

Healthcare Services Case Study

Clean Harbors Handles All of Park Nicollet's Pharmaceutical and Hazardous Waste

Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated care system that includes the 426-bed Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minnesota and 26 Park Nicollet clinics. Park Nicollet has more than 8,100 employees in clinical and administrative positions serving the metro Twin Cities area. As a large regional medical institution Park Nicollet must manage a number of hazardous materials related to the delivery of services and to running its facilities. Like other health service providers, Park Nicollet had several ways to approach the problem. It could:



- Fully manage the process in-house by hiring supervisors and staff to collect and move materials within the buildings. It would still need to contract with a certified hazardous waste disposal company to remove and process the waste;
- Administer the process and rely on separate vendors to handle the in-house functions and removal;
- Fully outsource the program to a company that specializes in hazardous waste management.

Park Nicollet decided to outsource to Clean Harbors and took full advantage of the resources and expertise that the company brings to the table.

Explained Dick Barrett, Park Nicollet Director of Safety and Security, who oversees the contract, the fully outsourced approach is also a cost-efficient way to handle the waste. "We're constantly challenged to get the best service we can at the best price. One thing that we noticed when we researched our alternatives was that many of the service companies were actually

Park Nicollet Health Services is an integrated care system that includes the 426-bed Methodist Hospital in St. Louis Park, Minnesota and 26 clinics. It has completely outsourced its pharmaceutical and hazardous waste management to Clean Harbors for all of its facilities.

Clean Harbors:

- Designs, manages and inspects all collection areas in each facility;
- Collects, packs and removes hazardous materials, including hazardous facilities waste;
- Provides specialized and online waste management training;
- Manages all compliance reports and supports Park Nicollet during onsite regulatory inspections;
- Offers continual improvement consulting services to reduce costs and improve waste management procedures.



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brokering with Clean Harbors for the final disposition at some of their incinerator sites or other resources, so we decided to get the complete package with one vendor.”

Disposal and Consulting Services

Clean Harbors’ services to Park Nicollet fall under two main categories. It handles all of the pharmaceutical waste for final disposition and it provides a number of value-added services to help Park Nicollet manage the regulatory process, train staff and continuously improve its pharmaceutical waste management program.

Clean Harbors personnel collect, characterize, sort, and dispose of the pharmaceutical waste in all of the facilities. They pick up the material at each collection station at every clinic and hospital department that generates waste. This means that the medical staff only needs to know what does, and what does not, go into the collection containers.

Clean Harbors takes care of the rest, moving the materials to a main storage area, consolidating the materials from different departments, developing manifests and keeping records. Clean Harbors also regularly inspects all of the collection stations and provides administrative services, such as advice on how to manage and where to locate the stations and holding rooms. They recommend the most economical way to handle and dispose of the waste in accordance with the regulations. Their recommendations even include container sizes for both the collection and main storage areas in order to create the most cost-effective pickup schedule.

“Our objective is to efficiently dispatch personnel so we can pick up material on a regular schedule that meets the regulatory requirements but is not so frequent that it wastes money,” said Amanda CeClean Harbors Account Manager. “We go in, collect, pack and pick up the materials, and perform the inspections, all in one trip.”

The Clean Harbors staff characterize and collect every hazardous material in the hospital and the clinics, including non-clinical materials such as cleaning chemicals, fluorescent bulbs, batteries and other materials used in running an office facility.

Value-added Services Extend the Relationship

Clean Harbors is part of the Park Nicollet team. Hospital and clinic staff always have access to information on hazardous waste management Clean Harbors’ Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) section on the Park Nicollet intranet. Clean Harbors also maintains and monitors an internal email account for questions not covered in the FAQ or for special service requests.

The company’ services extend much further. Since the hospital and clinics are all licensed facilities, they are inspected annually for hazardous materials management compliance. Clean Harbors’ Mell Turner, Hospital Project Manager/Senior Lead Chemist, works with Park Nicollet staff on all licensing applications and renewals and provide ongoing counsel on the latest regulations. Explain Turner, “We do any paperwork that’s needed; we assist with the bi-annual reports and I also assist them in writing policies and procedures.”

Clean Harbors also represents Park Nicollet during the inspections by participating in the tours along with Barrett and others from the organization. “We found that it’s best to have Clean Harbors’ expertise available,” said Barrett. “The Clean Harbors staff talk the language; they know the intent and purpose of a lot of the statutes and can relate very well to them.”

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– John Swan/Director of High Technology



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Barrett has also found that Clean Harbors' record keeping systems are accurate and quickly answer most of the regulators' questions. "It reflects well on our organizations because it shows that we've identified resources that meet the full intent and scope of the regulations," he continued.

Clean Harbors also provides hazardous materials handling training for hospital and clinic staff in class settings for department-specific training, and online for annual re-certifications. "We're



constantly training new people, re-training staff and training for new positions, so our learning development centers were one of the first to develop a comprehensive online training program. It's an online service that includes self-testing modules and is available 24/7. The online instructional program has become a model for other healthcare organizations," said Barrett.

Another area where Clean Harbors contributes its expertise comes when new and experimental drugs are being tested. Clean Harbors characterizes the drug components and reviews the regulations. They are then able to develop protocols that integrate the new drug into the waste management system, define safe handling procedures for Park Nicollet staff and develop proper channels for disposal.

The Testament of Time

The relationship has been positive for both Park Nicollet and Clean Harbors. "I think that Clean Harbors' length of service with Park Nicollet is testament to the relationship, not only between the companies but with the staff, as well. The same Clean Harbors individuals have been on the account from inception. These people, Amanda Cerne, Mellissa Turner and our Account Sales Manager Matt Goethel, have a real good understanding of what the needs are from both sides. We know it's working - we've never had a case, whether it be from a regulator or from any of our customers in the clinics, where there has been poor performance or any other issues.

"We consider them to be part of our team and not just a vendor. We know that the Clean Harbors resource is always there. They're always up to the challenge, they're always up to the commitment to the right thing, and that's what makes it work. It's a relationship that has served us well."



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