

Providence Climate Action Plan

Providence caregivers are committed to our mission, values, vision, and promise. These principles guide caregivers' decisions daily, and we are called to higher service through them.



Mission: “As expressions of God’s healing love, witnessed through the ministry of Jesus, we are steadfast in serving all, especially those who are poor and vulnerable”

Core values: Compassion, Dignity, Justice, Excellence, Integrity

Vision: “Health for a Better World”

Promise: “Know me, care for me, ease my way”

Pope Francis, in writing *Laudato Si* in 2015, said “We are faced not with two separate crises, one environmental and the other social, but rather with one complex crisis which is both social and environmental.” We acknowledge that this complex crisis cannot be dismantled. The value of justice tells us that caring for the poor and vulnerable requires caring for our common home, earth, at the same time.

Our decisions are evidence-based. By following climate, biological, and social scientists, we recognize that our social and environmental crises are worsening, only to be amplified by a warming planet. We need ambitious commitment and bold action to slow the damage and its impact on health for all.

Setting the Goal

In 2019, Providence leaders reviewed and discussed several options for potential climate action commitment. We examined a range of commitment possibilities including addressing the emissions associated with our electricity only, energy only, Greenhouse Gas (GHG) Protocol scopes 1 and 2 only, adding a subset of scope 3, or to address all GHG emissions across all three scopes, direct and indirect. Our preferred approach was to address all emissions, focusing first on mitigating (reducing or eliminating) the most actionable aspects of our GHGs. Our timeline is short, 2030 is not far off, and we know that we will not be able to eliminate all GHGs, and we are and will be making decisions to maximize our results with both mitigation of GHGs and resiliency planning for changes in our environment present today.

In addition, we reviewed the span of our commitment. We considered addressing emissions from acute sites only (over 50 hospitals), all our clinical sites (hospitals, ambulatory centers, home health, virtual health), or from all aspects of Providence including office buildings, companies we have developed, and investments. We recognized that we are obligated to consider and address emissions from the span of the *entire organization*.

We reviewed the timeframe of our commitment. Scientists have indicated that time is of the essence and action in our current decade will be extremely impactful to determine whether humans can limit global temperature rise to an amount that will be manageable. We recognized that we need to act now, and to encourage others to do the same. Thus, we committed to bold action by 2030.

By committing to act *by 2030*, across our *entire organization*, our message is clear. We exist to support our vision of *health for a better world*, and we are taking a bold step toward transforming our organization, while reaching out to our own caregivers, the communities we serve, governmental

agencies, and partner organizations to amplify our efforts. On the 50th anniversary of Earth Day our president, Rod Hochman, MD, announced our goal to **reach toward carbon negative by 2030**. This was particularly meaningful, as we were on the front lines of addressing Covid and understood the disproportionate impact of the pandemic and climate change on communities living in poverty.

Our Plan

Mitigation of Carbon Emissions. Based on the Providence WE ACT framework, we focus on five areas that will help us achieve our goal: **Waste, Energy/water, Agriculture/Food, Chemicals, and Transportation.**



Waste. We have set a goal, to divert more than 50% of total waste to landfill or hazardous streams by 2030. We conducted a “waste optimization” assessment with extensive data collection, creating action plans for each of our 52 hospitals. All are making progress establishing waste streams to maximize recycling, composting, and most important, source reduction.



Energy/water. Our Plan is to minimize energy and water intensity of our buildings through deep energy retrofits. New construction will maximize the use of electricity and efficiency. We aim to purchase 100% renewable electricity by 2030. Through efficiency, conversion to electric heating technologies, and smart building operations, we anticipate being able to mitigate 15% of our natural gas emissions in existing buildings. We will continue to evaluate technologies for direct carbon capture from our operations. Many of the communities we serve are at drought risk and as such we have an obligation to conserve our own water use and educate the public about water conservation. We have developed a water reduction plan and are systematically converting to low-water landscape, high-performing low-flow fixtures, and water saving technologies for our water-consuming processes.



Agriculture/Food. Our food service provider is both committed and contractually obligated to help support our efforts to reduce waste, choose lower carbon intensive foods, reduce waste, and support local and sustainable foods. We believe we can decrease emissions significantly through meal planning and procurement, energy efficiency in our kitchens, reducing food waste during meal preparation, and by composting food waste where available.



