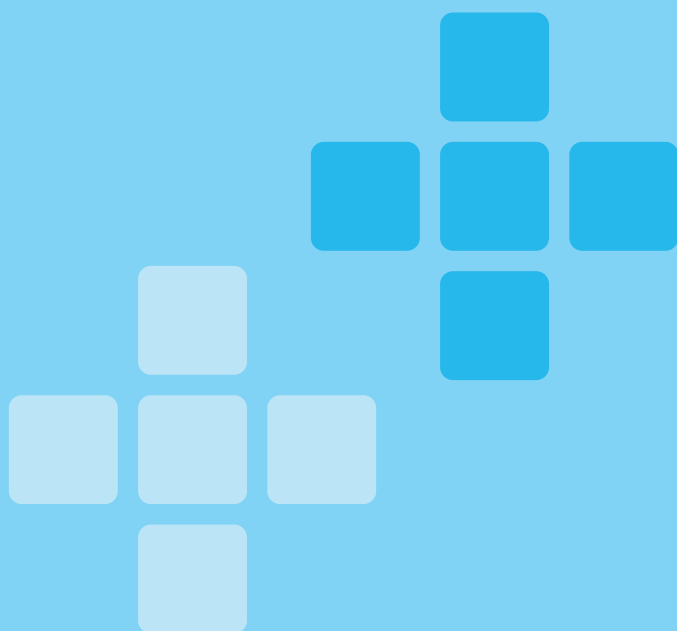


Roadmap for climate resilient, sustainable, low-plastics healthcare



Roadmap

for climate resilient, sustainable, low-plastics healthcare



From fires to flooding and extreme heat, communities around the world are facing the effects of climate change. Concurrently, plastic pollution is accelerating, contaminating ecosystems and communities. These crises are two of the greatest threats to human and planetary health of our time.

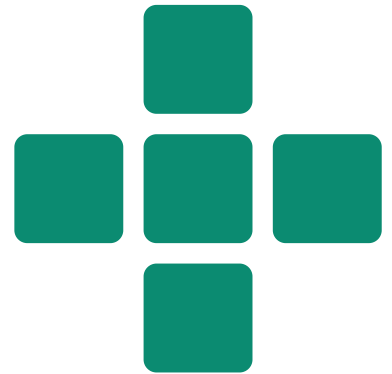
For healthcare institutions around the world, these are not distant threats; they are operational and public health emergencies already affecting care delivery, infrastructure, supply chains, and most importantly, public health. Dangerous weather events, disease outbreaks, poor air quality, and pollution are intensifying the pressure on healthcare in every part of the globe.

Yet the health systems responding to the impacts of these crises are also contributing to them. With resource-intensive operations, increasing climate emissions, and high use of single-use plastic, the global health sector is fueling the problem they also have to treat. This creates a profound contradiction—but also a historic opportunity for transformation.

Healthcare systems can—and must—become part of the solution. By transforming how care is delivered, how resources are used and how institutions prepare for a changing world, the sector can help create a healthier, more resilient future for people and the planet.

Climate resilience and plastics reduction

To protect health in a changing world, there is an urgent need for a new healthcare agenda—one that addresses the climate crisis and plastics crisis together. This means building health systems that can adapt and respond to shocks and stresses while reducing emissions, eliminating problematic and avoidable plastics, improving efficiencies, and forging a path toward **climate-resilient, sustainable, and low-plastics healthcare.**



Climate resilience beyond adaptation

The Global Green and Healthy Hospitals network of Health Care Without Harm puts forward a broad vision of climate resilience—one that combines preparing healthcare systems to withstand and adapt to climate impacts with reducing the emissions and environmental pressures that drive them.

By taking action on both fronts, healthcare institutions can strengthen services, protect patients and communities, ensure continuity of care, and build a healthier, more resilient future. This approach also creates opportunities to improve efficiency, reduce costs and deliver wider health and environmental benefits.

The choices made today can and will transform healthcare and position the sector to lead the transition toward a healthier, resilient, and sustainable future. This is a call to action for healthcare institutions in every corner of the world to reimagine healthcare not only as a first responder to these crises, but as a force for prevention, resilience, and transformation.

These actions can deliver benefits far beyond environmental impact—improving health outcomes and quality of care, strengthening operational resilience, and reducing costs through greater efficiency and smarter use of resources.

