



Sarasota County Health and Human Services | Florida Department of Health | scgov.net |
941-861-5000 | TV 19

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Media Contact: Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852, dianne_shipley@doh.state.fl.us

Program Contact: Margaret Kennedy, 941-861-2730,
margaret_kennedy@doh.state.fl.us

MEDIA NOTE: A schedule of Earth Day activities is provided at the end of this release.

Hospitals and Health Departments celebrate Earth Day

In celebration of the Wednesday, April 22 Earth Day observance, eight hospitals and three health departments across Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties will have events/activities to showcase and promote “green” practices in their facilities, and on their grounds.

Although healthcare organizations like small cities are traditionally high users of energy, water and generators of waste, there is a trend that is gaining momentum to reduce toxins and provide a healthier, healing environment. By reducing the amount of mercury and polyvinyl chloride (PVC) entering landfills, fewer toxins are released where they can seep into ground water and into the air when items are incinerated.

Many healthcare organizations that have taken up green practices are lowering their energy bills, reducing waste and achieving healthier indoor air. Tom Franklin, coordinator for the Sarasota County Green Business Partnership, is helping healthcare organizations assess their practices in becoming more responsible stewards of the environment. These include water efficiency, energy and air pollution, materials and resources, indoor air quality, healthy hospital food, green education, product procurement, contaminants, green cleaning, waste reduction, and healing gardens.

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System (SMHCS), for example, has adopted waste-reduction measures in virtually all areas of the health system, from introducing extensive recycling programs to using drought-resistant plants in landscaping. “For such a large organization, they have really done an excellent job of addressing their environmental impacts,” says Tom Franklin. **SMHCS** recycles 278 tons of waste and 600 gallons of motor oil annually, recycles used electronic equipment, has replaced 10,000 light bulbs with energy efficient lighting, recycles/reuses old bulbs and ballasts, and has purchased four hybrid automobiles for Home Health services. Doctors Hospital has received the Green Business Partnership designation. Their linen reduction program has resulted in savings of \$56,000 in just one year. “Even small changes can make a big difference,” says Tom Franklin. Energy costs at Doctors Hospital have been reduced by \$19,000 simply by reprogramming the hospital's air conditioning system. They have also

invested in light switches with sensors that turn off when no one is in an office. Venice Regional Medical Center has adopted waste reduction measures that include selling cardboard to a third party vendor for recycling. This action prevents 104 tons of waste from entering the landfill annually.

Conservation efforts are being adopted by hospitals and health departments across the region.

These include the use of alcohol-based hand foams to reduce water consumption, energy use reduction efforts and green products in cleaning. Venice Regional Medical Center uses floor cleaning machines that use only hot water instead of harsh chemicals. In addition, there is a trend toward use of Florida friendly landscaping and reclaimed water for irrigation. In some cases, the green effort has taken on a community focus to include adopting roadways and parks, and participating in coastal clean-up efforts.

Future plans include efforts to promote consumption of fresh and nutritious foods. Health leaders from Sarasota, Charlotte and DeSoto counties are committed to creating a culture of wellness and green consciousness in some cases through the establishment of "Green Teams" at their facilities. The organizations included in this effort are Charlotte Regional Medical Center, DeSoto Memorial Hospital, Doctor's Hospital of Sarasota, Englewood Community Hospital, Fawcett Memorial Hospital, Peace River Regional Medical Center, Sarasota Memorial Health Care System and Venice Regional Medical Center, as well as the Charlotte, DeSoto and Sarasota County Health Departments.

This effort was spearheaded by the Community Health Improvement Partnership (CHIP) through its Health Provocateur Project. This dedicated group of CEOs has been collaborating for several years to improve health care systems in the region. The CHIP program is a community-based initiative to improve the health of residents in the tri-county area. Supported by The Community Foundation of Sarasota County, Inc., Gulf Coast Community Foundation of Venice, the Sarasota and DeSoto County Health Departments, Sarasota County Government and partner hospitals, the program is a partnership of residents, local organizations, and health care leaders. For more information on the CHIP program or the Green Initiatives, contact the CHIP office at 941-861-2582 or visit the CHIP website at www.chip4health.org

Listing of Earth Day Activities at Area Hospitals and Health Departments

Wednesday, April 22

Doctors Hospital

5731 Bee Ridge Road, Sarasota, FL 34233

Point of Contact: Lyn Cassan 941-342-1012

Kick off Disney Earth Day Movie Celebration; green food and cookies; distribution of seed packets;

recycle plastics factory and clothing vendor display/discussion.

