



V A
P O R T L A N D
H E A L T H
C A R E
S Y S T E M

**YOUR GEMS
COMMITTEE MEMBERS**

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- Wendy Trapp

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

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- Jannes Austin 2157 Portland
- Robert Lindberg 2583 Vancouver

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- Karie Galvin

Energy Manager

- Vacant

Environmental Management

- Carter Carlson

Facilities Management

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- Travis Peake
- Christian Weidler

Industrial Hygiene

- Jenika Major

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- Diane Stief
- Sukey Lupton
- Shane Edwards
- Anne Curley

Logistics and Material Management

- Vacant

Operative Care

- Kathleen Coleman
- Angela Loo

Pathology & Laboratory Medicine

- Cate Eyberg

Pharmacy

- Yusuf Dawoodbhai
- Lewis DeJaegher

Projects and Interior Design

- Vacant

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- Heather Parman

Specialty Clinics

- LaShelle Jackson

FALL/WINTER 2014

GEMS Newsletter



A Message From the GEMS Coordinator

Another fiscal year has passed, and almost another calendar year. This year has been very eventful for GEMS. Some major accomplishments include earning the Emerald Award from Practice Greenhealth, which shows our facilities' commitment to sustainability, achieving a solid waste diversion rate of 39.7%, switching to 100% recycled content paper for the entire medical center, purchasing new gloves for the facility, receiving no violations on our recent Oregon Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) inspection, and many others. For specific recycling and waste statistics for this year, please turn to page 2 for the report. I am also excited to report a new instrument recycling program where items that were once thrown away or into the bio-hazard are able to go for recycling. This will be a huge waste

and cost savings measure for the facility. The GEMS Committee continues to follow the VA Mission by striving for excellence and continuous growth. Please check out a recent pathways project on page 4 that targets improvement to our public recycling programs. In addition, this issue shows a couple of recent events that we did this fall, including the office swap, medication take back day, and the Eco Challenge. In January, be on the look out for a waste reduction contest! Your department will have a chance to win fabulous prizes by participating in our solid waste reduction challenge. Please look for contest requirements coming soon in flyers and e-post announcements. Stay green and safe for the holidays!

*Wendy Trapp,
GEMS Coordinator*

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Waste Report

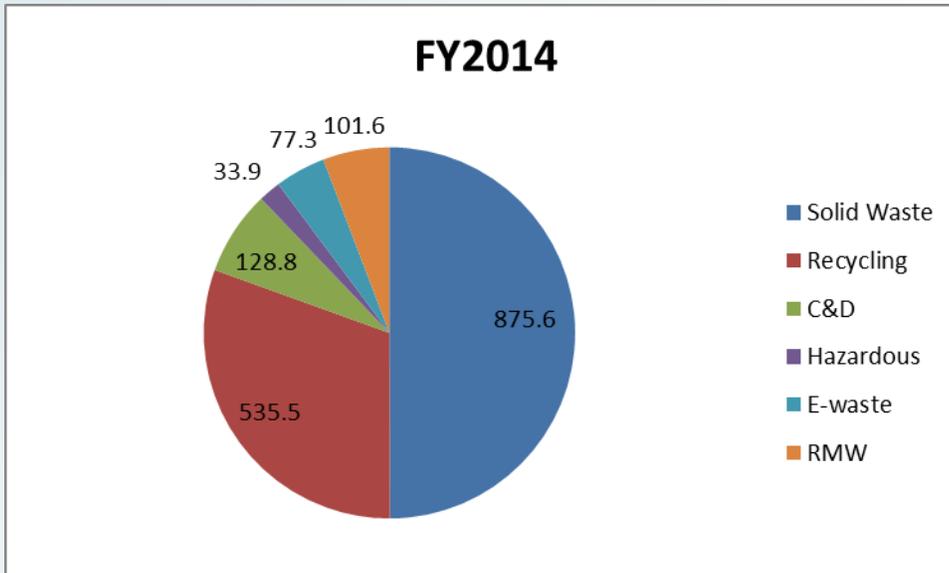
How did we do?