Chemicals. Our clinical progress in selection and use of anesthetic agents have resulted in a 55% emissions reduction (and millions of dollars saved) from inhaled anesthetics with a goal of 80% reduction. We are developing best practices for nitrous oxide delivery and monitoring and believe we can reduce emissions by 90%.



TRANSPORTATION

Transportation. We monitor four aspects of business travel, including flights, rental cars, hotels, and reimbursed miles used in care delivery. We anticipate sustaining decreased business travel emissions from a 2019 baseline by 50%. We are developing plans to electrify 50% of fleet vehicles by 2025, and the remainder by 2030. We survey employee commuting across our operations and plan to decrease emissions from commuting by 30% through electrification of the transportation sector, remote work initiatives and alternative forms of commuting. We are developing a strategy for electric vehicle charging for employees, patients, visitors, and fleets. We work with our vendors to become EPA Smart Way certified and encourage them to electrify their fleets.

- The effectiveness of the WE ACT framework is dependent on access to reliable cost and consumption data. We have developed the “WE ACT Scorecard” with Providence caregivers at our Providence Global Center in Hyderabad, India. Utility cost and usage data are gathered by our partner Schneider Electric. The scorecard consolidates data on resource use, cost, and carbon emissions for each acute site each month, focused on the WE ACT elements of waste, energy/water, agriculture/food, chemicals, and transportation.
- Our procurement patterns represent a substantial portion of our estimated carbon footprint (40%) in the categories of goods & services and capital purchases. Our system wide Environmentally Preferred Purchasing Policy instructs caregivers to consider the environmental impacts of their purchasing decisions, using the WE ACT framework as a guide. In addition, we are working with our key vendors to understand the emissions from the products they manufacture and/or sell and deliver. With more transparency from our vendors and a better understanding of purchasing patterns, we aim to decrease emissions from working with vendors on their own emissions reduction strategies, and to reduce ours through source reduction and efficient management. Our new construction projects are beginning to be designed with consideration and better understanding of embodied energy in building products and installation.
- We are developing additional tools, guidelines, and plans to help advance our carbon emissions reduction, a few of which are listed here:
 - Nitrous Oxide Assessment and Management Plan
 - Waste Optimization Playbook
 - Water Reduction Plan
 - Green Team Toolkit
 - Commuter Data and Best Practices Guide
 - Climate Action Plan
 - Leadership Playbook
 - WE ACT Profile



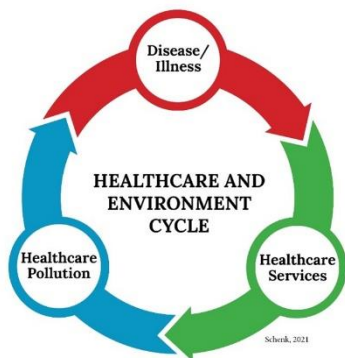
Resiliency and Adaptation

In alignment with our vision of health for a better world, we are committed to help build climate resilience in the communities we serve. We call our strategy “WE REACH”, incorporating the important elements of **R**esiliency, **E**quity, **A**daptation, **C**limate, and **H**ealth.

We are focusing on three pillars for our resiliency planning: our buildings and infrastructure, our clinical care delivery, and our community partnerships. We have already seen how excessive heat impacts our buildings, make it harder to maintain temperature and humidity requirements. We have experienced fires and smoke in the communities we serve, requiring evacuations, loss of caregiver homes, and exposures to risk and harm. We are working with emergency planners, facilities engineers and city and county governments to enhance our readiness so we can continue to serve, as we have for over 170 years.

As a health care organization, we focus on care delivery, which is also challenged by changes to our climate and environment. We are working with thousands of clinicians of all disciplines across the organization to identify risks, challenges, knowledge gaps, and needed resources to be able to provide high quality, compassionate care during and after climate -related extreme events.

Clinicians often have a professional directive to do no harm, or to practice safely. They are well educated, and in positions of leadership and impact within their communities. Further, clinicians can assess practice issues and change policies, processes and purchasing to decrease their environmental impacts. For example, hundreds of our anesthesia providers have reduced



greenhouse gas emissions significantly by selecting environmentally safer inhaled anesthesia agents. Nurses across the health system reduce waste through proper segregation and product selection. Pharmacists are decreasing waste by establishing consumer drug take-back programs. Respiratory therapists are helping decrease greenhouse gas emissions from nitrous oxide leakage. We are working with many clinicians to reduce GHGs from care delivery, educate patients and families, and drive efficiencies in purchasing, policy, and practice decisions.

