

Standards, Intents, and Measurable Elements

Governance, Tracking, and Reporting

Standard GHI.01.00

Hospital leaders ensure that environmental strategies are formally included and acted on as part of the organization's operations and governance.

Intent of GHI.01.00

To decarbonize and increase the resilience of a hospital, actions must be taken at all levels of the organization. This requires an effective strategy, stewardship, accountability, and leadership at the hospital leaders and board levels. This will allow the organization to do the following:

- Respond to country legislation and regulation in relation to climate and environmental issues.
- Identify the priorities for the organization.
- Inspire and support an organizational culture that takes environmental sustainability into account and creates a sense of ownership and shared goal by regularly communicating about it across the hospital.
- Engage all stakeholders in the process and clearly communicate what their specific role is, how it impacts their daily work and practices, and which positive outcomes are expected.
- Involve hospital governing bodies to ensure reporting, monitoring, and improvement of the strategies.

Growing evidence demonstrates the impact of climate change and disruptive climate events on health and delivery of health care. Therefore, it is part of hospitals' mission to fight adverse effects of climate change, and work toward more sustainable services by addressing it as an integral part of health care delivery. In addition to decarbonizing the sector and making it more resilient, many co-benefits have been identified, including positive impacts on health, patient experience, and operational performance. An increasing set of evidence also demonstrates the relevance of sustainability initiatives with quality of care, and adequacy for patient safety. In addition, environmental sustainability initiatives provide opportunities for financial savings and have been identified as an efficient way to support long-term financial sustainability of hospitals. The type of interventions, impacts, and benefits will depend on the hospital's size, setting, and interventions already in place.

A large scope of actions and processes can be implemented at the hospital leaders and board levels to drive this process forward. Examples of such actions include the following:

- Formally respond to country-specific legislation and regulation in relation to climate and environmental issues.
- Formally include environmental-sustainability goals in official and publicly available documents, including the organization's mission statement, values, charters, and other governance documents (this reinforces accountability and creates a sense of a shared goal throughout the organization).
- Adopt indicators to measure, track, and report on progress through existing frameworks to monitor and adjust over time.
- Increase the efficiency and active accountability and engagement of top management through the appointment of a dedicated person or group of people to oversee the process.

Beyond designating these people, it is essential to support them in their work and set targets incorporating environmental regulations to ensure an effective strategy. Their role is to develop a plan of action including short-, medium-, and long-term objectives; to identify the required resources; to oversee the development, implementation, and evaluation of the strategy; and to work and communicate with relevant stakeholders. This person should have relevant educational and/or professional experience to assume such a role.

Measurable Elements of GHI.01.00

1. © Hospital leaders include environmental sustainability and low-carbon and resilient care on their board agenda to discuss at least once a year, with reporting of progress, declaration of resources allocated, and assessment of the implementation of the strategies. Minutes reflect actions taken and any follow-up on those actions.
2. © Progress on environmental strategies is included in the organization's annual report for wider public visibility and accountability to the community and other stakeholders.
3. Hospital leaders appoint or designate, and annually evaluate the performance of, a person in the lead role who reports to the board (for example, Chief Sustainability Officer) to ensure that environmental strategies are part of the organization's priorities and are effectively implemented in tracking and governance processes. (*See also* GLD.06.00, ME 1)
4. The person appointed or designated as having the lead role is responsible for the following:
 - Defining the hospital's sustainability plan, strategies, and goals, in consultation with relevant stakeholders
 - Overseeing the implementation of processes related to environmental sustainability
 - Reporting to the hospital's leaders and board to present the progress made and take action on resulting discussion points
 - Producing reports and communications pieces for relevant stakeholders

Employee Engagement and Empowerment

Standard GHI.02.00

Hospital leaders establish mechanisms to raise awareness and to engage and train employees on climate change and health across the organization.

Intent of GHI.02.00

Employees have a role to play in the transition to low-carbon, resilient, and sustainable health care. In order to support their staff in implementing new or different practices and regulations, hospital leaders must provide the knowledge and tools to facilitate ownership and make staff agents of change.

Two key mechanisms can be used for engaging organization staff on climate change initiatives:

- A favorable and engaging organizational culture: An *organization culture* represents the “mindsets, beliefs and values that members of the organization share in common, and which shape the behaviours [and] practices . . . of the organization” (Prajogo and McDermott, 2005). Good leadership and focus on the customer (patient) are essential components to engage employees and rally them toward a common objective. Therefore, hospital leaders should emphasize that the strategy toward environmentally sustainable health care is a collective effort and that it can contribute to improved health outcomes and patient experience. This can be achieved through relevant and regular communications from hospital leaders to the staff, and mechanisms to allow the staff to share ideas and actively contribute to the sustainability strategy. The hospital setting being a complex and unpredictable environment, flexibility and a focus on relationships are key competencies to maintain a fruitful organizational culture.
- Training and education are key to providing the knowledge, tools, competencies, and guidance to the employees. Some content will be the same for all staff, such as basic knowledge about climate and health, and how this is included in hospital objectives. Those training courses should include content related to the hospital's setting, including the local or regional climate impacts and related health outcomes, potential environmental scenarios for the hospital, and vulnerabilities identified in the hospital's patient population. Some training courses may be more targeted to focus on specific roles and practices to adjust or implement, as in the following examples: