



# Massachusetts General Hospital

Founding Member, Mass General Brigham

## Center for the Environment and Health

*Working to integrate sustainability into clinical, research, and educational activities, and to improve the environmental health and well-being of the hospital and our communities*

### Summer 2024



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#### MGB Waste Summit

Hospitals produce an important amount of waste leading to substantial negative impacts on the environment. This impact is particularly large for regulated medical waste which requires extensive disinfection before going to a landfill. On May 15th, Dr. Ann-Christine Duhaime, Associate Director of the CEH organized a waste summit bringing together actors from across MGB as well local and state organizations involved in creating hospital waste regulations to discuss policies and look for waste reduction strategies. The event included presentations from multiple stakeholders, small group working sessions, and identification of steps to reduce the waste generated by MGB.



Click [here](#) to see more information about waste generation at MGH.

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#### CEH Members Attend CleanMed

In May, CEH members and associates Jonathan Slutzman, Wynne Armand, Michael Padget, and Mike Zalis attended the CleanMed conference in Salt Lake City. CleanMed is the premier national conference for leaders in health care sustainability. CEH members met healthcare sustainability professionals from across the country and attended



conference sessions on climate-smart health care innovations, environmentally preferable purchasing, sustainable food strategies, greening the operating room, renewable energy, and others. Dr. Slutzman led a session on environmental sustainability in clinical decision making alongside sustainability leaders at Brigham and Women's hospital.

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### **Sustainability in Food Services**

Food services represents a large portion of the environmental footprint of MGH through food purchases along with high energy and water usage. The environmental impact of animal protein is particularly large due to the resources needed to raise livestock and the impact animal antibiotics can have on the environment. The CEH has partnered with leaders in food services to implement several several changes to support sustainability over the last few months including an increased number of plant forward items through expanded salad bar options as well as grab & go options from vendors Farm Fresh and Magic Bites. Nutrition Food Services will also be adding pork to antibiotic-free meat options, in addition to the current antibiotic-free chicken.

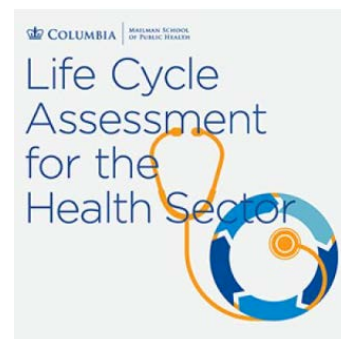


## **Upcoming Events**

### **Life Cycle Assessment Boot Camp**

August 12-13 & September 23-24

Registration for the Life Cycle Assessment Boot Camp: LCA for the Health Sector class is now open for the summer session. LCA is a tool used to quantify the environmental emissions of a product or process and is critical for anyone seeking a career in healthcare sustainability. The LCA Boot Camp is a 4-day intensive, hands-on course where an individual and/or team will learn the concepts of LCA and analytic methods required to complete their own LCA with their team. The course is hosted by Columbia University's SHARP Program and Columbia University's Global



Consortium on Climate Change and Health Education, in collaboration with Health Care Without Harm and the CEH.

Click [here](#) for more information and registration.

## Research

### Research Laboratory Sustainability Update

For the past year and a half, the CEH has been conducting a pilot study among five research labs to measure the environmental impact, cost-effectiveness, and acceptability of laboratory sustainability efforts. Initial results show that sustainability effort are cost-effective and supported by the research community. Thanks to financial support from MGB, this effort is currently being expanded to include 20 research labs across the MGB system. Participating labs will be enrolled in the My Green Lab certification process which helps labs improve their processes in energy use, waste, chemical toxicity, water use, and many other domains of research. Results of this work should help support further lab sustainability efforts across MGB.



## Advocacy

### Climate & Health Day at the Mass Statehouse

On June 25, 14 health professionals and students including those from MGH participated in the Climate & Health Day at the Massachusetts Statehouse organized by the Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility. Participants spoke with our congressional leaders and representatives to educate them and ask for their support in critical climate and health bills in our state in both the Senate and the House.

Highlights of the event included witnessing the passing of the Senate Omnibus Bill including comprehensive climate legislation to strengthen the state's transition to renewable, clean energy and achieve net-zero emissions goals by 2050. The bill also makes significant progress to prevent the expansion of the gas system, aid in building decarbonization efforts, and set a deadline to electrify the commuter rail, among other priorities.



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## Open Letter for AstraZeneca

The Greater Boston Physicians for Social Responsibility group is seeking signatures for an open letter to AstraZeneca to bring Symbicort Turbuhaler to the U.S. market. This dry powder form of Symbicort (budesonide-formoterol) is the formulation used in many of the asthma trials, and is readily available in Canada, the United Kingdom, much of Europe, China and other Asian countries – but not in the U.S.



