

Healthcare Services Case Study

Fairview Partners with Clean Harbors for Pharmaceutical and Hazardous Waste Reduction

Fairview is one of the largest not-for-profit health care systems in Minnesota. Founded in 1906 in Minneapolis, the Fairview network has grown to more than 22,000 employees working in seven hospitals, 48 primary care clinics and many specialty clinics throughout the state. It is a leader in integrated health delivery, providing care from prevention and disease management to treatment of the most complex life-threatening injuries and illnesses.



Fairview has been recognized for several medical advances, however, its community programs, delivered through its network of hospitals and clinics, remain at the core of its mission. One growing portion of this community involvement includes the careful handling and disposal of hazardous waste. Fairview has a commitment to the Green Movement and supports the effort with a comprehensive, system-wide hazardous waste disposal program with Clean Harbors.

Hazardous waste management for the Fairview network is administered by Coordinator of Waste Services and Waste Reduction Crystal Saric.

Clean Harbors provides comprehensive pharmaceutical waste management services. The program meets strict federal guidelines, as well as Minnesota state guidelines that, in some cases, are different or more stringent than national regulations.

The Fairview network has more than 22,000 employees working in seven hospitals, 48 primary care clinics and many specialty clinics throughout Minnesota. Clean Harbors provides hazardous waste disposal, management and consultant services for virtually all of the facilities.

Clean Harbors:

- Visits each facility to collect, pack and remove hazardous materials;
- Provides general and specialized waste management training;
- Offers a wide range of consulting services to help Fairview reduce costs and continually improve its waste management procedures.



42 Longwater Drive • PO Box 9149 • Norwell, Massachusetts 02061-9149
800.282.0058 • www.cleanharbors.com

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Comprehensive Services

Fairview takes advantage of Clean Harbors' hazardous waste management collection, transportation and disposal expertise. Explained Amanda Cerne, Clean Harbors Account Manager, "We provide waste disposal, as well as what we call 'Project Manager



Services' where we help with pharmaceutical waste reduction, compliance issues, work with the inspectors, evaluate Fairview's labs, test different chemicals, as well as provide other services. It is a full-service healthcare hazardous waste program."

Clean Harbors' pharmaceutical waste management service provides scheduled and on-demand collection, removal and disposal of hazardous materials. The company handles the entire process, in some cases picking up materials from approved containers throughout the buildings. Clean Harbors also packs the materials for shipment and transports them to Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) hazardous Resource Conservation and Recovery Act (RCRA)-approved Clean Harbors disposal sites.

"Staff at our small clinics call us or Clean Harbors when they need a pickup," said Crystal. "Clean Harbors fits it into one of its scheduled runs and consolidates the clinic's waste to lower our costs. They'll pick up any hazardous waste, lab chemicals, even cleaning materials, and other non-medical hazardous waste."

In many cases, Clean Harbors consults with the nurses on where to place the "black box" collection stations on the floor and how many are needed. It is a matter of finding the optimal balance between convenience and capacity so that pickups can be efficiently scheduled and cost effective.

"Every site is different," explained Amanda. "It depends on their location and the extent of the involvement of the medical, housekeeping or janitorial staff. We go either weekly or bimonthly to some sites and inspect the satellite accumulation areas – the points of generation – and transfer full containers to the packing area where it is bulked together for removal and disposal. In other sites, they've already moved the black boxes and satellites to the storage area before we arrive."

An Effective Partnership

Clean Harbors delivers significant increased value through its value-added services and partnership approach with Fairview. Crystal explained, "We partner with Clean Harbors and have a good relationship with a lot of open communication with the Project Manager Mellissa Turner. She helps us work within the regulations – what we need to collect, what's different, what's changed."

Related to this monitoring of the regulatory environment are a number of value-added services that make Fairview's hazardous waste management process more cost effective and efficient. These Clean Harbors' services range from waste handling training to waste reduction and avoidance. Clean Harbors also supports Fairview in its annual RCRA hazardous materials audits, helping with the preparation and acting on audit recommendations.

