Fiscal Year 2021

Environmental Impact & Sustainability

Ascension
Ascension’s commitment to reducing our environmental impact and achieving sustainability is rooted in our Mission, which calls us to be advocates for a compassionate and just society in our actions and our words. Through Catholic social teaching, we recognize the human dignity of all people and the common good as we work toward equitable access to resources to improve community health and the lives of individuals we serve.

Ascension recently announced its intent to achieve Net Zero Carbon Emissions and Zero Waste across all sites of care by 2040. Ten years ago, Ascension mapped its road to sustainability when we established the Environmental Stewardship Program. The program’s new name, Environmental Impact and Sustainability, was launched on Earth Day 2021.

The heart of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program is healthy communities: exploring the relationship between sustainability and the social determinants of health; and linking this to Ascension’s Mission to sustain and improve community health and the lives of individuals we are privileged to serve.

Underserved communities do not have the means to overcome pollution that affects their physical health. Extreme weather conditions brought about by climate change affect the social determinants of health (SDOH), which are conditions in the places where people live, learn, work, and play that affect a wide range of health risks and outcomes. SDOH include healthcare access and quality; education access and quality; social and community context; economic stability and neighborhood and built environment (CDC.gov).

“We never have we so hurt and mistreated our common home as we have in the last 200 years.

Yet we are called to be instruments of God our Father, so that our planet might be what he desired when he created it and correspond with his plan for peace, beauty and fullness.

The problem is that we still lack the culture to confront this crisis. We lack leadership capable of striking out on new paths and meeting the needs of the present with concern for all and without prejudice toward coming generations.”

- Pope Francis, Laudato Si’, Care of our Common Home, published May 24, 2015
Ascension has bold plans and we are ready for the next chapter of our sustainability journey.

Healthcare’s impact on the environment is significant and directly linked to the health of the communities and patients we are privileged to serve. Compelled by our Mission to sustain and improve the health of individuals and communities, it is our time to respond in a bold way.

What if there were a way to change healthcare as it relates to environmental impact and sustainability so that it had a profound effect on our associates, our patients and our communities? How does this work get integrated into our ministry to bring about meaningful, sustainable change over time?

How can we harness the power of 150,000 associates and their families, and all the people they impact, to make a tangible difference to our patients and communities—and likely change healthcare as a whole?

As a healthcare ministry, rooted in our Catholic faith and social teaching, we believe it’s an expectation and enormous opportunity for us to approach our work in a different way. We are uniquely positioned to make a difference. Care for God’s creation is one of the principles of Catholic social teaching and serves as a beacon for all Catholic ministry to lead the way on sustainability.

Think big. Don’t be constrained by how things have been done in the past. Help us determine the best path forward that will provide meaningful change where we can demonstrate our commitment to being strong advocates and stewards of our environment.
According to Practice Greenhealth, healthcare is responsible for 8.5 percent of U.S. greenhouse gas emissions, and inpatient healthcare is ranked by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency as the second-largest commercial energy user in the country. Ascension is positioning its sustainability program to maximize environmental impact with activities focused in three areas:

### Net Zero Places
This pillar is focused on carbon sources associated with physical environments — energy management, water management and mobility, both moving within those environments and getting to and from them. Net Zero Places considers the carbon footprint and operational efficiency of facilities as well as sustainable transportation.

### Responsible Supply Chain
This pillar is focused on the flow of goods from their procurement all the way through their disposition after use—encompassing sustainable sourcing, product usage management, recycling and waste management. Responsible Supply Chain efforts address responsible purchasing—to ensure Ascension buys only what is needed—as well as waste management. Together, these efforts will lower environmental impact and provide social good.

### Healthy Communities
Most of Ascension’s work up to this point has focused on realizing energy savings and thinking differently about how to construct and operate facilities. The heart of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program is efforts toward Healthy Communities. This pillar is focused on the relationship between sustainability and social determinants of health, linking this back to Ascension’s Mission to sustain and improve the health of individuals and communities the ministry is privileged to serve.
What is sustainability?

