

Hospital Bukit Mertajam's initiative on plastic reduction

Malaysia

Demographic information

- Hospital Bukit Mertajam
- Southeast Asia
- Malaysia
- Hospital
- 242 beds

GGHH agenda goals

- Waste

Description

Hospital Bukit Mertajam, a 242-bed government facility in Penang, Malaysia, has been serving the community since 1890. With 24-hour operations and diverse medical services, it supports around 240,000 patients annually. Committed to sustainable healthcare, the hospital integrates eco-friendly practices to reduce its environmental impact.

The issue

Hospital Bukit Mertajam faced significant challenges with single use plastic consumption, particularly in medical supplies, medical disposables, and daily operations through daily observations. This single-use plastics led to more non-hazardous waste and raised concerns about its impact on the environment. Acknowledging this issue, the hospital took steps to implement sustainable waste reduction measures to minimize its plastic footprint.

Sustainability strategy implemented

Hospital Bukit Mertajam implemented several initiatives to reduce single-use plastic consumption. In the Haemodialysis Ward, plastic bottles containing liquid treatments were replaced with powdered alternatives. This transition not only minimized plastic waste but also optimized storage space and reduced costs.

Additionally, the hospital introduced a 3R Initiative (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) to collect plastic bottles from medical supplies and hospital visitors for recycling. These collected bottles are sold, generating funds that are reinvested into sustainability projects. Staff and patients were encouraged to participate through awareness campaigns and proper waste segregation practices.

To further reduce plastic, pharmacy counters replaced plastic bags with cardboard boxes for medication dispensing. Patients were also encouraged to bring their own reusable bags, reducing dependency on single-use plastics.

The hospital also adopted a Refill Concept for hand sanitizers in wards, where existing bottles are refilled instead of being discarded. This simple yet effective measure significantly reduces plastic waste.

Challenges included initial adaptation and logistical changes, which were addressed through staff training and regular feedback sessions. These strategic efforts successfully reduced Hospital Bukit Mertajam's plastic footprint, contributing to its commitment to sustainability.

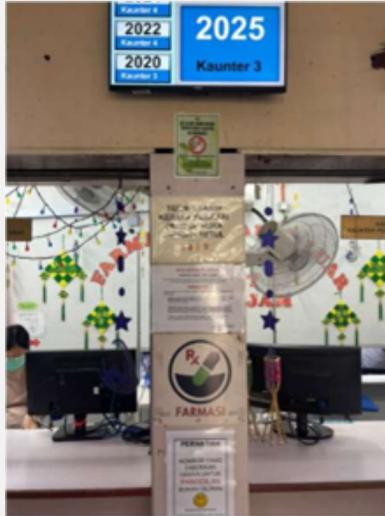
Progress achieved

In 2024, Hospital Bukit Mertajam achieved a 2% recycling rate for plastic waste from recycling 7,969 kg out of a total of 340,467.92 kg of general waste. This effort generated RM 7,103.60 in revenue from recycled plastics, mainly from the solution bottles used in haemodialysis treatments, reflecting a commitment to sustainability and resource optimization. Although modest, this initiative marks a step forward in waste reduction and cost recovery. Ongoing efforts focus on increasing staff awareness and improving waste segregation to enhance recycling rates. Addressing challenges such as low segregation compliance and logistical constraints remains crucial for achieving greater sustainability outcomes.

Lessons and next steps

Hospital Bukit Mertajam learned that consistent awareness and structured waste segregation are crucial for effective plastic recycling. Initial challenges, such as low compliance with segregation and logistical issues in collection, were addressed through staff training and improved waste management procedures. The hospital advises every department to begin with clear waste categorization and regular monitoring to track progress. Moving forward, the hospital aims to increase its recycling rate by strengthening staff engagement, improving collection systems, and exploring partnerships with recycling companies. Sustaining this initiative will require continuous education and periodic audits to measure effectiveness and identify areas for improvement.

Please note that the information in this case study was provided by the GGHH member named above. Health Care Without Harm (HCWH) is not responsible for the accuracy of the information/data provided.



"No Plastic Bag" posters are displayed at all pharmacy medication collection counters to remind visitors to bring their own reusable bags, supporting our commitment to reducing single-use plastic.



At the pharmacy collection counter, medications are provided to patients without plastic bags, promoting eco-friendly habits and reducing plastic waste.



A dedicated recycling center has been established to collect and manage all recyclable materials, supporting sustainable waste management initiatives.



Used plastic bottles from the Haemodialysis Unit are gathered for recycling, contributing to eco-friendly waste management efforts.



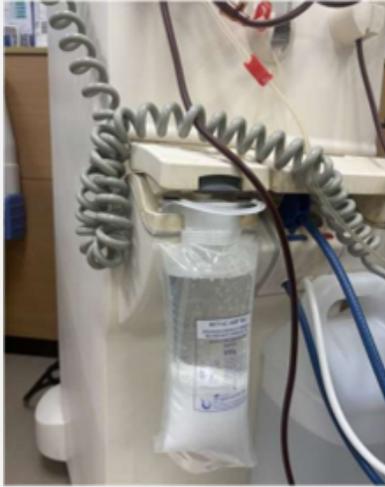
A 3R (Reduce, Reuse, Recycle) awareness banner has been installed along the hospital pathway to educate and encourage all hospital staff and visitors to adopt sustainable waste management practices and support environmental responsibility.



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3R bins (Paper, Plastic, and General Waste) placed in front of the ward to promote waste segregation and environmental awareness among hospital staff, patients, and visitors.



Towards a plastic-free solution: In the Haemodialysis Ward, plastic bottles have been replaced with powdered treatment packs, significantly reducing single-use plastic waste.