Overall, our data collection has been improved by more accurate numbers by vendors and other departments. We have begun capturing additional waste streams that we didn't previously collect such as; tire recycling, EXP pharmaceutical reverse distribution, and cold composting. Solid waste only increased 3.2%, despite us being the fastest growing VA in the nation. Hazardous waste continues to decline each year, with a decrease in 17.7% this year. Our Construction and Demolition and Electronics recycling/donation continue to increase each year with a 75% and 94.5% increase respectively.

◆ Non-hazardous Pharmaceuticals	7.9 tons.
◆ Shredded Paper	119.1 tons
◆ Mixed Plastic	21.5 tons
◆ Scrap Metal	66.9 tons
◆ Comingled (cardboard, plastic, aluminum)	105.5 tons
◆ Food compost	60.9 tons
◆ Landscape compost	80.3 tons
◆ Wood pallets	16.9 tons
◆ Construction debris (recycled)	128.8 tons
◆ Fluorescent lamps	18.8 tons
◆ Electronic waste	77.3 tons
◆ Batteries	4.2 tons
◆ Biowaste	101.6 tons
◆ Solid Waste	875.6 tons

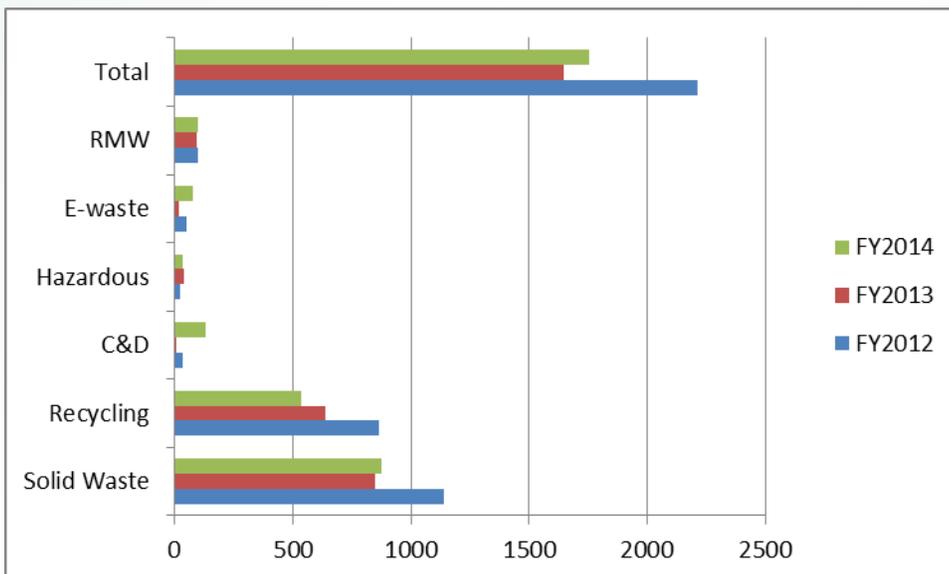
The facility also generated \$29,190.94 in recycling revenues for FY 2014, which is a 28% increase from FY 2013. These funds go towards purchasing Cactus Smart Sinks for narcotic disposal, battery recycling boxes, recycling containers and stations, compost bags, furniture for the healing garden, and many other items to help further the GEMS program, and better the facility.

Graph 1: Waste Analysis for FY 2014 (tons)



(C&D refers to construction & debris, and RMW is regulated medical waste.)

Graph 2: Yearly Waste Stream Data Comparison



***Our FY 2014 solid waste diversion rate is 39.7%...
Way to go!***

LEAD-Pathways and GEMS: Adding More Green to the Holidays

When LEAD-Pathways COHORT XVII students Matthew Oman, Robyn Lee, Kelli Riley and Brandy Martin (Team Green) researched project ideas for class they discovered plentiful recycling options in staff only areas but intermittent options in common areas such as the Atrium, Canteen and hallways. Team Green saw this as a window of opportunity for improvement. In partnership with Wendy Trapp (GEMS Coordinator) and Carter Carlson (Housekeeping Officer) Team Green devised a project to improve recycling visibility and availability in common areas.