Sustainability is the ability to meet the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. At Ascension, the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program leads the pursuit of sustainability.

Communities served by Ascension are impacted by climate change. Effects can include respiratory allergies and asthma, heat-related illness, mental health impacts, and migrations from drought, flooding and severe storms.

Implementing sustainable practices mitigates climate change. A focus on aggressively reducing carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions supports the goal of the Paris Climate Agreement of 2015, limiting global temperature increases to 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

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<tr>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Activities</th>
<th>Bold goal</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Net Zero Places</strong></td>
<td>Energy efficiency</td>
<td>50 percent reduction in carbon emissions by 2030 and net zero carbon emissions by 2040.</td>
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<td>Ascension seeks to create and support a resource-efficient, cost-effective and resilient ecosystem of facilities and real estate with a sustainable physical presence.</td>
<td>Renewable energy Mobility</td>
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<td><strong>Responsible Supply Chain</strong></td>
<td>Sourcing</td>
<td>Recycle 50 percent of non-hazardous waste from all managed facilities by 2030; zero waste by 2040.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ascension’s Responsible Supply Chain seeks to create and support a cost-effective, healthy, circular and resilient value chain that catalyzes change toward a value-based care model, in alignment with Ascension’s commitment to holistic care for the person and the common good as well as to Catholic social teaching. Ascension has a tremendous opportunity to optimize its work in supply chain management on what comes in and out of its facilities as well as the impact on the footprint that it leaves behind.</td>
<td>Waste</td>
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<td><strong>Healthy Communities</strong></td>
<td>Partnerships</td>
<td>Ascension will walk alongside the individuals and communities most impacted by climate change in an effort to improve their lives and livelihoods. Other intended outcomes of this important work include safer, healthier communities.</td>
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<td>Examine communities and social determinants of health and design programs and processes that support interventions to address environmental effects on patients and create healthier environments in the communities that Ascension serves. Align efforts with Mission and Catholic identity integration in Ascension’s Strategic Plan.</td>
<td>Community engagement Public policy</td>
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Governance and Working Groups

The governance structure of the **Environmental Impact and Sustainability** program extends from the executive Steering Committee to Green Teams at each site of care in order to create a continuum of engagement for Ascension associates.

Multidisciplinary Green Teams integrated into Environment of Care committees extend the initiative's reach in order to optimize efficiency and sustainability.

**Environmental Impact and Sustainability Steering Committee**
Guides overall strategic direction and provides visible support

**Environmental Impact Office**

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<th>Sustainability Team</th>
<th>Coordinates sustainability transformation across organization</th>
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**Working Groups**
Cross functional working groups with executive sponsors and subject matter experts that identify initiatives and drive implementation

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**Market and Hospital Green Teams**
Customize implementation to be relevant and impactful to each market
**FY21-23 goals**

**Greenhouse gas goal**

5% reduction by FY23

Reduce energy consumption and transition to clean energy sources to reduce air pollution in the community.

**Municipal solid waste goal**

6% reduction by FY23

Reduce landfill usage in our communities and emissions from existing landfills.

**Definition of Scope 1, 2, 3 Emissions**

Greenhouse gas emissions are divided into three sectors. Ascension has set a goal to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2040 in the three categories in order to support the Paris Climate Agreement.
Green Teams

The dedication of Green Team members allows the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program to foster a culture in which every person understands that stewarding our natural resources is a fundamental, individual responsibility at Ascension. Green Teams collaborate with Environment of Care committees at each hospital or other site of care to drive green practices. Activities include:

• Attending monthly or quarterly meetings to implement projects using best practices and toolkits developed by the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program.
• Participating in quarterly System Green Team calls to share ideas across Ascension.
• Reporting on energy, water, waste management and Green Team activities at Environment of Care meetings at Ascension care sites.
• Celebrating the Feast of St. Francis activities in October to honor the patron saint of ecology and animals and Earth Day activities in April to recognize our care of the earth.

