



## Maryland Green Registry MEMBER

The Maryland Green Registry promotes and recognizes sustainable practices at organizations of all types and sizes. Members agree to share at least five environmental practices and one measurable result while striving to continually improve their environmental performance.

# Veterans Affairs Maryland Health Care System



10 N. Greene Street  
Baltimore, MD 21201  
(Includes Perry Point Loch Raven and Baltimore VA Medical Centers,  
and six Community Based Outpatient Clinics)  
(410) 642-2411 ext 25772  
[www.maryland.va.gov/index.asp](http://www.maryland.va.gov/index.asp)  
Health Care System  
Member since October 2009

## Management and Leadership

### Environmental Team

*Our facility has two Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) coordinators and a committee that meets every other month to focus on environmental compliance, resource reduction, pollution prevention, and sustainability. The committee is a multi-disciplinary group with representation from services throughout the VAMHCS including: safety police, research, engineering, laboratory, nursing, infection control, pharmacy, housekeeping, nutrition and food, and acquisitions.*

### Environmental Policy Statement

*The mission of the VA Maryland Healthcare System (VAMHCS) is to offer options to timely quality services for Veterans through care and respect for one's physical, psychological, and spiritual health. To accomplish this, the VAMHCS must operate to protect both the environment and the health and safety of patients, employees, and visitors. VAMHCS Memorandum 512-001/OPS-S-003 establishes a governing environmental policy to accomplish this mission. VAMHCS policy helped develop and implement a VAMHCS Green Environmental Management System (GEMS) that will meet environmental regulations and help set environmental goals. Through the development of the GEMS program, the VAMHCS will:*

*a. Strive to be a good steward of the environment by complying with federal, state, and local environmental laws and other requirements, preventing*

*pollution, minimizing waste, conserving cultural and natural resources, and continually improve environmental programs.*

*b. Strive to utilize sustainable practices to eliminate, minimize, or mitigate adverse environmental impacts.*

*c. Evaluate the operation of each VAMHCS facility to incorporate actions into facility planning and procedures to reduce environmental vulnerabilities.*

*d. Integrate pollution prevention, waste minimization, resource conservation, and environmental compliance into the VAMHCS operations, projects, purchasing, planning, and decision making, wherever practical.*

*e. Strive to use natural resources efficiently and maintain and protect plant and wildlife habitat consistent with the VAMHCS mission.*

*f. Recognize that the development and construction at VAMHCS facilities must consider the unique conditions of the environment of which the facility is a part.*

*g. Train VAMHCS staff as needed to carry out environmental responsibilities of their positions.*

*h. Solicit input, as appropriate, from stakeholders including staff patients, visitors, and the local community regarding environmental matters affecting the operation of the facilities.*

<https://www.va.gov/maryland-health-care/programs/green-environmental-management-system-gems/>

**Annual Environmental Goals**

*Each year, our GEMS Committee reviews environmental hazards that result from activities in different services throughout the hospital. We use an environmental aspects and impacts spreadsheet to review over 500 facility activities that have environmental impacts. These items are all ranked on: Compliance, Frequency, Control, and Risk. Items with the highest scores are deemed significant. After significant aspects are identified, targets and goals are established to achieve a lower, more compliant ranking in the future. Our current goals for 2022 are:*

- 1) Install emission reduction units (Diesel Oxidation Catalyst) on all six Baltimore Emergency Generators to decrease air emissions from the Baltimore VAMC. These units have been installed on all six generators and reduce CO emissions by >70%.*
- 2) Further develop and implement a Green Procurement Policy for A&MM & Purchase card holders.*

- 3) *Design a replacement for the Perry Point VAMC 150,000-gallon Boiler Plant Tank that will be safer and easier to manage.*
- 4) *Continue to develop service specific staff training on Hazardous/Universal Waste, Tanks, and GEMS Awareness and assign this training to appropriate staff.*

**Environmentally Preferable Procurement**

*Though we do not currently have a policy in place, we have attempted to order some items that are environmentally preferred. The VA Central office (VACO) is working to enhance green purchasing at all VA hospitals. VACO has issued a directive that will help facilitate the continual improvement of VAs Green Purchasing Program Management. A quick reference guide has been developed and training will be provided to the field in the coming year.*

**Environmental Restoration or Community Environmental Projects**

*In 2021, we held two events that included staff and veteran patients. The Arbor Day Tree Planting and a Shoreline Cleanup activity for the celebration of Earth Day. The Arbor Day event included the planting of 88 total trees with 12 of them falling within the Critical Areas Commission buffer zone. The cleanup activities along the shoreline concentrated on efforts near the freshwater intakes at Building 20. We were able to remove 5 old tires, 3 plastic drums and filled 2 large recycling bins with plastic bottles and other recycle materials. Other items removed from the shoreline included jet ski docks, buoys, empty plastic drums and floating dock sections. We are also working closely with our community partners for our MS4 permitting.*

**Independently-Audited Environmental Management System**

*Our GEMS program is in conformance with ISO 14001. We are independently audited by regional offices and receive an external compliance audit every 3 years.*

