

# *Environmental Impact and Sustainability*

ANNUAL REPORT

2024



**Ascension**



**Ascension is positioning our sustainability program to minimize waste, reduce our carbon footprint and help address the effects of climate change that can impact the communities we serve.**

FY24 marks the 13th year of Ascension's Environmental Impact and Sustainability program, aligning with the Mission, Vision and Values of Ascension and themes from Catholic social teaching that speak to care for the environment. As we understand the factors affecting those who are at an increased risk for health effects associated with climate and climate change, we are able to identify at-risk populations, educate our communities, and develop action plans to mitigate intense weather events.

This report illustrates successes and illuminates challenges to infuse these efforts into our daily work. Looking ahead, we will:

- Continue efforts to validate greenhouse gas emissions data, tracking progress toward our external commitments.
- Improve access to waste data as we advance toward our waste diversion goals.
- Engage associates across Ascension to care for Creation.

**Please help us celebrate the important strides we have made by reading and sharing this report.**

*Cover image: Dell Children's Medical Center 4th Bed Tower Addition has achieved LEED Platinum certification four times over the life of the campus.*

## PURPOSE STATEMENT

Ascension's commitment to reducing our environmental footprint 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 that improve community health and the lives of individuals we serve.

As a large healthcare system, Ascension has the opportunity to drive environmental change through our governance, resources and infrastructure. We see the value in creating both impact downstream through clinical care and by investing in initiatives and partnerships to address “midstream” and “upstream” efforts to provide social improvement and environmental stewardship.

In the FY24 Environmental Impact and Sustainability report, we share both our commitments and achievements in living out this work. Examples include:

- **Upstream:** Improving communities’ climate resiliency through community engagement and advocating for policies and regulations that support those we serve.
- **Midstream:** Screening social factors that can impact individuals’ needs and using this data to learn how to lower the number of preventable asthma-related emergency department visits.
- **Downstream:** Removing desflurane, an inhaled anesthetic and greenhouse gas, from the formulary and support the planet.

This work reflects:

- Our **Mission** in action, which calls for us to provide holistic care which sustains and improves the health of individuals and communities.
- Our **Values**, which reinforce Service of the Poor, Reverence, and Dedication.
- The **Principles of Catholic Social Teaching**, to include:
  - Fostering the common good through access to food and shelter, education and employment, healthcare and housing.
  - Prioritizing the care of persons who are poor and vulnerable.
  - Emphasizing solidarity; recognizing we are our brothers’ and sisters’ keepers wherever they may be.



*It is an honor to work alongside associates who are dedicated to the care of our patients and our common home.*

Joseph Impicciche, JD, MHA  
Chief Executive Officer, Ascension



*At Ascension, we work to reduce our environmental footprint, recognizing the profound impact our actions have on the health of the planet.*

Eduardo Conrado  
President, Ascension

# OUR GOALS

Ascension's sustainability goals will support healthier communities by increasing the use of clean energy sources and reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills. We are developing science-aligned targets to achieve our 2030 and 2040 goals.

## 2030

By 2030, reduce carbon emissions 50% from the 2020 baseline and divert 50% of non-hazardous waste from all Ascension-owned facilities from the 2022 baseline.

- Carbon emissions are the total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organization, event or product.
- Non-hazardous waste does not meet the EPA's definition of hazardous waste, and causes no harm to human or environmental health.

## 2040

Achieve net zero carbon emissions and zero waste across all sites of care.

### SCOPE 1

Direct emissions from healthcare facilities



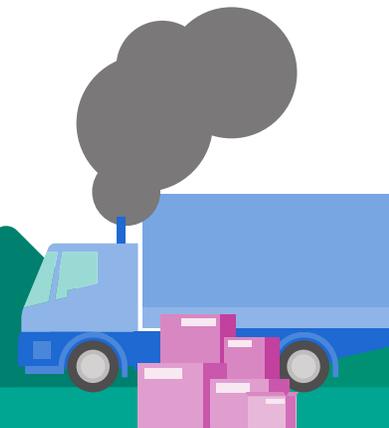
### SCOPE 2

Indirect emissions from purchased energy



### SCOPE 3

Other indirect upstream or downstream emissions from the supply chain and investment portfolio



# EXTERNAL COMMITMENT

Race to Zero is a global coalition committed to achieving net zero carbon emissions by 2050. As a signatory and member of the Health Care Climate Council, Ascension's goal is to achieve this 10 years sooner, by 2040.



