ealthcare facilities can generate up to 25 pounds of waste per day per patient! Hospital leaders recognize the large amount of waste is

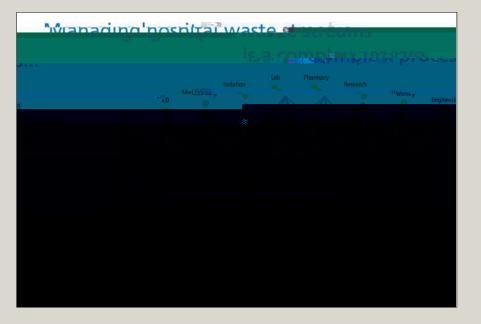
a consequence of operating around the clock. Priorities are shifting to achieve a balance of sustainability and compliance that pushes environmental boundaries with commitments to improving air and water quality.

Many regulatory standards for properly managing waste were set in motion beginning in 1976 followed by RCRA, and then the Clean Water Act, the Safe Drug Disposal Act, and the Hospital Medical Infectious Waste Incinerator Rule, to name a few. Yet the average number of regulatory compliance issues (The Joint Commission, OSHA, EPA, and/or Department of Transportation) uncovered during a typical hospital compliance review is 23.

To AHE members at the EXCHANGE 2012 conference, Laurie Leon, director of materials management at Boca Raton

Regional Hospital, highlighted that 90 per-

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safety is improved due to the container•s user-friendly •point and drop• design. The container is a FDA-regulated medical device, which can be reused 600 times creating a greener, more sustainable solution. We use a company that manages proactive container exchange, so EVS teams and hos-

opportunity for waste reduction and sustainability within hospitals. Rounding with managers and speaking with staff helps make sure that things are being disposed of in the appropriate waste stream. Education is critical to focuson getting bandages, gloves, and other normal trash materials out of the red bags and into the clear bags or containers where they belong.Ž

## Keep Drugs Out of the Public Water System

It is important for EVS teams to know what waste they are hadling, whether it is hazardous or nonhazardous, and the process of signing the appropriate manifests or DOT shipping papers. The EPA has specifica 24-month case studyof reusable pharmanagement requirements for hazardous warfarin (Coumadin) and nicotine must be kept out of the water supply and therefore should be discarded in separate, designated containers that require responsible disposal by a properly licensed company. Either way, several guidelines help you better understand the risks.

- 1) Understand which state or federal regulations impact drug disposal;
- Protect your community by not allowing narcotics to be diverted; and
- accessibility to unauthorized personnel. The issues of pharmaceuticals pollut-

ing the waterways were highlighted in the

Robert Frankel noted, •There is a massive 80 percent of tested streams. Roughly one third of those contaminants were pharmaceutical substances which prompted close examination of how hospitals dispose of pharmaceuticals and how they affect Americans. Regulatory and legislative bodies have begun establishing and enforcing strict hospital waste guidelines. This increase in regulatory oversight has left hospital leaders challenged to understand what their role and responsibilities are and how to avoid costly fines and citations.

Combined with keeping drugs out of the water, hospital leaders and EVS professionals also desire to keep containers that carry pharmaceutical waste out of landfills. At Beebe Medical Center (BMC) in Lewes, Del., maceutical containers tracked the reuse waste. For instance, medications such as rates for 2,184 containers serviced. Ninetyseven percent of the reusable containers were eight-gallon and 17-gallon. By utilizing reusable containers, BMC diverted between 3.7...5.0 tons of plastic from disposal, therefore minimizing landfill contributions and reducing hospital disposal costs.

## Proactive, Reusable Sharps Container Services Don•t Always Add Labor Costs

An often overlooked component of 3) Properly store waste on site and restrict reducing waste includes the waste containers such as reusable sharps containers.

Yale-New Haven Hospital switched from using disposable to eco-friendly reusable early 2000s with the U.S. Geological Survey sharps containers. The solution creates a (USGS) Water Survey finding substances in •win-winŽ for the facility said Frankel. •Staff