

## Medical Center Celebrates First Campus-Wide Earth Day Celebration

On April 22<sup>nd</sup>, the Texas Medical Center will join tens of thousands of organizations and groups around the world to celebrate Earth Day. Although institutions at the Medical Center have observed the global holiday in the past, this is the **first** campus-wide celebration, organized by the Houston Medical Center Recycling Collaborative, (HMCRC) which consists of members from many of the Medical Center's institutions.

The Texas Medical Center is the world's largest medical center and is made up of 47 member institutions, 73,000 employees and more than 33,000 students. "With this city-like population, it is crucial that the Medical Center community be active in recycling," said Rock Morille, past chair of the HMCRC and senior director of Facility Services for Baylor College of Medicine.

M. D. Anderson Cancer Center's John Gamble and Kim Williamson, 2009 co-chairs of the HMCRC, agree with Morille, noting that TMC institutions are stepping up to the plate.

"Recycling at TMC institutions has quadrupled in the last two years, in large part because of the efforts of the Collaborative, and member institutions are actively looking at other ways to reduce their environmental footprints," said Gamble.

Dr. Winifred J. Hamilton, director of environmental health at BCM and a key organizer of the Collaborative and the Earth Day event, emphasized the enthusiasm and sense of collaboration among the institutions.

"We're very excited about this event," said Dr. Hamilton. "Not only is it a demonstration of the member institutions working together on this critical issue, but it will be an exceptional opportunity to raise awareness and educate the TMC community on how each of us can make a difference—at work and at home."

The first campus-wide Earth Day celebration at the Texas Medical Center will be held Wednesday, April 22, at the John P. McGovern Texas Medical Center Commons, located at Bertner and Moursund, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Organizers expect more than 20 exhibitors who will provide faculty, students, patients and visitors with useful information about how to live "greener." The event will feature

an Earth Day roulette wheel with prizes, as well as on-site recycling for a number of items, including eye glasses and cell phones. There will also be a number of demonstrations, including an electric vehicle and green cleaning techniques.

(more)

“The Collaborative is fulfilling a real need, by sharing specific information about cost-effective sustainability initiatives and recycling in a medical center environment, and by

helping institutions get programs started,” said Hamilton. “For example, some of the larger institutions are now collecting recycling from institutions too small to support a recycling vendor.”

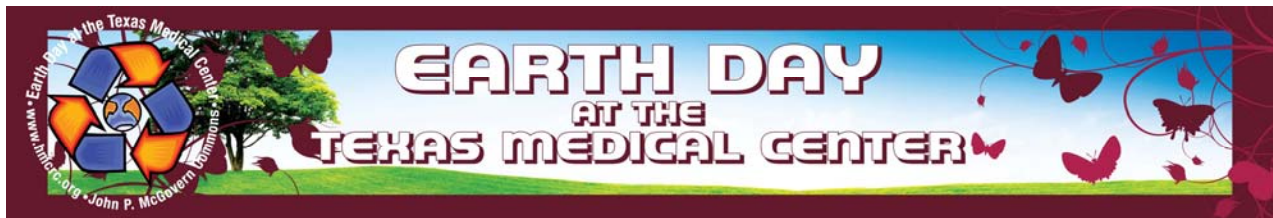
An example is the case of Texas Woman’s University, which needed help with identifying a recycling partner. After a meeting, BCM added TWU to its route and now picks up TWU’s recycled paper and cardboard weekly.

This win-win collaboration provides TWU an outlet for its recycled paper and cardboard, reducing its waste stream by approximately 25%. BCM adds these quantities to its recycled materials, increasing the amounts it sells to its recycling partners. In addition, this solution reduces energy and emissions expended in recycling the materials, since additional trips are not needed.

Here are several **Earth Day and everyday** tips for reducing your ecological footprint that the HMCRC recommends:

- Choose energy-efficient products, such as those with the Energy Star label.
- Turn off your computer monitor, printers, copy machines, and the lights when they are not being used.
- Scrape rather than rinse dishes and wash only full dishwasher loads.
- If possible, take the stairs instead of using the elevator.
- Print double-sided whenever possible. Minimize the amount of paper you use.
- Use energy-efficient florescent lights but be certain to recycle properly as they contain hazardous mercury. Most TMC institutions collect these bulbs for proper recycling.
- Keep a recycling bin at your desk.
- Donate clothing, furniture, old eye glasses and other items to people you know or appropriate charities.
- Reduce the number of miles you drive by walking, riding your bike, using public transportation, combining errands or moving closer to work or school.
- Always think: how can I reduce, reuse or recycle.

For more information, visit the HMCRC web site at [www.hmcrc.org](http://www.hmcrc.org) or for media inquiries, call Alexa Enriquez at 713-791-6136 or by email [aenriquez@texasmedicalcenter.org](mailto:aenriquez@texasmedicalcenter.org).



## COLLABORATION RESULTS IN RECYCLING SUCCESS

The power of collaboration in recycling is illustrated by the successful arrangement between Texas Woman's University (TWU) and Baylor College of Medicine (BCM).

TWU wanted to recycle paper and cardboard. Faculty and staff had a strong interest, and students were applying pressure. Collecting the material appeared easy. But finding an interested recycling partner appeared to be a barrier. Space to store the material until there was enough to interest a recycling partner was a problem. In Houston, TWU has only one building, so even if there were storage space, quantities would never be really large.

At meetings of the Medical Center Recycling Collaborative, TWU's representatives met the people behind Baylor College of Medicine's recycling program. Baylor has many buildings in the Medical Center and uses a panel truck to pick up recycled materials from these locations. As a result of the relationships developed at the MCRC, Baylor added TWU to its route and now picks up TWU's recycled paper and cardboard weekly.

This win-win collaboration provides TWU an outlet for its recycled paper and cardboard, reducing its waste stream by approximately 25%. Baylor adds these quantities to its recycled materials, increasing the amounts it sells to its recycling partners. In addition, this solution reduces energy and emissions expended in recycling the materials, since Baylor's truck circulates through the Medical Center anyway and no trips by recycling companies to TWU are needed.