In FY24, Ascension submitted calendar year 2022 Scope 1 and 2 data to Race to Zero. All of Ascension's calendar years 2019-2023 emissions data measurements are in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e).

We define and measure greenhouse gas emissions within Scopes 1, 2 and 3. The three Scopes categorize the emissions our organization creates in its own operations as well as its wider value chain (its suppliers and customers) and establishes a baseline for measurement.

**Factors included in Scope 1 calculations are**

- Natural gas usage
- Diesel fuel for backup generators
- Emissions from fleet vehicles, refrigerants, nitrous oxide and volatile anesthetic gases

**Measurements for Scope 2 calculations include\***

- Steam and chilled water usage
- Electricity purchased from utilities

*\*Emissions that are not produced by Ascension, and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by Ascension. Ascension currently calculates these emissions from other sources and actively advocates with partners to reduce them. Given the reliance on external data, Ascension does not publicly report these estimates.*



143K+

MTCO<sub>2</sub>e REDUCTION IN CARBON EMISSIONS

The equivalent to removing more than 34,000 cars from the road for one year.

# EXTERNAL COMMITMENT

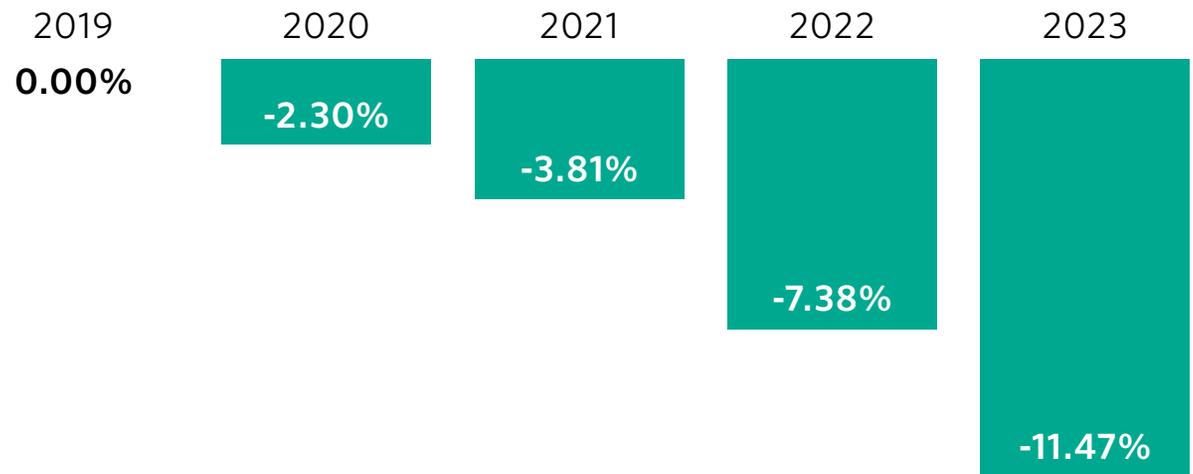
## Emissions by Scope (MTCO<sub>2</sub>e)



### Service type

- **57.6%** PURCHASED ELECTRICITY
- **34.5%** NATURAL GAS
- **3.0%** STEAM AND CHILLED WATER
- **1.7%** NITROUS OXIDE
- **1.2%** REFRIGERANTS
- **1.1%** BACKUP GENERATORS
- **0.7%** VOLATILE ANESTHETICS
- **0.1%** MOBILE FLEET

## Annual carbon reduction from baseline



# EXTERNAL COMMITMENT

Healthcare stakeholders committed to reduce greenhouse gas emissions 50% by 2030, achieve net zero by 2050, and develop a climate resilience plan. Ascension's goal is to achieve net zero carbon by 2040.