In partnership with the FMS sign shop and the Green Team, new recycling symbol decals were placed on existing recycling bins on the VA Portland Healthcare System (VAPORHCS) Portland and Vancouver campuses by Oman, Lee, Riley and Martin making them easier to locate. See image below for symbol. In addition, GEMS ordered nine more recycling bins and placed them next to existing trashcans in the elevator alcoves on each floor of the VAPORHCS Portland campus. The new recycling bins are used to recycle: books, newspaper, magazines, aluminum, light cardboard, and plastic and will be arriving in early December. This will be similar to your curbside recycling bins at home. Refer to the poster below for a picture of the new recycling bins. Both Gems and Team Green hope the improved visibility and availability of recycling in common areas will contribute greatly to decreasing waste on VA Portland Healthcare System campuses and help preserve the beautiful environment in which we live.

Article By: Robyn Lee, Matthew Oman, Kelli Riley and Brandy Martin

VA Portland Healthcare System

Proudly presents:

More opportunities to Recycle!



Books/Newspaper/Magazines

Aluminum

Light Cardboard

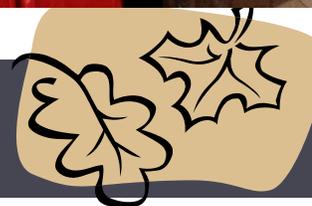
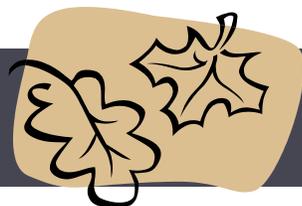
Plastic

Medication Take Back- October 2014

Another successful take back day occurred on Tuesday, Oct. 21, which collected approximately 2 boxes of medications for proper disposal. Thanks to all who participated and helped to run this event smoothly!

Look for our next

Event coming during earth week in April 2015 !



Office Supply Swap– September 2014– Year end makes it difficult to get the office supplies you need! Many take advantage of our office supply swap located on the VA Skywalk to get the items they need. One person's trash is another's treasure! Thanks GEMS Committee!





Green Holiday Tips

1. Have a create your own decorations party and use electronic invitations.
2. Turn off holiday lights during the day.
3. Choose re-usable shopping bags, for gift-giving and for all of your shopping needs.
4. Donate old and unused items to charity.
5. For parties, choose re-usable silverware, napkins, cups etc.
6. Compost leaves and food scraps
7. Fill your dishwasher before running it.
8. Buy a living tree to plant outside, to enjoy every year!
9. Use LED lights and sustainable candles
10. Remember to recycle your Christmas tree.
11. Shop for local foods
12. Add a new healthy option to your menu this year.

ECO CHALLENGE 2014

This October, eight members of the GEMS Committee embarked on a new journey to make personal choices to conserve by taking the NW Earth Institutes' Eco Challenge. Those members chose one lifestyle change, such as taking 5 minute showers for 2 weeks and tracked their progress to determine successes and challenges with. It came a friendly competition as well as a time for sharing with peers. Together with the community, they helped save 58,004 gallons of water, 2,127 disposable cups from going into the landfill, 642 pounds of waste from the landfill, and replaced 167 light bulbs. Thanks to GEMS Committee members, Travis Peake, Aaron Cornett, LaShelle Jackson, Kathy Coleman, Kate Eyberg, Wendy Trapp, Sherri Baber, and Melissa Kuhn for participating. Stay tuned for next year, as anyone can participate and make a difference! See link below for more information.



<https://www.ecochallenge.org/>

Have GEMS
questions, contact
Wendy Trapp
Extension 55417

Want some more green?
Visit the [GEMS SharePoint!](#)