



SUSTAINABILITY
SNAPSHOT

DIGNITY HEALTH

 IRON MOUNTAIN®


Dignity Health®

PROFILE OF A VISIONARY: SISTER MARY ELLEN LECIEJEWSKI

It is through the innovative work of Sister Mary Ellen Leciejewski, that Dignity Health's original sterilization wrap recycling program came to life. Described by Key Green Solutions as a "sustainability crusader", Sister Mary Ellen has dedicated herself to integrating and advancing environmentally-friendly practices across the health system. She attributes her success to the support of Dignity Health's leadership and the collaborative efforts of colleagues such as Purchased Service Administrator Supply & Service Resource Management, Leah Kolicko.

Working together, Sister Mary Ellen and Leah were able to conceptualize a program wherein they could expand the reach of their existing document shredding service to reduce the increasing landfill and incineration waste attributed to sterilization wrap disposition. Through their out-of-the-box thinking and tireless efforts, this concept was made a reality, elevating Dignity Health's sustainability posture and giving life to a new service that amplifies sustainability industry-wide.



WHAT'S GOOD FOR THE PATIENT IS GOOD FOR THE PLANET.

ADVANCING COMPLIANCE AND REDUCING
PLASTIC WASTE WITH AN ENTERPRISE-WIDE,
ECO-FRIENDLY STERILIZATION WRAP
RECYCLING PROGRAM.

BACKGROUND

As one of the largest health care providers in the nation, Dignity Health recognizes the interdependence between caring for patients and the environment. A founding member of Greenhealth Exchange, their industry-leading approach to sustainability focuses on eco-responsible decision making, from the products that they use, to the energy they consume and the waste that they generate.

Today, the health care industry is buckling under the enormous weight of generated waste. According to Practice Greenhealth, "hospitals produce more than 5 million tons of waste each year." One way that Dignity Health is addressing this complex challenge is through a sustainable approach to managing sterilization wrap. Commonly used to protect medical devices and sterilized instruments from contamination, sterilization wrap makes up as much as 20% of the surgical services waste stream and 5% of the total waste stream in some medium to large hospitals.¹ Understanding this, Dignity Health developed a program that makes it easy for employees across the enterprise to dispose of this material in a consistent, compliant and environmentally-responsible manner.

CHALLENGE

Like most new programs, Dignity Health's initial sterilization recycling efforts faced some early challenges. It was extremely challenging to find local recyclers willing to take the plastic. Without the ability to service all geographies, Dignity Health was unable to roll-out a standardized process system-wide. Where the service was available, gaps in communication and processes resulted in inconsistent placement of the disposal bins and a co-mingling of materials (other than sterilization wrap) in containers. This co-mingling of materials, even if non-hazardous, rendered entire bins ineligible for recycling. Collectively, these early challenges hindered full-scale program adoption.

Dignity Health quickly recognized, in order for the program to realize long-term success, they would not only need to develop a scalable program, capable of servicing their extensive footprint, but also standardized instructions to educate each of their facilities on the process, where to place the collection containers, and what to include or more importantly, what to avoid placing in the containers.

SOLUTION

Committed to its goal of enabling enterprise-wide compliance and waste reduction, Dignity Health set out to evolve their program by focusing on three critical elements: 1) improving internal program awareness, 2) re-engineering the program to enable standardization and adoption across all facilities and 3) re-examining how they could drive measurable results as a force for good.

As a first step, Dignity Health implemented a process to collect feedback from each of their facilities. Using this intelligence, Dignity Health was able to isolate existing deficiencies and deploy an effective training and communication plan to increase policy awareness. Next, Dignity Health sought to identify a like-minded partner that could service their extensive footprint while delivering against their robust set of needs. After much diligence, they selected Iron Mountain whose commitment to sustainability is reflected in their corporate responsibility report as well as their extensive portfolio of ecofriendly disposition services. Leveraging Iron Mountain's Sterilization Wrap Recycling solution, Dignity Health is able to recycle sterilization wrap in a safe, cost-effective manner, while eliminating unnecessary landfill and plastic waste. Equipped with training to help with program adoption, checklists to ensure there are no program gaps and clearly identified sterilization wrap

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*ELISE NAGOWSKI,
DIGNITY HEALTH,
PERIOPERATIVE SERVICES
ADMINISTRATOR SUPPLY
& SERVICE RESOURCE
MANAGEMENT*

collection containers, Dignity Health is able to eliminate ambiguity and simplify the process for their employees. Perhaps most importantly, Dignity Health is able to seamlessly integrate this program into existing processes with little to no interruption to patient care. As Michelle Rodriguez, Purchased Service Administrator Supply & Service Resource Management, put it, "We were able to work the program in to support patient care, not get in the way of it."

RESULTS

Today, Dignity Health has the scalability, standardization and support needed to deliver an enterprise-wide program as well as the reporting required to enforce it. Collaborating with Iron Mountain, they've been able to establish a process to track container contamination by site, as they move toward their goal of zero contamination. Most notably, they are striving to move beyond waste reduction to leverage their program as a force for good. "With this new program in place, we don't just feel we are doing the right thing. We have real measurements and targets established to prove it. As part of our program, we've set a buy-back goal of 75%." As the program matures Dignity Health plans to use resin from the recycled

sterilization wrap to create other products such as recycle bins, bed pans and distribution totes to create a second life for materials that would have otherwise been waste. Through this program, Dignity Health is demonstrating their strong commitment to cultivating fiscally sound business practices founded on principles of environmental sustainability. In summary, they are proving that doing good can be an integral part of doing business.

To learn more about Dignity Health's commitment to sustainability click [here](#).



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Iron Mountain Incorporated (NYSE: IRM), founded in 1951, is the global leader for storage and information management services. Trusted by more than 220,000 organizations around the world, and with a real estate network of more than 85 million square feet across more than 1,400 facilities in over 50 countries, Iron Mountain stores and protects billions of information assets, including critical business information, highly sensitive data, and cultural and historical artifacts. Providing solutions that include secure storage, information management, digital transformation, secure destruction, as well as data centers, art storage and logistics, and cloud services, Iron Mountain helps organizations to lower cost and risk, comply with regulations, recover from disaster, and enable a more digital way of working. Visit www.ironmountain.com for more information.

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