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– Crystal Saric/Waste Services and
WasteReduction Coordinator

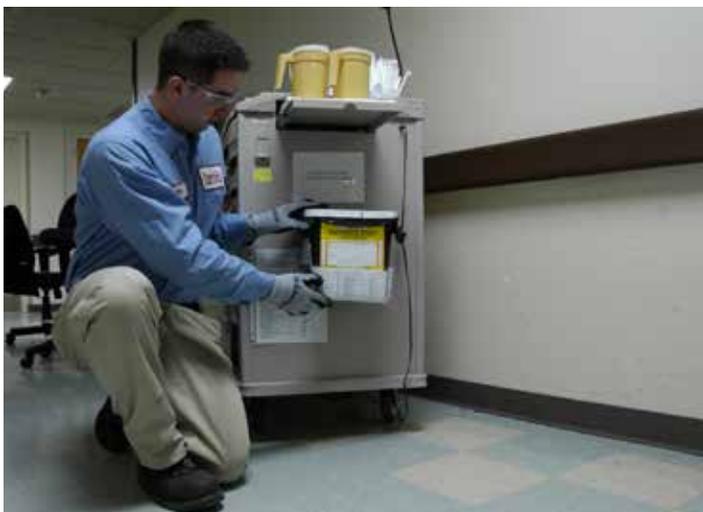


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Pharmaceutical waste management training from Clean Harbors has been incorporated into Fairview's regular program. The training is part of orientation and is also offered as a periodic refresher for staff. Called "Movers Training," it reviews the basics of what goes into the hazardous materials box and how to date and label the materials. The objective is to train staff to capture all of the hazardous materials but not sequester non-hazardous materials that can be handled as normal waste. It's about safety, efficiency and cost effectiveness.



"The relationship adds a lot of value to Fairview," said Crystal. "We're able to reduce some costs and make better decisions on the best way to handle this waste. Fairview is really committed to the Green Movement and Clean Harbors helps us there. We've partnered with Mellissa on some projects to reduce our waste and our costs, as well as reduce our toxic substance output, which is a pretty important step in this process."

Special Projects

Clean Harbors conducts many system-wide and individual facility special projects and studies to improve procedures and address specific goals. Mellissa offers an example:

department at Fairview Southdale Hospital. They were interested in identifying which left over or expired contrast media (injectable IVs and drinks) required for radiological exams are hazardous, which ones are not hazardous, and what handling procedures were necessary.

"So we met with the staff and sent some items out for testing. We identified that there are some things that people are given in radiology that have surprisingly high levels of barium and other pharmaceuticals. Then there was another large group of contrast media that came back non-hazardous – some of it was pretty surprising to the staff. As a result, we're able to reduce the hazardous waste that has to be collected from the radiology department – saving money and simplifying the process.

"It started at Fairview Southdale Hospital, but Crystal is making the findings available across the Fairview system because the contrast media are all order through one central ordering system, so they all use essentially the same products at every location."

This type of system-wide sharing benefits Fairview in many areas, from characterizing any number of materials to sharing best practices. In this way, similar clinics can learn from others in the group to reduce expenses and improve operations. Fairview also benefits from Clean Harbors' wider experience.

"We've also conducted some training on hazardous waste reduction – using less contrast media. It's really a matter of raising awareness. We're highlighting the fact that if just a spoonful is needed and a few ounces are dispensed instead, all of the leftover barium must be specially handled as hazardous waste, which is both wasteful and expensive. We find that overall usage and disposal amounts go down after these types of training sessions," added Mellissa.

"Clean Harbors brings a lot of value to the relationship," concluded Crystal. "I know that I can count on them to efficiently handle the collection and disposal responsibilities. I also know that Mellissa is always there to do the special projects that keep us moving forward in reducing our waste and finding new efficiencies."

