

# A Socially Responsible SickKids

**Greener Hospital. Healthier Children. A Better World.**

(2016 – 2030)

## The Need

A safe, healthy and ecologically efficient environment and healthier planet for the benefit of patients and their families, staff, visitors and the community.

## Health Care's Ecological and Health Impact

- Health-care facilities in developed countries account for 3 to 8 percent of climate change greenhouse gas emissions. Health effects of climate change include respiratory and cardiovascular conditions, the spread of infectious diseases, trauma from extreme weather events, food insecurity and the introduction of new pathogens.
- Hazardous health-care waste is often incinerated, releasing dioxins, furans and other toxic air pollutants. Most waste from health-care facilities end up in landfills that release methane gas, a powerful greenhouse gas.
- The health-care sector is a large consumer of chemicals used for treatment for medical conditions and to maintain a safe environment. An increase in diseases and conditions like cancer, birth defects and infertility are linked, to a varying extent, with environmental exposure to a complex mixture of chemicals.
- Infants and children are far more sensitive than adults to exposure of toxic substances in the environment, leading to increased rates of childhood asthma, birth defects and neurodevelopment disorders.



**Climate change affects the social and environmental determinants of health – clean air, safe drinking water, sufficient food and secure shelter.**

World Health Organization (WHO)

## Why Invest in Socially Responsible Work Environment at SickKids:

- To reduce the release of greenhouse gases and chemicals into the environment.
- To prevent patients, families, staff and the community from exposure to harmful pollutants.
- To contribute to a low carbon society.
- To ensure future generations have a healthy planet that can meet their needs.
- SickKids is a provincial asset with a global footprint, and an international reputation as one of the top children's hospitals in the world.
- SickKids offers critical services that are vital to the health of Ontario's youngest and most vulnerable populations.

## The Vision

A socially responsible work environment that contributes to a safe, healthy and ecologically efficient environment and sustainable low carbon future.

## 2030 Goals

- Reduce greenhouse gas intensity by 25% and become 'carbon neutral' by investing in renewable and clean energy – aligning with the Paris Climate Agreement.
- Reduce energy use intensity by 30% through energy conservation and retrofits.
- Reduce water use intensity by 45% through water conservation and retrofits.
- Increase the diversion rate of non-hazardous waste to 75% through recycling, composting and waste reduction.



## Strategies

- Invest in energy, water and infrastructure retrofits to reduce energy use, water use, and greenhouse gas emissions.
- Invest in alternative water sources and re-use, renewable and clean energy.
- Design buildings and health-care services resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Implement waste infrastructure and practices to support waste reduction and diversion rate.
- Implement procurement policies and practices to reduce waste and chemical impact on the environment.
- Reduce the use of natural resources and toxic substances through continuous process improvement.
- Form partnerships to promote a socially responsible work environment.
- Promote socially responsible behavior through campaigns, training, and departmental accountability.
- Participate in provincial, national and international environmental performance benchmarking, awards and challenges.
- Procure sustainable food.