## Waste

**Recycling**

*The VAMHCS Environmental Management Service (EMS) is composed of three facilities. The Baltimore, Loch Raven and Perry Point VA Medical Centers (VAMC). Within those facilities, the Service has enhanced the recycling programs by expanding the single stream collection containers throughout the campus.*

*This includes both internal containers for point of generation collection and external containers for bulk collection.*

*Baltimore VAMC Canteen service works with MOPAC and recycled 1.1465 tons of recyclable inedible by-products (cooking oil) in 2021.*

*The facilities also recycle used linens by sending them out to be converted into rags. This service is completed once annually.*

*Old pallets from Loch Raven are taken to Baltimore for recycling and delivered to a recycling center as needed.*

*Baltimore VAMC recycles metal that is placed in the green room as needed (full truck).*

*Toner cartridges are recycled at all facilities as needed.*

**Composting**

*Nutrition and Food Service has implemented an organic waste diversion program at the Perry Point VAMC. A compactor was installed in the Nutrition and Food Services (N&FS) building for the collection of food waste and other organic materials. This compactor is equipped with an odor control system. The organic waste is delivered to a Veteran owned composting facility in Aberdeen, Maryland, where it is turned into a beneficial, nutrient rich soil. This program diverted 50.76 tons of waste from landfills in 2021*

**Hazardous Waste/Toxic Use Reduction**

*Each year, the VAMHCS reviews current hazardous waste streams (including waste pharmaceuticals) to see if they can be reduced safely through recycling, redistributing, recovery, and purchasing alternatives. Waste dental amalgam is now recycled. Non-clinical wastes such as waste oil is also recycled. We have virtually eliminated all devices containing mercury, except for fluorescent light bulbs which we have reduced the use of considerably by switching to LED lighting. All of our universal waste is recycled, and we currently have battery recycling programs as well. We also have a VAMHCS-wide Hazardous Materials and Waste Management policy and provide associated training to all departments.*

## Energy

### **Energy Efficiency**

*VAMHCS is in the implementation Phase of a \$33 million Energy Saving Performance Contract applying energy conservation measures to the Baltimore, Perry Point and Loch Raven medical centers. These measures include chiller and air handler replacements, LED lighting conversion, heat recovery implementation, building automation system upgrades, and steam system maintenance management. Under this contract energy savings are guaranteed and pay for the work over the 21-year performance period.*

## Transportation

### **Employee Commute**

*The VAMHCS has enhanced telework opportunities for employees, eliminating travel to and from the VAMHCS Campuses. Employees that do not have direct patient interaction (Engineering, Contracting, Acquisitions, Pharmacy, Pathology, Research, Nutrition & Food, Canteen, and Housekeeping) are permitted to work compressed schedules of 9-10 hour days. By doing this they can eliminate one to two days that they are required to drive to work. The VAMHCS has multiple commute options that minimize emissions and traffic from employees and patients. We have a VAMHCS shuttle that is used primarily for patients commuting between facilities, however when there is room staff are also allowed to use the shuttle services. We have the Transit Benefit program that provides 328 employees a non-taxable subsidy to staff that use public transportation for their daily commute.*

### **Efficient Business Travel**

*Many training and conference opportunities have moved to a virtual format. This allows employees to attend from their home or office. All travel that is required and not offered in a virtual format is reviewed by a leadership committee to ensure that it is necessary.*

### **Fleet Vehicles**

*The VAMHCS has 200 plus vehicles in its fleet. About 10% of vehicles are hybrid or plug in electric hybrid. About 25% can run on e85 gasoline when available and about 7% run on diesel/biodiesel. As old vehicles are replaced, electric and hybrid vehicles are considered and purchased depending on the needs of the Veterans and Staff using the vehicle. There are currently 6 charging*

*stations for plug-in electric vehicles at the VAMHCS. These stations are primarily used for fleet vehicle charging and can also be used for staff and Veteran's POVs. All fleet vehicles purchased in 2018 or after are fitted with Telematics by GEOTAB GO. This fleetwide system helps lesson the environmental impact of the fleet by providing robust engine data reporting, route optimization and helping with driver behavior management (things such as excessive idling can be addressed).*

## **Water**

### **Water Conservation**

*Under the Energy Saving Performance Contract, conversion to low-flow plumbing fixtures is being implemented in the Baltimore, Perry Point and Loch Raven medical centers. The Baltimore VA has also replaced 5 one-pass water cooled condensing units with air cooled units. Similar to energy efficiency work, savings are guaranteed and pay for the work overtime.*

## **Green Building**

### **LEED Silver**

*Using the New Construction Rating System all new building construction in the VAMHCS will be designed to LEED Silver standard equivalent. We have also developed a Lease agreement scope that will require any buildings leased by the VAMHCS to be LEED Silver equivalent.*

***Profile Updated April 2022***



*Help build a greener, more sustainable Maryland through voluntary practices that reduce environmental impacts and save money.*

*Learn more at [green.maryland.gov](http://green.maryland.gov)*