Feast of St. Francis

The Feast of St. Francis celebrates the patron saint of ecology and animals. The October 4 feast day provides an opportunity for Green Teams to spread awareness of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program and add members to their Green Team.

For example, Lourdes Hospital (Binghamton, New York) shared morning prayers and distributed email communications about the feast day.

Waste management

As noted on Page 5, Ascension has a bold goal to recycle 50 percent of nonhazardous waste from all managed facilities by 2030 and achieve zero waste by 2040. The near-term goal is to reduce the volume of municipal solid waste sent to landfills by 6% by the end of FY23.

We will implement source reduction and waste management best practices across Ascension waste streams to maximize environmental, social and financial benefit not only in Ascension communities but across the globe.

• Identify waste streams that can be recycled from Ascension sites of care.
• Map waste stream flow through buildings. Analyze space requirements and equipment needed to store materials destined for recycling and beneficial donations. Develop a targeted waste flow study to enhance cardboard recycling. Expand Ascension’s food waste diversion, digestion and composting project.
• Monitor and manually sort materials from recycling containers in public spaces to minimize contamination.
• Create targeted training and communications materials to support source reduction, waste management and recycling.
• Implement standard data collection to set baselines, set goals and track progress.
• Partner with health systems, sustainability organizations, waste haulers and recyclers to create markets for expanded healthcare recycling.
• Investigate chemical recycling technology for healthcare plastics to supplement conventional mechanical recycling.
Earth Day

On April 22, 2021, people across the globe honored the 51st anniversary of the first Earth Day to demonstrate respect for all life on Earth. The 2021 theme, “Restore Our Earth,” connects with Ascension’s Mission and demonstrates how we can all positively impact people and environments to protect God’s creation.

Below are a few examples of how associates across Ascension helped the planet prosper and addressed climate change.

- The Food and Nutrition team at Ascension Providence Hospital (Mobile, Alabama) offered an organic food station in the cafeteria. The site’s Facilities and Landscaping teams worked in their community garden while staff members helped plant trees and admired work done on the garden.
- The Landscaping team at Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola (Pensacola, Florida) planted fruit trees and a garden with fruits and vegetables for hospital staff to enjoy. They distributed bags including Earth Day-themed pencils, stress balls and seed packets.
- Unusual but Usable Produce was launched on Earth Day in the Jacksonville, Florida, hospital cafeterias. The program reduces waste by distributing food that might be disposed of due to unattractive appearances.
- At Ascension Columbia St. Mary’s Hospital Milwaukee, the Landscape team planted 24 pavement roses, backfilled plants with organic soil, and installed fresh mulch into the planting bed.
Sustainability activities within subsidiaries

**Medxcel Energy program for Ascension facilities**

**Phase I, July 2008 through June 2017, Department of Energy Better Buildings Challenge:**
Ascension surpassed its goal three years early to reduce energy use by 20 percent by 2020 from a 2008 baseline. The Energy Program achieved 23 percent energy cost reduction across a 35 million-square-foot acute care hospital portfolio, with $53.3 million in energy cost avoidance.

**Phase II, July 2017 through June 2021:**
Ascension achieved an additional 8.6 percent energy cost reduction and $42.7 million in energy cost avoidance across a 48.1 million-square-foot acute care hospital portfolio.

**Ascension System Office renovation**

**Reducing construction waste send to landfills**
After renovating the Ascension System Office in St. Louis, the team minimized construction waste sent to the landfill by recycling 27,000 square feet of carpet and upgrading 580 light fixtures from fluorescent to LED. When fixtures were not replaced, retrofit LED kits were installed with the driver, diode array and lens in one assembly. The project contractor recycled the removed lamps, ballasts, lenses and diffusers.

Charities in St. Louis benefited from donations of surplus office supplies, kitchen equipment and workstation furniture, keeping unneeded items out of the landfill.