Pressurized metered dose inhalers (MDIs) are responsible for roughly 4% of our healthcare system's greenhouse gas emissions. In 2020, the greenhouse gas emissions from metered dose inhaler use in the U.S. was the equivalent of driving 500,000 cars for a year. Switching from pressurized MDIs to dry powder inhalers, when appropriate, can significantly reduce these emissions.

Click [here](#) to learn more and sign the letter.

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## Climate Health Organizing Fellowship 2025



The Cambridge Health Alliance Center for Health Equity Education & Advocacy is looking for applicants for the 2025 Climate Health Organizing Fellows Program, a tuition free, Zoom based program for health professionals and community leaders focused on creating climate solutions through community organizing. The fellowship has been developed in collaboration with Harvard Kennedy School Professor Marshall Ganz and includes learning and practice sessions throughout the year.

Letters of Interest are accepted starting August 9, 2024 with a final application deadline of September 20, 2024.

More information can be found [here](#)

**Resources**

## Reduce the Use of Dirty Energy at Work and at Home

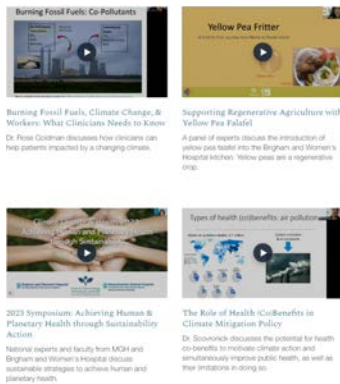
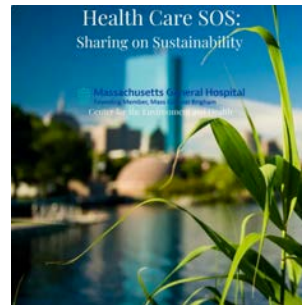
Extreme weather often leads to larger energy demands through cooling or heating use at particular times of the day. These peaks in energy need are often met with energy produced from the dirtiest and most expensive fossil fuels. Sign up for the Shave the Peak effort to learn how you can help save energy during these peak hours and help the environment.

[Sign up for alerts](#)



## Sustainability in Healthcare Podcast

Have any colleagues who want to integrate sustainability into their health care system but don't know where to start? Refer them to our podcast "[Health Care SOS: Sharing on Sustainability](#)" – a podcast series hosted by the CEH Associate Director Wynne Armand and devoted to sharing the ways in which Mass General is integrating environmental sustainability into the clinical, research and educational activities of the hospital, and to providing tools and knowledge to support other health care institutions to do the same.



## Climate and Health Webinars

The CEH has a library of climate and health webinars covering a range of topics from healthcare sustainability, to sustainable agriculture, to climate and health education for health workers. Our [most recent webinar](#) included speaker Dr. Victor Dzau, President of the National Academic of Medicine who presented the case for collective climate action in the health sector. Click [here](#) to see a list of all our recorded webinars.

## Publications and Media

- Armand, W, Cunningham, L. Massachusetts residents' health depends on fossil fuel-free buildings. Energy News Network. July, 2024.

URL: <https://energynews.us/2024/07/11/massachusetts-residents-health-depends-on-fossil-fuel-free-building-codes/>

- Armand, W, How do trees and green spaces enhance our health? Harvard Health Publishing. April, 2024. URL: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/how-do-trees-and-green-spaces-enhance-our-health-202404193034>
- Armand, W. One surprising effect of wildfires: Itchy, irritated skin. June, 2024. Harvard Health Publishing. URL: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/one-surprising-effect-of-wildfires-itchy-irritated-skin-202406243052>
- Coltrera, F. 5 great tips for sustainable summer living. Harvard Health Publishing. June, 2024. URL: <https://www.health.harvard.edu/blog/5-great-tips-for-sustainable-summer-living-202406283054>
- Hantel A, Cernik C, Walsh TP, Uno H, Larios D, Slutzman JE, Abel GA. Assessing the Environmental and Downstream Human Health Impacts of Decentralizing Cancer Care. JAMA Oncol. 2024 Jun 3:e242744. [Assessing the Environmental and Downstream Human Health Impacts of Decentralizing Cancer Care | Oncology | JAMA Oncology | JAMA Network](#)
- Northern Light Health. Healthcare's role in climate sustainability - Overcoming obstacles and advancing solutions. Healthy, Happy, & Wise podcast series. April, 2024. URL: [Podcast | Northern Light Health - Northern Light Health](#)
- Padgett M, Peters MA, Brunn M, Kringos D, Kruk ME. Health systems and environmental sustainability: updating frameworks for a new era. BMJ. 2024 Apr 30;385:e076957. doi: 10.1136/bmj-2023-076957. PMID: 38688557.

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