CORE PRIORITIES



Climate
resilience



Plastics
reduction

ACTION AREAS



Natural
resources



Infrastructure



Procurement



Waste

Strategic action areas



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The Global Green and Healthy Hospitals (GGHH) Roadmap focuses on four strategic action areas where healthcare institutions have significant opportunity to adapt and improve their operations to advance climate resilience, reduce emissions, minimize avoidable plastics, and protect people and the planet.

Natural resources

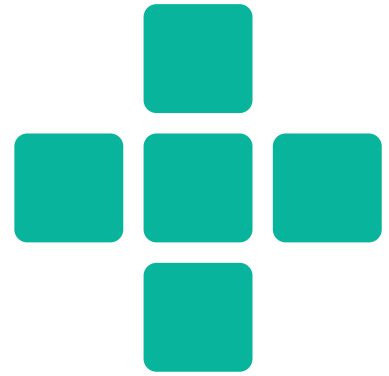
Healthcare depends on stable access to water, energy and materials to build and maintain its facilities and to provide care to communities and patients. It consumes significant amounts of these resources, which in turn increases its environmental footprint and makes it vulnerable to shortages and disruptions to access.

Efficient use and stewardship of these resources and using renewables can dramatically reduce the demand of healthcare, their associated environmental impacts and their climate footprint. Strong water, energy, and materials management improves resilience by helping hospitals and facilities withstand extreme climate events such as drought, heat, and flooding, which can lead to outages, supply disruptions, and other climate-related stresses that threaten continuity of care.



Priorities

- Improve efficiency and conservation of resources such as water and energy.
- Use renewable resources and sources of energy.
- Electrify healthcare facilities when the grid is reliable and provides lower emissions.
- Strengthen water, sanitation, hygiene (WASH) management systems and capacity across the healthcare facilities, health system and the community.
- Develop resilient systems to prepare for disruptions.
- Reduce plastic dependence in favor of reusable materials.



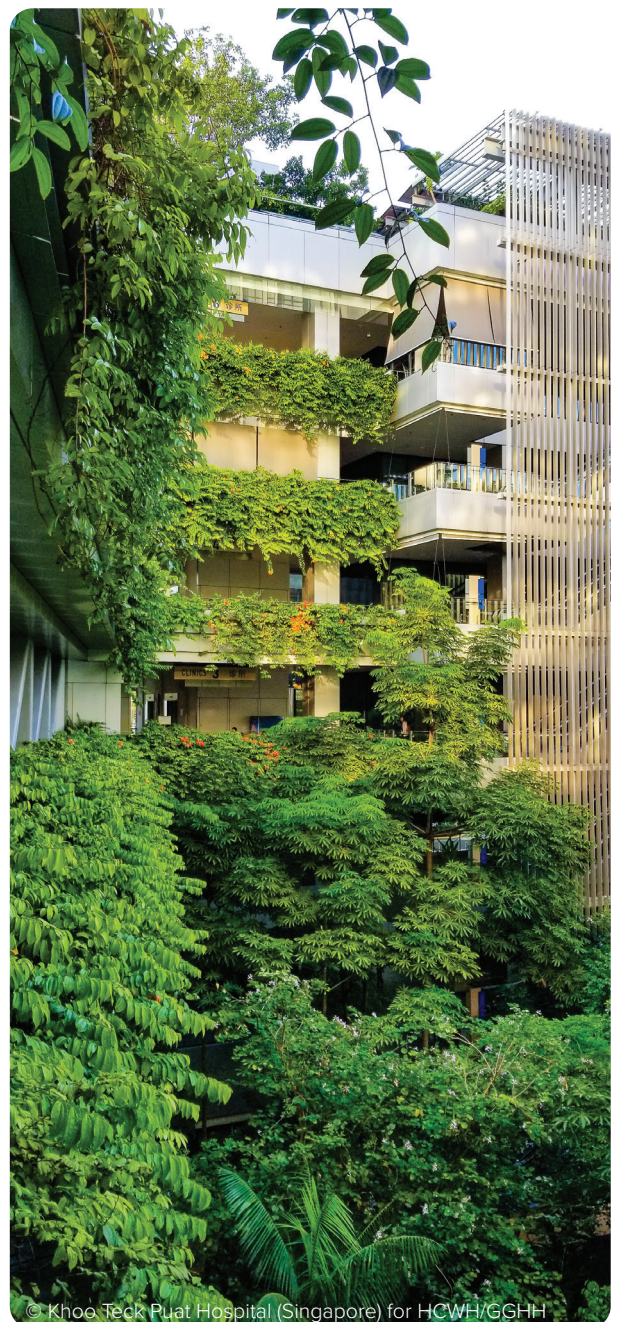
Infrastructure

Hospitals and healthcare facilities are complex buildings. As structures, they have high demands of their own to heat, cool, and maintain to ensure they are open and operational even during the most extreme weather events. Meeting this demand generates emissions and pollution.