Associates working at home experience shorter commutes, which reduces vehicle expenses and increases time for personal activity and exercise. Environmental and social benefits include decreased carbon emissions from fewer single-occupant car trips and increased access to daylight and nature in a home setting.

When associates working both at sites of care and at home focus on self-care as well as on the environment, they support the health of the patients, visitors and communities Ascension serves.
Modular casework and walls

Modular casework contributes to a comprehensive waste reduction strategy of source reduction, efficient design and standardization. Modular casework can be repurposed in a new space during renovation projects, reducing costs and material use. It is not permanently attached to walls; thus, its use minimizes damage to existing spaces when it is moved. Following Ascension Design & Construction Standards by using pre-manufactured components allows reuse of both freestanding furniture and modular casework in exam rooms, ancillary areas and team workstations. The standards and products are versatile and agile, allowing furniture and casework products to be reused for varied clinical specialties.

Modular casework from an existing Ascension clinic in Indianapolis was moved and reinstalled at a new facility. The cost for new casework (product and labor to install) was estimated to be $690,000. The cost to disassemble and reinstall the existing product was $333,000, resulting in savings of over 50 percent. This prevented unneeded furniture from being sent to the landfill and avoided production of new furniture, thus reducing waste and cost as well as the emissions produced by furniture manufacturing and delivery.

The Ascension Via Christi Concierge Primary Care Clinic – Spirit Campus (Wichita, Kansas) used modular products for 80 percent of its interior partitions. Planning, budgeting, design and construction for this project took about nine months, while standard construction projects typically require twelve months. The project was completed on schedule and $100,000 under budget, primarily due to the use of efficient planning methods and less fabrication time required for factory-built modular walls.

2020 Energy Star Certifications

The following Ascension sites of care received Energy Star Certifications, demonstrating outstanding performance in facility operations with a focus on energy efficiency.

- Ascension St. Vincent’s Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)
- Ascension St. Vincent Fishers (Fishers, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension St. John Broken Arrow (Broken Arrow, Oklahoma)
- Ascension St. John Jane Phillips (Bartlesville, Oklahoma)
- Ascension St. John Owasso (Owasso, Oklahoma)
- Dell Children’s Medical Center (Austin, Texas)
- Dell Seton Medical Center at the University of Texas (Austin, Texas)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin – Mercy Campus (Oshkosh, Wisconsin)
Smart, sustainable landscaping

The Medxcel Kansas Landscape team installed Smart Rain Irrigation Controllers that are based on evapotranspiration and weather conditions. The team is seeing improvement in turf health, water savings, time efficiency, troubleshooting and ease of use. Evapotranspiration is the process by which water is transferred from the land to the atmosphere by evaporation from the soil and other surfaces and by transpiration from plants.

Landfill diversion from roof projects

A roof restoration and landfill diversion initiative incorporated white membranes applied to existing roofs. Restorations avoid the energy requirements of a new roof by minimizing raw materials extraction, manufacturing and transportation. Roof restorations can avoid up to two landfill diversions, presuming a 40-year lifespan for the membrane roof, compared to two conventional roof replacements in that time.

Some 500,000 square feet of existing roofs were restored by Medxcel in FY21, and 1,260 tons of material were diverted from landfills, equivalent to 180 truckloads of landfill debris. Also, 19,500 tons of CO₂ emissions will be avoided over 40 years—the equivalent of 3,800 cars not driven in a year or 9,700 tons of coal not burned.

Air filter project

Air filters for heating, ventilation and air conditioning equipment are typically changed every quarter. Medxcel installed pressure gauges to monitor whether filters are still operating within compliance. This can increase the lifespan of the filters, reduce labor associated with changing filters, and reduce waste to landfills. Because a single set of filters can last up to one year, labor and material reduction can save Ascension an estimated $1 million annually.

