmaceutical Services Directorate.

### **Implementation process**

The integration of GGHH into KPA of employees at the Directorate was a strategic move. Existing KPA were modified after consultation with employees in the Directorate to include GGHH implementation as an on-going project. Greening of healthcare facilities is also an agenda item at the regional and district Health Care Waste Fora. Head office has a monitoring and evaluation function and therefore support is given to public healthcare facilities that have enrolled as GGHH members.

GGHH is presented at every HCRW awareness event, championed by EHPs in the Directorate. This is a tool used to encourage enrolment and also create awareness around sustainability and the effects improper HCRW management. The use of alternative treatment technologies to treat HCRW will be incorporated into the provincial HCRW policy which is in draft stages.

Recycling of empty pharmaceutical containers, in collaboration with Pharmaceutical Services Directorate is only in the early implementation stages and further consultation will be done to determine whether pilot projects should be done to assess implementation.

### **Tracking Progress**

Sustainability integration into daily activities is evident in discussion points at senior management meetings, for the Directorate it has been mainstreamed, however, as a Department; this is a long term goal. Progress tracking currently involves monitoring of HCRW generation rates at health care facilities. Recycling generation rates data will also be captured. At policy level, progress involves having strategic guidance in place for operational issues.



**Waste audits conducted by GDoH**

### **Challenges and lessons learned**

Challenges experienced involved organizational issues, such as organogram, rank, reporting lines for mainstreaming “green” issues. Systems thinking was applied to overcome the challenges; however, there is a great need for behavioural change throughout GDoH. Efficiency could be improved by the Department signing up as a member, and infrastructure management being a main stakeholder in the mainstreaming process.

### **Next Steps**

A provincial HCRW policy that emphasizes sustainability is the next goal. Secondly, an Environmental Health Policy in collaboration with the sub-directorate for Environmental Health will be prioritized. Piloting of recycling empty medicine containers at GGHH facilities in the province will commence in 2019, to determine practicality and feasibility.

### **Demographic information**

Gauteng Department of Health, ~68,000 employees, delivering public health services in the Gauteng province in South Africa.

### **Links.**

<https://www.gauteng.gov.za/>

(This is for internal use only, we won't publish it)

Main contact person information:

Email: [Azeeza.Rangunwala@gauteng.gov.za](mailto:Azeeza.Rangunwala@gauteng.gov.za)

Telephone n<sup>o</sup>: +27823186343

**Submission date: 29 July 2019**