Climate-resilient, low-carbon infrastructure reduces dependence on fossil fuels, avoids plastic-intensive materials when alternatives exist, and strengthens the ability of hospitals and facilities to continue operating during extreme weather, outages, and disasters. Better infrastructure design protects patients, reduces long-term costs, improves efficiency, and ensures that health facilities can remain safe, functional, and responsive under climate stress.

Priorities

- Build for heat, flooding, storms, wildfire, and extreme weather dependent on local vulnerabilities in order to protect critical infrastructure and operations.
- Align retrofits and new buildings with adaptation plans.
- Improve facility efficiency and use of natural resources.
- Reduce problematic and avoidable plastic building materials and pursue reuse systems.
- Design for surge capacity and emergency response.



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Procurement

Supply chains are the biggest driver of healthcare's environmental impacts. From manufacturing to transport to packaging, supply chains make up the majority of the carbon footprint of care and generate huge volumes of waste – much of it plastic.

By reducing reliance on single-use items and scarce resources, sustainable procurement decisions can also improve supply chain resilience in the face of shocks and disruptions, protecting the delivery of essential healthcare.

With their huge purchasing power, healthcare buyers have the opportunity to influence suppliers to prioritize low-carbon, reusable, non-plastic products that deliver high-quality patient outcomes.



Priorities

- Prioritize lower-emission products and suppliers that have climate and sustainability commitments.
- Favor local materials, supplies and production where possible.
- Favor a variety of suppliers to increase resilience to supply chain disruptions.
- Reduce hazardous additives and chemicals.
- Reduce purchasing of plastics in favor of reusable materials.



Waste

Healthcare generates significant quantities and types of waste across all areas of its operations and care. This waste, depending on how a healthcare facility manages and disposes of it, can contribute to its climate footprint and the pollution it puts out into the world.

Reducing waste at the source, shifting toward reuse, and improving segregation and treatment can reduce emissions and problematic plastic consumption. Waste reduction also supports healthcare adaptation by reducing dependence on disposable supply chains, lowering operating costs, and ensuring essential resources remain available during shortages so that care can continue at all times.

Priorities

- Prevent waste at the source through improved procurement practices.
- Reuse and recycle.
- Improve waste segregation and treatment in favor of low carbon alternatives to incineration.
- Reduce waste from plastics and single-use items.

Vision



The climate crisis and plastics crisis are health crises—but our collective action and response can be catalysts for transformation of the healthcare sector.

A future where healthcare institutions around the world are no longer contributors to these global emergencies, but leaders in building a healthier, more resilient future is possible. The Global Green and Healthy Hospitals network has been creating it for 15 years. Now is the time to accelerate our commitment and action.

A future where healthcare institutions are powered by clean energy, designed to withstand climate shocks, use resources wisely, reduce avoidable waste and plastics, and deliver high quality and high value care without compromising the health of people or the planet.

A future where hospitals and health facilities are prepared to be anchors of resilience in their communities—remaining safe, operational, and responsive during floods, fires, heat waves, storms, disease outbreaks, and supply disruptions. A future where healthcare protects communities not only through treatment, but through prevention, stewardship, and leadership.

A future where procurement systems reward safer and lower-impact products, where waste is prevented rather than managed, where reusable systems replace unnecessary disposables, and where healthcare's purchasing and institutional power helps transform markets and industries.

No single hospital, health system, clinic, or facility can transform the sector alone. But together, healthcare institutions around the world can continue to push for a global movement—one that shares solutions, scales innovation, sets new standards, and demonstrates that healthcare can deliver excellent care while advancing climate resilience and moving toward low-plastic care.

This is an opportunity, a roadmap, and a call to action to redefine what healthcare is in the 21st century. The Global Green and Healthy Hospitals network is just the community to champion this work forward around the world.



The time to act is now—and together, healthcare can lead.

Commit+ Transform Together

GGHH+



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