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International Federation of Hospital Engineering

ENVIRONMENTAL POLICY

Adopted by IFHE Council in Turku, Finland on 01 June 2015

Version 1.1

IFHE Environmental Policy

Introduction

The International Federation of Hospital Engineering (IFHE) is a global membership body supporting national member associations to promote safe, efficient, effective and environmentally sustainable facilities management in the Healthcare and Hospital context. IFHE takes note of the World Health Organization (WHO) statement that “Climate change is the greatest threat to global health in the 21st century¹,” and that “A ruined planet cannot sustain human lives in good health. A healthy planet and healthy people are two sides of the same coin.²”

Healthcare Facilities Management Context

Healthcare Facilities Management includes the design, development, construction, commissioning, maintenance, and operation of the built environment in which healthcare services are delivered.

The ongoing operation of a healthcare facility in accordance with the original design and commissioning criteria is essential to maintain and continually achieve improvements in efficient operation.

Sustainability in the Healthcare Context

Sustainability is the application of effort during design, construction and operation to reduce energy and water consumption and minimise waste output, without compromising safety or negatively impacting patient outcomes. Sustainability should be achieved by the application of measurable targets with regular and accurate monitoring, and should also reduce financial impacts.

Healthcare facilities should be planned, designed, constructed, and maintained so as to minimize, eliminate, or reverse negative impacts on the natural environment both locally and globally.

¹ <http://www.who.int/globalchange/global-campaign/cop21/en/>

² <http://www.who.int/dg/speeches/2015/climate-change-paris/en/>

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Background

Studies indicate that climate change is impacting public health, creating evolving challenges for healthcare organizations and facilities.³ Other studies indicate that the built environment must become part of the solution, mitigating their impact on global environmental health.⁴ Finally, global trends in disaster management indicate that catastrophic events associated with extreme weather events linked to the effects of climate change are having a considerable impact on healthcare facilities, and that healthcare organizations and facilities must also increase their resilience to face these challenges.⁵

The IFHE at its Council Meeting in Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia in 2013 agreed to make a concerted effort to provide opportunities for the IFHE community to benefit from the experiences and knowledge of its members and associates. In particular this includes supporting both emerging and developed countries to address these issues in advocating for change. It was agreed that a policy position needed to be developed to establish a framework and action plan to provide this support. The IFHE adopted the first version of this policy at its Council meeting in Turku, Finland in 2015, and will continue to stay abreast of global issues by regular reviewing this policy and assessing progress against its stated objectives.

IFHE Policy Statement

Congruent with the WHO, the IFHE believes that in the global context and alongside patient safety, environmental sustainability in Healthcare Facilities Management is the issue of most significance to be promoted. The IFHE will make every opportunity to promote Environmentally Sustainable outcomes to its member associations.

³ <http://www.who.int/globalchange/environment/climatechange-2014-report/en/>

⁴ *Nature Climate Change*, Vol. 5, December 2015, pp. 1057-1060

⁵ http://www.eenews.net/assets/2014/12/15/document_pm_02.pdf

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IFHE Objectives

The International Federation of Hospital Engineering will:

- Ensure that environmental sustainability is given appropriate coverage in its activities;
- Develop and promote publications that will draw attention to issues of environmental sustainability and will showcase projects and lessons learnt from the global experiences of its member countries. This will continue to be done through its official publication, the IFHE Digest and its associated Journals and Bulletins;
- Use its web-site and other social media platforms to promote awareness of environmental sustainability;
- Ensure that the bi-annual IFHE Congress will always have environmental issues and sustainability as subjects for promotion, education and shared learning;
- Make and use opportunity for promotions in appropriate public media to encourage an awareness of environmental issues in the healthcare sector;
- Advocate for change in areas of influence through member organisation, and globally through international bodies [eg World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations (UN)];
- Seek, develop and maintain partnerships with other associations, research and academic institutions and experts to promote environmental sustainability;
- Support members to focus on sustainability by education, promotion and information sharing;
- Establish a specific role or appoint a specialist project officer to coordinate this work on behalf of the IFHE;
- Develop technical and practical recommendations on issues of environmental sustainability in healthcare facilities.

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