## HHS Health Sector Climate Pledge

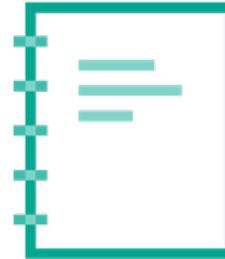
Ascension signed the US Department of Health and Human Services Health Sector Climate Pledge in the initial cohort, which was announced on Earth Day 2022.

### The pledge has three parts:

1. Reduce emissions by 50% by 2030 and achieve net zero emissions by 2050.
2. Designate an executive-level lead to reduce emissions and to conduct an inventory of Scope 3 emissions. We have done this through the governance of our Environmental Impact and Sustainability program, with guidance from our steering committee.
3. Develop a climate resilience plan, anticipating the needs of groups in our communities that experience disproportionate risk of climate-related harm.



Office of  
Climate Change  
and Health Equity



Ascension published its Climate Resiliency Plan in June 2024, coinciding with the presentation, Building Climate Resilient Communities using the lens of Health Equity and Environmental Sustainability, at the 2024 Catholic Health Association Assembly.

Plan elements, as outlined in the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Sector Climate Pledge, include:

- Health Equity and Community Engagement
- Prospective Risk Assessment
- Assessment and Remediation of Vulnerabilities in Infrastructure and Operations
- Collaboration between Healthcare Organizations
- Interdisciplinary Planning, Oversight, and Evaluation

# EXTERNAL COMMITMENT

**Laudato Si’ is Pope Francis’ encyclical on caring for our common home — a collaboration between the Vatican, Catholic organizations and individuals worldwide. The seven goals guide actions to redefine and rebuild relationships with each other and our common home.**



Ascension joined the Laudato Si’ Action Platform in FY22 in response to Pope Francis’ 2015 encyclical On Care for Our Common Home. Participating organizations in the Laudato Si’ Action Platform include parishes, healthcare organizations, universities and families.

Laudato Si’ Week was celebrated May 16-20, 2024, with daily reflections about sustainable transportation, sustainable food, renewable energy, waste reduction, water conservation and integral ecology to foster commitment for these important themes.

**Seven goals guide the Laudato Si’ Action Platform. Each goal provides actions people can take to care for God’s creation.**

Column two reflects how Ascension’s environmental efforts align with those of the Laudato Si’ Action Platform.

Laudato Si’ 7 Goals	Ascension Pillars of Work
<b>Response to the Cry of the Earth</b> calls us to protect our common home by addressing biodiversity loss and ecological sustainability.	Net Zero Places
<b>Response to the Cry of the Poor</b> promotes eco-justice around the globe.	Healthy Communities
<b>Ecological Economics</b> encourages an economy that supports the planet, such as through sustainable production and consumption.	Responsible Supply Chain
<b>Adoption of Sustainable Lifestyles</b> acknowledges the need for sufficiency by reducing waste, using more public transportation and avoiding single-use plastic items.	Net Zero Place, Responsible Supply Chain, Healthy Communities
<b>Ecological Education</b> re-imagines how educational systems can foster ecological awareness and transformative action.	Environmental Impact Office
<b>Ecological Spirituality</b> helps us “discover God in all things,” such as in the beauty of Creation.	Environmental Impact Office
<b>Community Resilience and Empowerment</b> advocates for community engagement at various levels by encouraging a sense of belonging in neighborhood ecosystems.	Healthy Communities

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OFFICE

Ascension's Environmental Impact and Sustainability program is composed of three pillars:



## NET ZERO PLACES

The Net Zero Places pillar focuses 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.



## RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

The Responsible Supply Chain pillar focuses 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 improve environmental impact and provide social good.



## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The Healthy Communities pillar is at the core of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability Program. Healthy Communities is focused on the relationship between sustainability and social determinants of health (SDOH), linking this to Ascension's Mission to sustain and improve the health of individuals and communities the ministry is privileged to serve.

On the following pages, FY24 work fulfilling our commitment to environmental sustainability is detailed.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

## NET ZERO PLACES

### Renewable Energy

In FY24 and beyond, a strong emphasis will be placed on continued reduction in Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions at Ascension facilities. It is essential to reduce energy use at the same time as implementing renewable energy sources to minimize both Ascension's carbon footprint and capital expenses.

**Ascension Texas and Ascension Indiana use renewable energy sources.**

Dell Children's Medical Center and Dell Seton Medical Center at the University of Texas have participated in the Austin Energy GreenChoice program since 2017. AES Indiana Green Power program has provided 100% Renewable Energy Certificates representing renewable energy generation since 2022 at Ascension St. Vincent Hospital, St. Vincent Hospital for Women & Children and Ascension St. Vincent Seton Specialty Hospital.



*Ascension Seton, Austin, Texas*



*Ascension St. Vincent Women's Hospital, Indianapolis, Indiana*

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

## NET ZERO PLACES

### Planning, design and construction

#### Ascension Standards and Furniture Program

Design and construction standards include many sustainable design features in support of the Ascension Environmental Impact and Sustainability program.

- Materials, products, furniture, fixtures and equipment included in the Ascension Specifications were reviewed for sustainable sourcing, humane and ethical practices, and occupant comfort.
- Product specifications include architectural materials and furniture that reduce exposure to chemicals of concern. Products compliant with the Healthier Hospitals Safer Chemicals protocol and GREENGUARD Certified are produced without:
  - Polyvinyl chloride, commonly known as PVC
  - Flame retardants
  - Phthalates, which are used to make plastics flexible
  - Perfluorinated compounds, also referred to as PFAS
  - Formaldehyde
  - Antimicrobials
  - Interior paints free of volatile organic compounds
- **Exterior signs at Ascension sites of care feature reusable packing material that is made of materials that can be recycled. All removed signs and waste packaging material is to be recycled.**
- Energy and metering requirements are provided within the Standards to monitor and reduce consumption. LED lighting is installed in all Ascension-owned or leased facilities.
- Capital project plans require the General Contractor to create a Construction & Demolition Waste Management plan to achieve a 50% diversion rate. Project teams submit their C&D plan for review at 60% and 100% project milestone dates. Sustainability Scorecards are required at the 15% and 60% project milestone dates.



Ascension St. Vincent Warrick, Boonville, Indiana

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

## NET ZERO PLACES

### Planning, design and construction

#### Green building projects

Among recently completed capital projects, the Dell Children's Medical Center 4th Bed Tower expansion achieved LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) for Healthcare Platinum certification, its fourth Platinum certification over the life of the hospital campus.

Typical project materials diverted from landfill and recycled include brick, block, concrete, cardboard, dirt, wood, ferrous and non-ferrous metals.



#### Construction and demolition waste recycling

**55.0%** Recycled job to date at St. Vincent Indianapolis - Women & Childrens Hospital

**61.8%** Recycled job to date at St. Vincent Indianapolis - Brain & Spine Hospital



St. Vincent Indianapolis - Brain & Spine Hospital  
(IBJ photo/Eric Learned)

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

## Sourcing

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**The Resource Group, Ascension's resource and supply management solution, leads this work. FY24 highlights include helping remove desflurane from the formulary, meeting with suppliers to encourage them to adopt more sustainable practices, and continuing to enhance the contracting decision-making process to include sustainability attributes.**

### Supplier review sessions

This workgroup had a FY24 goal to meet with 25 suppliers to review their short- and long-term goals to reduce packaging and greenhouse gas emissions with a focus on setting science-aligned targets. The group focused on the suppliers that make up a large portion of The Resource Group's spend. At the end of FY24, The Resource Group met with 26 suppliers, and more meetings are scheduled for FY25. The Resource Group engaged with suppliers' national account representatives, sustainability leads and executive leadership across multiple disciplines, such as capital, critical products and pharmaceuticals. Discussion topics ranged from reducing carbon footprint to implementing energy-efficient practices, and developing strategies to minimize waste generation.