Steam Blanket Program

Medxcel’s Steam Blanket Program will increase efficiency in high-pressure steam systems in acute care hospitals. By reducing heat loss in poorly insulated pipes and requiring less natural gas to meet heating loads, the heat energy saved will directly contribute to the Ascension’s FY21–FY23 carbon reduction goal. Seventeen sites of care are scheduling steam blanket installations. Combined, they will reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 40,000 Metric Million British Thermal Units per year.

Labor and material reduction simply in changing air filters more efficiently can save Ascension an estimated $1 million annually.
**Electric vehicle charging station**

An electric vehicle charging station was installed at AMITA Health Saint Joseph Hospital (Elgin, Illinois) in May 2021, containing 120V and 230V outlets for electric vehicles.

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**Open loop filtration systems**

Five sites of care implemented an open loop filtration system to clean condenser water loops, allowing improved heat transfer with chillers.

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**LED Lighting Flat Panel Program**

In FY21, the Energy team launched the LED Lighting Flat Panel Program. This innovative program is designed to support the FY23 goal to reduce carbon emissions by replacing fluorescent fixtures with LEDs.

Each LED flat panel can replace fixtures with two to four fluorescent tubes emitting 32 watts per tube. The LED fixtures use 30 to 40 watts per fixture, reducing power consumption by almost 40 percent.

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**LED flat panels reduce energy consumption, reduce costs captured on the hospital’s energy bill, and reduce greenhouse gas emissions.**

A total of 19,900 fixtures will be ordered through the Energy Capital Program, representing $1.2 million to be invested in lighting for Ascension’s sites of care.

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**Mark Yeager (left) and Jerry Maddox oversee the boiler installation project at Ascension Providence (Waco, Texas), including removal of the old boiler and installation of a new boiler. Two new steam boilers produce more efficient steam, providing heat for the facility and steam for Sterile Processing.**
Food and Nutrition Services

In FY21, Ascension’s Food and Nutrition Services provider supplied hospitals with cage-free eggs, fair trade coffee, milk and yogurt produced without recombinant bovine growth hormone, reduced-antibiotic chicken and turkey and sustainable seafood. In total, 87 percent of food purchased for Ascension hospitals met sustainable criteria. Sourcing local foods attributed to 22 percent of total produce purchased in FY21.

Meat production emits higher levels of greenhouse gases than growing fruits and vegetables. Between 2019 and 2021, Ascension hospitals lowered meat purchases by 16 percent, thus reducing their carbon footprint.

The Imperfectly Delicious Produce Program distributes fruits and vegetables that would be discarded due to non-standard appearance to decrease food waste.

Reducing food waste sent to landfill

In May 2021, food waste digester pilot projects were initiated at Ascension Saint Agnes (Baltimore, Maryland) and Ascension St. Vincent’s Riverside (Jacksonville, Florida) in cooperation with Medxcel, The Resource Group, and Ascension’s Food and Nutrition Services provider.

Food waste is produced in hospitals during meal preparation and from uneaten items delivered to patients or sold to guests and associates. Food waste is a significant portion of Ascension’s municipal solid waste stream and is the greatest producer of the greenhouse gas methane in landfills. After full implementation, Ascension hospitals are projected to digest 1 metric ton of food waste every eight days, which is equivalent to 0.76 metric tons of carbon dioxide emissions avoidance.

Digesters use organic microorganisms and oxygen to break down food into “gray” wastewater, which is discharged to local municipal water treatment plants. Composting is another method to divert solid waste from landfills. Deploying digesters and composting at Ascension sites of care will support the FY21-23 waste diversion goal and reduce Ascension’s carbon footprint.

Environmental Services

Green Seal® and ECOLOGO® products were purchased for Ascension hospitals, resulting in 28 percent of total environmental supply purchases. These two certification programs verify that products have reduced environmental impact.

