

Reducing Non-Recoverable Waste: Examining Opportunities for Durable Medical Equipment Reuse within UW Medicine

Anne Ordway, PhC

Environmental Stewardship Committee Meeting

April 18th, 2016



Acknowledgements

Project team: Jennifer Pitonyak, Faculty Investigator

Anne Ordway, Student Investigator

Alan Knue, Staff Investigator

Jennifer Zumsteg, Consultant

Tracy Mroz, Consultant

Kit Johnston, Graduate Assistant

Thank you to Kurt Johnson, Samantha Murphy,
Brenda Nissley, and the study participants

Problem Statement

- Lack of literature describing clinical processes and behavioral and social aspects of how medical providers use and recycle resources
- Few studies have examined the lifecycle of DME, how unwanted DME is disposed of, and the quantity that becomes waste
- Limited research on costs, benefits, and unintended consequences of DME reuse for patients, health systems, and the environment

Study Objectives

- To understand the connections and, perhaps, tensions between practices and processes for DME prescription and provision *and* reuse and recycling
- To identify opportunities within UW Medicine for reducing the amount of non-recoverable waste from DME that goes into the landfill

Methods

- Basic qualitative study design
- Acute care and inpatient rehabilitation units
- Semi-structured interviews ($n = 11$), focus group ($n = 7$), site visit with Bridge Disability Ministries, document review
- Content analysis of interview and focus group transcripts

Study Participants

Micro-level	Macro-level
Occupational Therapist	UW Medicine Compliance
Outpatient Occupational Therapy Manager	HMC Sustainability and Waste Management
Rehabilitation Manager	UW Environmental Services
Social Worker	UW Surplus Store
Physiatrist	HMC Clinical Engineering
DME Vendor	Community-based DME and Assistive Technology Programs
Physical Therapist	HMC Infection Control
Equipment Specialist	Health Sciences Risk Management
	UW Supply Chain Management

Key Findings

- Systematic process for the reuse, recycling, and disposal of internal DME; no systematic process for patient referral to reuse and recycling resources
- DME reuse programs need to meet local needs
- Diverse opportunities for DME reuse initiatives based on waste hierarchy and hospital-community continuum

Next Steps

- Interview patients on their experiences obtaining and disposing of DME
- Perform a more extensive feasibility study on a hospital-based DME reuse program

Plan for Dissemination

- Final report: Project advisory team
Study participants
Who else?
- Conference presentations: American Congress of Rehabilitation Medicine 2016, CleanMed 2017
- Journal publications: access barriers to DME

For questions or feedback, contact:

Jennifer Pitonyak

jsp15@uw.edu

Anne Ordway

ordwaa@uw.edu











