

# VCH COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT



Making better decisions together with patients and families

## Health & the Environment Survey

### Community Engagement Summary Report

Date: June 19<sup>th</sup>, 2020



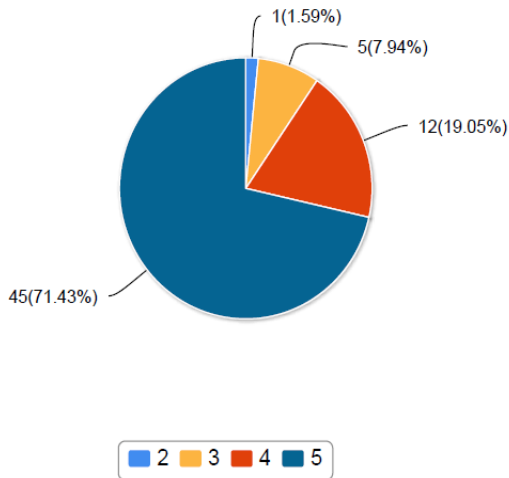
## Background

It is the goal of [GreenCare Energy and Environmental Sustainability \(EES\) Team](#) with Vancouver Coastal Health (VCH) to reduce the environmental impacts and increase the resilience of health care facilities. Just as we recognize that health is not simply the absence of disease, we are striving to go beyond simply reducing negative environmental impacts by seeking solutions that restore, renew, and revitalize environmental health across our local and regional communities.

Along with the GreenCare EES Team, the Community Engagement team had hoped to bring this topic to CEANs at this year's annual spring forum, which had to be cancelled due to COVID-19. Still wanting to gather input from CEANs, we sent out a survey to get CEAN feedback in late April. We had 68 CEAN members respond to the survey. Below is a summary of the feedback they provided. Where possible, the GreenCare EES team has provided updates on initiatives that they are working on to address the themes that CEAN members provided.

Survey Questions and Responses	GreenCare EES Notes and Initiatives
<p><b>1) What do you feel are the connections between the environment and health?</b></p> <p>TOP THEMES (in order):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. We are reliant on the environment we live in to be healthy</li><li>2. Environmental issues have a direct impact on our health</li><li>3. We need clean air to live healthy lives</li><li>4. COVID-19 spread has relied on environmental issues such as overcrowding to flourish. It has also helped us to see how we could live differently with less impact.</li><li>5. Chemicals we use directly impact the environment and its health</li><li>6. Living with nature is vital to our health and happiness</li></ol>	<p><b>VCH (and the other lower mainland health organizations) are served by an Energy and Environmental Sustainability (EES) team that works to reduce health care's impact on the environment. This team works under the brand GreenCare, although all health care staff are part of the GreenCare Community.</b></p> <p><b>An annual Environmental Performance Accountability Report (EPAR) is created which describes the work that has been done and the progress VCH has made towards its targets.</b></p> <p><a href="https://bcgreencare.ca/sites/default/files/GreenCareEPAR_VCH_VF_Oct-4-2019.pdf">https://bcgreencare.ca/sites/default/files/GreenCareEPAR_VCH_VF_Oct-4-2019.pdf</a></p>

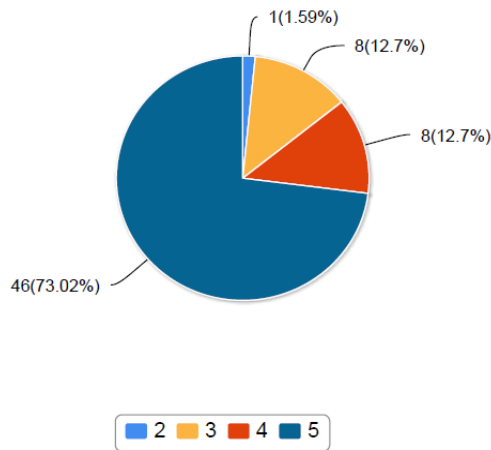
2) On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 is not at all and 5 is very much) how strongly do you feel that health organizations should demonstrate leadership with regards to environmental health and wellness in communities?



VCH has an environmental sustainability policy which guides its work to support environmental sustainability.

<http://www.vch.ca/about-us/accountability/energy-environmental-sustainability>

3) On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 is not at all and 5 is very much) how strongly do you feel that health organizations should educate the public on the links between the environment and health?



Currently our team does not regularly communicate externally, it's interesting to see that ¾ of respondents would like to see education about this!