Due to COVID-19, higher levels of disinfectants and single-use items were utilized than in previous years. Disinfectants were 9 percent of total environmental services purchases. Over half of these were hydrogen peroxide cleaning products, which are considered to be less toxic and equally effective compared to other alternatives.
Minimizing waste due to shipping office supplies

Ascension’s office supply partner is delivering supplies in paper bags instead of cardboard boxes. By delivering 2,800 shipments in paper bags, the equivalent of 2.3 tons of wood needed to make cardboard boxes was avoided. The bags have a lower carbon footprint than cardboard, avoiding 5,000 pounds of carbon dioxide emissions.

Medical device reprocessing program

Ascension’s sites of care continue to successfully advance a medical device reprocessing program approved by the Food and Drug Administration. In FY21, Ascension hospitals collected over 1.1 million devices, resulting in over $19 million in savings and 481,000 pounds of waste diverted from the landfill. Since the program began in FY13, over 4.9 million pounds of waste have been diverted.

TRIMEDX hybrid vehicle fleet

TRIMEDX has deployed 23 hybrid vehicles at Ascension sites used by biomedical engineers to service medical equipment. The fleet vehicles are used to carry tools and parts, so small SUVs are ideal for this purpose. Hybrids are purchased as TRIMEDX replaces vehicles in order to achieve fuel and maintenance savings over the life of the vehicles, as well as reducing pollution by moving away from fossil fuels.

Beneficial donations of medical supplies and equipment

Through its partnership with MedSurplus Alliance, Ascension Global Mission provides donated supplies and equipment from Ascension ministries to reputable organizations in underdeveloped and developing nations.

Ascension’s agreement with MedSurplus Alliance follows World Health Organization guidelines for donated healthcare supplies and equipment. The donations must be unexpired and labeled appropriately, equipment must be fully operational and include all parts, and donations go to fully vetted international partners to ensure appropriate use.

Thanks to work by The Resource Group, Ascension has donated approximately 335,000 pounds of supplies, conservatively valued at over $3.6 million (excluding the value of biomedical equipment), to countries including Bolivia, El Salvador, Kenya, Liberia, Nigeria, Somalia and Tanzania.

This initiative, developed in response to Pope Francis’ Encyclical Letter Laudato Si’, reduces medical surplus waste in our landfills and enables caregivers in underdeveloped and developing nations to improve care for those most poor and vulnerable in our world.

Ascension’s donations include consumables (syringes, suction canisters); durable goods (walkers, medicine carts); medical devices (ostomy supplies, blood pressure units); and durable medical equipment (IV poles).

Ascension Investment Management impact investments

Ascension Investment Management (AIM) has a goal to make investments it believes will improve access for those who are poor and vulnerable to healthcare, clean water, food, nutrition, financial services, adequate and affordable housing, and education, which is one way to empower these populations so they have the potential to transition from poverty to prosperity.

AIM’s impact investments in FY21 included renewable energy power plants in Africa and South America; a solar/diesel battery hybrid project in Africa; affordable housing in Latin America and the United States; and global projects providing access to clean water.

Investments in AIM’s impact strategies aligned with several United Nations Sustainable Development Goals including Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation; Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy; Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production; and Goal 13: Climate Action.

AIM’s impact investment process is intended to help faith-based institutions and socially conscious investors achieve their investment objectives using these techniques:

- Investment screening using a Socially Responsible Investment (SRI) Policy aligned with Catholic values.
- Seeking to generate a beneficial social and/or environmental impact with a market-based return for investors.
- Reducing investment in fossil fuels with plans to invest only in fossil fuel companies that demonstrate a commitment to clean energy.
Moving forward

Three pillars of work, two FY21-FY23 goals and one Mission

Ascension’s bold goals will infuse sustainability into important business decisions across the organization.

The milestones achieved while working toward Ascension’s sustainability goals are made possible by the dedication of the executive leaders and Green Teams across Ascension.

Thank you for your support of a healthier planet for our patients, visitors, associates and communities.
For questions and to get involved with your market’s Green Team, contact: Sustainability@Ascension.org