

## The Hospitals for a Healthy Environment newsletter

*Creating a national movement for environmental sustainability in health care*

Volume 1, Issue 2

May 2004



### Letter from the Director

#### *Do you know where your electronics go?*

Computers contains hazardous materials like lead, mercury, cadmium, and chromium. Because of this, most communities across the country have landfill bans on electronic equipment. But then where do old computers go when we send them out for recycling? The fact is, about 80% of this waste material is being exported to Asia, where most workers -- including young children -- work in settings with few if any environmental or occupational safeguards. These materials are too dangerous for us to landfill, but we send them overseas where entire communities are being poisoned with our e-waste.

What can we do? Ask your recycler how your computers are recycled. Need help? H2E has a 10-Step Guide to Managing your Electronics from Purchasing to End-of-Life - <http://www.h2e-online.org/tools/univwast.htm#ele>. The guide outlines everything from how to include environmental considerations in your purchasing decisions, to how to deal with that pile of computers in your basement. This month's teleconference also highlights this issue. So use these resources. And don't throw that old computer in the dumpster!

Laura Brannen, Director, H2E



### Success Story: Computer Recycling

***Since 2001, Thomas Jefferson University Hospital has been successfully recycling electronics***

As computers and electronics are no longer needed within Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, a 650 bed facility in Philadelphia, PA, they are removed by Information Services or the Housekeeping Department and stored within those two departments. On a monthly basis, the CPUs are taken to Information Services where the hard drives are cleared, as per HIPAA regulations to ensure confidentiality of protected health information.

Once this is completed, Manager for Support Services Ed Barr and the housekeeping staff prepare the equipment by placing it on pallets and Elemental, Inc. removes them for off-site manual separation into glass, various metal components and plastic. Ed ensures that the material is broken down into raw material for recycling at the Philadelphia site, and the vendor has established reliable, safe and environmentally responsible outlets for recycling the raw material that's sold internationally.

For their efforts, Thomas Jefferson has received praise from the Hospitals for a Healthy Environment Program, the US Environmental Protection Agency, the City of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania Hospital Association, American Hospital Association, American Society Health Care Environmental Services (ASHES), and the Greater Philadelphia Commercial Recycling Council.



### May 14<sup>th</sup> Teleconference: Electronics Purchasing and Recycling

Each month H2E hosts a free, informative teleconference for H2E Partners and Champions to help health care facilities meet H2E goals. Topics for these presentations cover the many environmental challenges faced by today's health care facilities. Teleconferences are held on the second Friday of each month, at 1:00 pm Eastern Standard Time. **The topic of H2E's May teleconference is "Electronics - How to Purchase with End-of-Life Considerations in Mind and How to Safely Recycle the Pile of Computers in Your Basement."** For more information and to register, see [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org).

#### QUICK PROGRAM STATS

**HOSPITAL:** Thomas Jefferson University Hospital, Philadelphia, PA

**# OF BEDS:** 650

**PROGRAM START:** 2001

**VENDOR:** Elemental, Inc., Philadelphia, PA, [www.eleminc.com](http://www.eleminc.com)

**BUDGET RESPONSIBILITY:** Information Services

**OPERATIONAL RESPONSIBILITY:** IS and Housekeeping

**WHY:** Regulatory Compliance with EPA RCRA and environmental commitment

**CONTACT:** Ed Barr AKA: Lord of Landfills, Duke of Debris, Baron of Biohazard, Marquis of Medical Waste, Manager for Support, [Edward.barr@mail.tju.edu](mailto:Edward.barr@mail.tju.edu)

## Who's Who in H2E:



### Janet Brown H2E Partner Coordinator

After 13 years as Beth Israel Medical Center's Medical Waste Manager in New York City, Janet Brown joins the H2E staff as Partner Coordinator. She is committed to assisting health care facilities in the implementation and maintenance of environmentally responsible health care initiatives, whether it's getting the work off the ground or working on specific projects. Janet lives in Brooklyn, NY, with her husband Dean and children Grafton and Frances.

Janet can be reached at [janet.brown@h2e-online.org](mailto:janet.brown@h2e-online.org) or 212-941-2486. To learn more about the H2E Partner Program, check out the website at [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org). Not a Partner organization yet? It's easy. You can register online!



## About Us

H2E is creating a national movement for environmental sustainability in health care. As a joint project of the **US Environmental Protection Agency**, the **American Hospital Association**, the **American Nurses Association** and **Health Care Without Harm**, its goals are to eliminate the use of mercury in healthcare by 2005; to cut health care waste in half by 2010; and to phase out the use of hazardous substances and persistent, bio-accumulative and toxic chemicals in the health care sector. For more information, visit [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org).



## Contact Us

**Toll Free: 1-800-727-4179**    [www.h2e-online.org](http://www.h2e-online.org)  
**Fax: 202-234-9121**        [H2E@H2E-online.org](mailto:H2E@H2E-online.org)

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