And we recognize that environmental determinants of health, including heat, fires, and smoke caused by climate change, impact more vulnerable populations inequitably. We have conducted an environmental justice scan in communities from Anchorage, Alaska, to Lubbock, Texas, identifying environmental health issues, what populations, groups, and neighborhoods are most impacted, and what community partners are addressing these issues. This provides guidance to support the communities we serve, working with partners equitably and inclusively, while striving to help communities prepare for and adapt to changes occurring due to our environmental crisis.



Partnerships and Leadership

Providence participates in numerous national leadership opportunities. These include Healthcare Without Harm, Practice Greenhealth, the US Healthcare Climate Council, the National Academy of Medicine Action Collaborative for the Decarbonization of Health Care, the Institute for Healthcare Improvement, the Agency for Healthcare Research and Quality, the Department of Health and Human Services, the American Hospital Association, the Joint Commission, the U.S. EPA ENERGY STAR program, and others. By working together, we amplify the voice of health and health care as we aim to reduce environmental harm.

Advocacy for clean air and water and a stable climate is paramount. Providence has committed to the We Are Still in Campaign, and the Race to Zero campaign. We were early signatories of the Department of Health and Human Services Climate and Health Care Pledge. Our Government Affairs team advocates for a safe climate at federal, state, and local levels.

To make progress on our goals, we need active engagement and involvement of caregivers, patients and family, and community members is crucial to meeting the challenge of transforming how we deliver healthcare. Engagement is achieved through alignment with our mission and core values, education, and communication.

Our mission leaders provide guidance, reminders, and perspective about the challenges and necessity of caring for our common home, our earth. Mission leaders serve on all our key organizational structures and help communicate / educate about the importance of our environmental stewardship commitment and its connection to our mission, vision, and values.

We offer regular communications in many ways, including newsletters, articles, blogs, educational video events, external live and social events, an intranet (SharePoint) site, and many resources and toolkits. Providence values caregiver engagement and volunteerism. Our environmental stewardship commitment engages caregivers through dozens of green teams, challenges, events, and education sessions. Further, caregivers engaged with environmental stewardship volunteer regularly at our “Love the Earth” events, on river and highway clean-ups, working in gardens, working at donation centers, serving on boards. Our team supports our Medical Supply Recovery Organization (MSRO) to collect and donate equipment and supplies that would otherwise be discarded for use in areas of need across the nation and globe. The MSRO has been operating for 30 years, and in the last two years alone we donated over 250,000 pounds of supplies.

Key Components.

Governance: Providence leaders are setting the tone and pace for our environmental transformation. From Dr. Hochman, our president and CEO, to regional and ministry leaders, the need to care for our planet is understood and embraced. To carry this forward, we have developed a flexible and responsive governance structure.

Governance for our environmental stewardship initiative rests with the Executive Council, at the highest level of the Providence organization. Executive champions include Executive Vice Presidents of Operations, Finance, Information Services, and Advocacy/Social Responsibility. A proxy group of the full executive council makes recommendations to their leaders to help advance decisions and reporting internally and externally. Multiple project specific teams

address the many projects underway, including Food and Nutrition Services, Procurement, Waste Optimization, Real Estate efficiency, the WE ACT Data team, Clinical teams, Transportation team, Information Services, and our Action Collaborative for Environmental Stewardship (ACES.)

Meeting our goals has been included in executive incentive pay. Environmental Stewardship goals are set by ministry across the health system to ensure that we continue to make progress each year.

Finance and Philanthropy: Making progress in emissions reduction requires financial investment in efficiency, renewable energy, and improvement programs, and a long-term plan for sustainability of the initiative, including the purchase of carbon offsets or carbon capture strategies. We have developed a Green Revolving Fund in which savings from energy efficiency projects are reinvested into further projects. This decreases initial cost and provides a stream of funding to help offset costs.

Strategic planning and integration: Providence is a large and complex organization. We use both vertical and lateral integration strategies to build and maintain cohesive plans, goal setting, and reporting of outcomes.

Results

While our bold climate goal is enormous, since our commitment in 2020 we are already seeing results. Several examples of our progress are captured in our [Environmental Stewardship Report](#). As of 2023, we have reduced carbon emissions across numerous categories in our acute sites by 12.5% compared to our 2019 baseline, while reducing costs by \$11.5 million annually compared to 2019.

Providence Environmental Stewardship Visual Strategic Plan