### Reducing cardboard packaging

The Resource Group collaborated with two suppliers to decrease the amount of packaging used to ship items to Ascension sites and lower the amount of cardboard to be recycled. One company consolidated deliveries into as few shipping containers as possible, separating orders within cartons to allow for easy item identification. Our medical-surgical distributor implemented a national reusable tote program to replace cardboard boxes. Together, the two programs avoided the equivalent of 20.4 tons of cardboard waste in FY24.

### Medical device reprocessing

Ascension continues to demonstrate success with its FDA-approved medical device reprocessing program. In FY24, Ascension hospitals collected 816,000 devices, resulting in \$20.6 million in savings and 169,211 pounds of waste diverted from landfills. Our third-party vendor also partnered with the National Forest Foundation to plant 2,364 trees on behalf of Ascension.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

### Clinical

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**Ascension made a key step in caring for the planet and patients by ending the use and purchase of desflurane, an inhaled anesthetic. This will significantly reduce Ascension's waste anesthetic gas emissions, which is essential to achieve Ascension's goal of net zero carbon emissions by 2040.**

Desflurane was phased out in February 2024 across all of Ascension. Only a small portion of inhaled anesthetics are metabolized by a patient, while the remaining exhaled gases become waste emissions that are vented out of the hospital and into the atmosphere. These waste emissions are greenhouse gases. Compared to sevoflurane, desflurane has a much higher greenhouse gas warming potential, and it stays in the atmosphere years longer.

As we have equally safe and effective alternatives with better environmental profiles, the removal of desflurane was a clear benefit to those we serve. The Clinical workgroup championed this initiative by facilitating both clinical and operational reviews to gain buy-in among stakeholders and by shepherding the project through various approval and implementation points. The switch to sevoflurane is equivalent to avoiding over 10 million miles of driving each year.

A key partner in this initiative was The Resource Group. The Resource Group's Contract Design, Sourcing, and Integration associates completed a thorough review of product alternatives for desflurane. This review included collecting feedback from end users and clinical leadership for required product attributes, verifying ample alternative product supply, and providing clear, consistent information to stakeholders regarding the change.



10M+

MILES OF DRIVING AVOIDED

The equivalent each year  
by switching to sevoflurane

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The success of this initiative relied heavily on close collaboration with Ascension's clinical leadership and the ability to leverage expertise, insights and resources across stakeholder groups to achieve objectives.

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

### Clinical

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The Clinical workgroup and Ascension received a letter from the Congregation of the Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother, one of Ascension's historic sponsors. They applauded Ascension for removing desflurane from the formulary and noted this act responds to Pope Francis' encyclical, *Laudato Si'*, to "protect our common home and care for its most vulnerable inhabitants." The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother also wrote, "it is the moral responsibility of our nation to protect our common home, advance environmental justice, protect human health, and tackle the climate crisis. Thank you for this important step to protect human health and our future."

The Clinical workgroup provided thought leadership to the healthcare sector on this initiative by presenting at a 2024 Destination CleanMed webinar. The Destination CleanMed webinar series leads up to the annual CleanMed conference, the premier conference about healthcare sustainability.

In the webinar, the Clinical workgroup highlighted the inclusion of health professional leadership within Ascension's governance structure and processes and programming for clinical sustainability initiatives, such as desflurane elimination, improving regulated medical waste segregation, and educating clinicians about conserving resources.