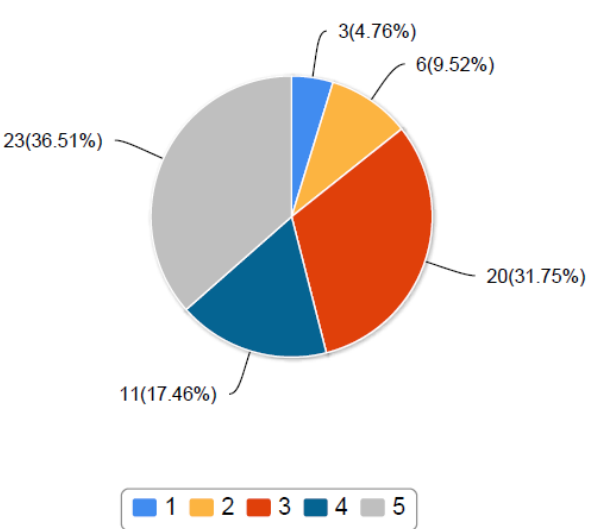

4) Please rank the following in order of what you feel health organizations should prioritize when it comes to environmental sustainability

1. Energy and emissions reduction (225, 22.39%)

VCH has a dedicated energy team that tracks energy use and emissions for all VCH-owned sites. VCH has goals to reduce:

- Energy use intensity (on track for 2020 target)
- Absolute in-scope GHG emissions (on track for 2020 target)
- GHG emissions intensity (on track for 2020 target)

	This work is supported by energy retrofits, the inclusion of energy reduction targets in new builds, and optimizing energy use in existing facilities.
2. Toxic chemical reduction (216, 21.49%)	VCH has begun work to identify chemicals of concern. This is a newer area of work and does not currently have targets. However work has already been completed to completely eliminate mercury from all health care operations.
3. Water conservation (195, 19.4%)	VCH has a goal to reduce building water use performance intensity for all VCH-owned sites.
4. Waste reduction (193, 19.2%)	<p>VCH has a goal to minimize the waste generated in its operations and has targets to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase waste diversion rates to 50% (on track)</li> <li>• Decrease waste intensity rates to 10 kg/square metre of facility space (on track)</li> <li>• Increase waste diversion rates at new LEED construction projects to 90% (surpassed target)</li> </ul> <p>This work is supported by a standardized Blue Bin recycling program in all hospital areas, staff engagement workshops to reduce waste, and questionnaires to service and product vendors to reduce waste entering the system in the first place.</p>
5. Climate change (176, 17.51%)	<p>In 2018, VCH completed a climate modelling report titled “Moving Towards Climate Resilient Health Facilities for Vancouver Coastal Health”, which outlines the impacts future climate projections will have on VCH facilities, and strategic recommendations to address them.</p> <p><a href="https://bcgreencare.ca/system/files/resource-files/VCH_ClimateReport%2BAppendices_Final_181025.pdf">https://bcgreencare.ca/system/files/resource-files/VCH_ClimateReport%2BAppendices_Final_181025.pdf</a></p>
<b>5) Are there any other environmental issues you feel health care organizations should prioritize?</b>	
TOP THEMES (in order)	
1. Access to healthy, environmentally sustainable food	<p>Contracted food services works with health care dieticians to determine nutrition plans and food menus. Recent work to improve access to healthy, environmentally sustainable food includes Canada’s first healthy food vending machine at Lions Gate Hospital.</p> <p><a href="https://www.greenmoustache.com/vending/">https://www.greenmoustache.com/vending/</a></p>
2. Reduce use of chemicals, antibiotics and hormones	<b>*addressed above</b>
3. Provide public and staff education, training and stewardship on environmental issues	

