

MAMMOTH HOSPITAL WINS AWARD FOR MAKING MEDICINE MERCURY FREE

Health care facility is eliminating use of toxin and improving patient, community, and environmental health

April 18, 2006, Seattle, WA – Today Mammoth Hospital received the Making Medicine Mercury Free Award, a prestigious national award given by Hospitals for a Healthy Environment (H2E).

H2E, a non-profit group focused on improving health care's environmental performance, is working to realize the vision of a healthy health care system – a system that embraces safer building products, clean air, energy and water efficiency, safe working practices, and a commitment to public health demonstrated through waste volume and toxicity reduction. Jointly founded by the American Hospital Association, the Environmental Protection Agency, Health Care Without Harm, and the American Nurses Association, H2E educates health care professionals about pollution prevention opportunities, rewards the sector's best performers, and provides a wealth of practical tools and resources to facilitate the industry's movement toward environmental sustainability.

The Making Medicine Mercury Free Award is a one-time award given to facilities that have met the challenge of becoming virtually mercury-free. Mercury - a potent neurotoxin and developmental toxin - can impact human health at extremely low levels, and health care facilities can be a major contributor to mercury air emissions. Hospitals that receive this award meet stringent benchmarks for mercury elimination.

Mammoth Hospital has gone to great lengths in achieving the goal of virtual mercury elimination. This was a long process for the hospital which started by working to replace mercury containing products. This process was continued and completed by a large group of employees that include the recycling committee, the product evaluation committee, the maintenance staff, the bio-med staff, the purchasing department, and all department managers. This took a lot of effort, from managers budgeting non-mercury containing equipment to employees researching and establishing battery and bulb recycling programs. Mammoth Hospital and the employees involved with this project should be proud of this great accomplishment.

“By eliminating mercury, Mammoth Hospital is taking an important step to protect vulnerable populations like infants, pregnant mothers and young children from the damaging effects of mercury pollution,” said Laura Brannen, Director of Hospitals for a Healthy Environment. “Mercury elimination is a no-brainer – mercury is a threat to the health of people and our environment, and safe and effective alternatives are available. Mammoth Hospital is to be commended for making health care safer and healthier for everyone.”

The leading national force in helping hospitals with environmental improvement, H2E provides practical solutions through a website full of resources, regular teleconferences offering expert help for environmental challenges, and a listserv where colleagues across the country share best practices and strategies for pollution prevention. At CleanMed 2006 (www.cleanmed.org), H2E honors nearly 200 facilities for environmental excellence through its annual awards program. To learn more, visit www.h2e-online.org.