Wednesday, April 22; 11:30 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Englewood Community Hospital

700 Medical Blvd., Englewood, FL 34223

Point of Contact: Susan Rachles; 941-473-5035; Cell: 863-990-1867
Green Team Celebration (for employees and volunteers)
Showcase team's accomplishments, raffle prizes including live plants, recycled pens for employees and volunteers, light refreshments, Opportunity for employees to sign a pledge form to acknowledge their commitment to be part of a positive change to leave a smaller carbon footprint on the Earth.

Wednesday, April 22; Noon to 1 p.m.

Sarasota County Health Department (SCHD)

2200 Ringling Blvd., Sarasota , FL 34237

Point of Contact: Dianne Shipley, 941-861-2852; Cell: 941-302-1058

Kick-off of health department's "green initiatives" to include a Lunch and Learn on "What it Means to Go

Green," and communication to staff at all eight sites on tips for going green.

SCHD will support the North Port Partnership for Wellness with their demonstration on how to construct

garden boxes and create container gardens at the North Port Community Outreach Expo from

2:30 to 6 p.m. at the North Port Education Center, 4940 Pan American Boulevard in North Port.

Wednesday, April 22; noon to 1 p.m.

Sarasota Memorial Hospital

Hospital Auditorium, 1700 S. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34239

Point of Contact and reservations: Healthline, 941-917-7777

Sarasota Memorial's Green Team hosts an "Earth Day Lunch & Learn."

Attendees will learn about energy conservation, weatherproofing, residential energy surveys and

hurricane preparedness from FPL experts. Reservations requested, please call HealthLine at

941-917-7777.

Wednesday, April 22

Friday, April 24; 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Venice Regional Medical Center (VRMC)

540 The Rialto, Venice, FL 34285

Point of Contact: Kathy Turner; 941-486-6935; **pager: 941-252-3139**

VRMC will distribute refillable drink cups to all employees to encourage employees to use mugs instead of paper cups for their beverages, thereby cutting down on the amount of paper products used.

"Go Green" blood drive honoring National Arbor Day on Friday, April 24 from 7:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. During the drive, all donors will receive a recyclable grocery bags and the first 50 donors will receive a tree seedling.

Wednesday, April 22; 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.

Fawcett Memorial Hospital Cafeteria

21298 Olean Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Point of Contact for Media: Michele Ritter 941-629-1181, ext. 6585

Go Green Team Chair: Jerry Mix; 941-629-1181, ext. 6665

Displays, Written materials about hospital's operating costs, prize drawings, and refreshments

Wednesday, April 22

Peace River Regional Medical Center

2500 Harbor Blvd., Port Charlotte, FL 33952

Point of Contact for Media: Bevin Gallo; 941-766-4399

Kick-off of hospital-wide initiatives including shut down of computer monitors after 20 minutes of inactivity, and current initiatives: compact fluorescent lighting, high efficiency retro-fitted lights, green cleaning products, soup can recycling, and more; distribution of seed packets to employee and visitors as they use recycle bins; raffling of saplings,

Experts available for interview:

Charlotte County

Charlotte County Health Department

Andrea Kendell; 941-833-3500, ext. 202

Charlotte Regional Medical Center

Brad Nurkin or Kamela Robbins; 941-637-3128

Fawcett Memorial Hospital

Michele Ritter 941-629-1181, ext. 6585

Go Green Team Chair: Jerry Mix; 941-629-1181, ext. 6665

Peace River Regional Medical Center

Bevin Gallo; 941-766-4399

DeSoto County

DeSoto Memorial Hospital

Julie Sutton 863-494-3535, ext. 666

DeSoto County Health Department

Keith Keene; 863-494-6780

Sarasota County

Sarasota County Government

Tom Franklin (Green Business Partnership) 941-861-6218

Gary Bennett (Solid Waste Collections) 941-861-1587

Doctor's Hospital

Lyn Cassan; 941-342-1012

Englewood Community Hospital

Susan Rachles; 941-473-5035; Cell: 863-990-1867

Sarasota Memorial Health Care System

Kim Savage; 941-917-6271

Ellen Simon; 941-917-1499

Pager: 941-252-8101

Sarasota County Health Department

Dianne Shipley; 941-861-2852

Chuck Henry; 941-861-6133

Venice Regional Medical Center

Kathy Turner; 941-486-6935; **pager: 941-252-3139**