4. Reduce waste created by healthcare industry and beyond	<b>*addressed above</b>																		
5. Ensure clean drinking water																			
<b>6) Please rank the following in order of importance to you when you may be in hospital</b>																			
1. The air quality (271, 26.57%)	<b>All new health care construction builds are required to reach LEED Gold standard at a minimum. LEED Gold requires enhanced indoor air quality strategies</b>																		
2. My thermal comfort (246, 24.12%)																			
3. Unpleasant/chemical smells (212, 20.78%)	<b>All new health care construction builds are required to reach LEED Gold standard at a minimum. LEED Gold requires the use of low-emitting materials to reduce/eliminate chemical smells</b>																		
4. Proximity to green space (149, 14.61%)																			
5. Recycling containers (142, 13.92%)																			
<b>7) Are there any other environmental factors you feel would be important to you if you were in hospital?</b>																			
<p>TOP THEMES (in order):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Noise – reduction of noise while in hospital</li> <li>Light – access to natural light and ability to control light</li> <li>Clean room and facilities</li> <li>Access to healthy, good food that is environmentally sustainable</li> </ol>																			
<p><b>1) On a scale of 1 to 5, (1 is not at all and 5 is very much) how strongly do you feel hospitals should ban single use coffee cups?</b></p>  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Rating</th> <th>Count</th> <th>Percentage</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>1</td> <td>3</td> <td>4.76%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td> <td>6</td> <td>9.52%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3</td> <td>20</td> <td>31.75%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4</td> <td>11</td> <td>17.46%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5</td> <td>23</td> <td>36.51%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Rating	Count	Percentage	1	3	4.76%	2	6	9.52%	3	20	31.75%	4	11	17.46%	5	23	36.51%	<p><b>We have posters/marketing to staff to encourage them to bring their own reusable mugs for drinks</b></p>  <p>Choose to re-use.</p> <p>Your Green + leader is:</p> <p>GreenCare GREEN+LEADERS bcgreencare.ca</p>
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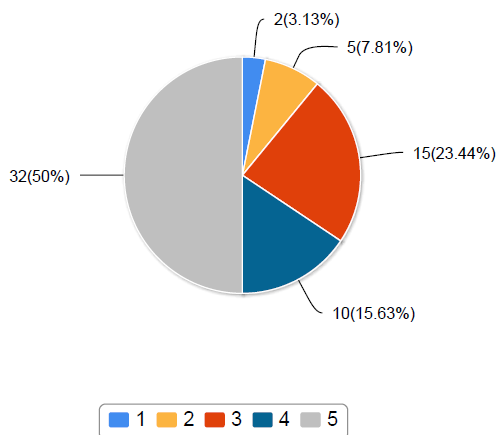
We are actively working to eliminate the use of Styrofoam cups, and replacing them with disposable paper cups. The elimination has already happened in patient food services and the cafeterias, however we are working now with clinical areas.

**2) Please tell us why you chose your answer to the question above**

TOP THEMES (in order):

1. Should be optional as single use cups are sometimes needed by patients and families
2. Need to create less waste in hospitals
3. Reusable cups should be used as long as they can be washed and used safely
4. Choose sanitation over sustainability
5. Need to use recyclable cups

**3) On a scale of 1 to 5, how strongly do you feel hospitals should ban plastic water bottles?**



Water bottles are generally provided by contracted food services, so any action to reduce offerings needs to be done in collaboration with them.

<p><b>4) Please tell us why you chose your answer to the question above</b></p> <p>TOP THEMES (In order):</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Have water filling stations at facilities</li> <li>2. Hospitals/facilities need to create less waste</li> <li>3. Plastic bottles should be optional – available for patients and families who may need it</li> <li>4. There needs to be less plastic overall in our oceans and in nature</li> </ol>	<p><b>Burnaby Hospital has plans to pilot additional water bottle filling stations with the goal of reducing single-use plastic water bottles.</b></p>
<p><b>5) Please check the following environmental initiatives that you are familiar with. Check all that apply.</b></p> <p>In order:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. City of Vancouver Single-Use Item Reduction Strategy (31, 25.83%)</li> <li>2. CleanBC Strategy (26, 21.67%)</li> <li>3. UN Sustainable Development Goals (24, 20%)</li> <li>4. BC GreenCare Community &amp; Initiatives (16, 13.33%)</li> <li>5. VCH Carbon Neutral Action Report (12, 10%)</li> <li>6. VCH Environmental Performance Accountability Report (6, 5%)</li> <li>7. VCH Strategic Energy Management Plan (5, 4.17%)</li> </ol>	

## Next Steps:

The GreenCare EES team will continue to review this feedback with the Community Engagement Team, to identify areas for further discussion with CEAN members, and develop a plan for further engagement with CEAN members and the public this fall.

Thank you to the CEAN members who responded to the survey and provided feedback. The GreenCare EES team is very excited to be connected to the network, and to involve patients and family members in further planning and strategy for environmental sustainability in healthcare.

Please contact [ce@vch.ca](mailto:ce@vch.ca) if you have any questions or comments.

## **CEAN QUOTES: What do you feel are the connections between health and the environment?**

*"It impacts many social determinants of health: pollution, food security, physical exercise, economic development/stability, employment safety and security. All of these and more impact overall health, and are in turn impacted by the health of the environment (i.e. climate change). It is an issue of population health that should be championed by health authorities."*

*"Physically there are many connections, from air quality, water quality, how soil quality affects food that we eat, and much more. Mentally, the environment has a major impact on our health, both positively and negatively."*

*"Hospitals, like every other organization and every household should have an objective of producing 0 waste. Put another way, I should not be able to produce anything that could be toxic or throw away anything that would end up in landfill. When I buy something, I need to know where the packaging or the item will go once I'm done with it. Zero waste may never be attainable, but it's a worth a try."*

*"Environmental sustainability and green care is vital and essential to Health and a Health Care in the future"*