***It is the moral responsibility of our nation to protect our common home, advance environmental justice, protect human health, and tackle the climate crisis. Thank you for this important step to protect human health and our future.***

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**The Sisters of the Sorrowful Mother**



2024

### DESTINATION CLEANMED WEBINAR

The Clinical workgroup provided thought leadership to the healthcare sector.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

## Waste

**Ascension’s 2030 waste goal is to divert 50% of non-hazardous waste from all Ascension-owned facilities. This will advance Ascension toward the 2040 goal to achieve zero waste.**

### 2030 Waste diversion goal

Complete, actionable and reliable data will allow Ascension to analyze current initiatives and determine how we can further enhance our efforts to achieve the 2030 waste diversion goal.

Multiple strategies to divert waste from landfills will help achieve the 2030 goal. Examples of these tactics are shown here in the waste diversion hierarchy. This depicts the preferred option at the top and the least preferred option at the bottom.

<b>AVOID</b>	Only purchase what is needed to prevent waste generation from the start.
<b>REDUCE</b>	Engage with supplier programs to reduce packaging.
<b>REUSE</b>	Engage with supplier programs that deliver items in reusable totes, deliver items on reusable pallets and donate unused furniture to local organizations. Utilize the Medxcel Marketplace to reuse assets with additional use remaining.
<b>REPAIR</b>	Participate in our supplier’s FDA-approved medical device reprocessing program. Utilize a supplier’s ability to fix medical equipment to avoid sending it to the landfill.
<b>RECYCLE</b>	Increase recycling rates of batteries, construction and demolition debris, cardboard, electronic waste, mixed recyclables, pallets (where available), scrap metal and shrink wrap.
<b>RECOVER</b>	Save cooking oil for recycling. Collaborate with municipal waste-to-energy plants to convert municipal solid waste into energy.
<b>DISPOSE</b>	Send items to the landfill as a last resort.

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

## RESPONSIBLE SUPPLY CHAIN

### Waste

#### Food waste digesters

Food waste at hospitals can account for up to 15% of the total municipal solid waste sent to landfills. In 2023, food waste digesters were in operation across Ascension hospital kitchens to help work toward Ascension's waste reduction goals. The machines use microorganisms and oxygen to digest food leftovers. The resulting gray water is discharged to local municipal wastewater treatment plants.

Food digesters come with several benefits:

- Digester technology reduces greenhouse gas emissions from landfills and reduces vehicle emissions due to fewer waste transports.
- Associate safety is improved by reducing the number of garbage bins hauled to the dock, and fees for municipal solid waste pickups may be reduced.
- The need for pest management on the loading dock is minimized.



# 390

## TONS OF FOOD WASTE

The amount digested in FY24 as a result of this project

#### Medxcel Marketplace

The Marketplace is a platform that allows Ascension sites to list and claim equipment and is managed by Medxcel, an Ascension subsidiary. The intent is to promote sustainability by re-using assets with additional life remaining; avoiding new asset purchases, and removing surplus assets from storage. In FY24, the first equipment transfer occurred.



*Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida) received surplus recycling bins from Dell Children's Medical Center (Austin, Texas)*

## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

The core of Ascension's Environmental Impact and Sustainability program is Healthy Communities.

**Our “whole person” perspective uses the social determinants of health to identify and address 80% of non-clinical factors such as individual behaviors, social and economic factors, and our built environment that influence the health and well-being of individuals and communities.**

So that our clinical care can have the most impact, Ascension clinicians have conducted over 3.5 million SDOH surveys to identify and gain an understanding of the needs of the community.

Climate events have a more significant impact on individuals who are poor and vulnerable. When events like tornadoes and floods hit a community and some people don't have insurance or a savings account, it's hard to bounce back. When pollution affects the air we breathe, disadvantaged children are more prone to medical conditions like asthma as a result. In the communities Ascension serves, we have seen weeks of extreme heat days in Austin; and intense rain events due to increased atmospheric temperatures in Nashville. As oceans absorb heat, hurricane seasons are starting earlier and becoming more severe, as experienced on Florida's Atlantic coast in Jacksonville and Gulf Coast in Pensacola. Two projects illustrate Ascension's FY24 Healthy Communities work: Preventing Asthma Exacerbation and Food Insecurity.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR  
**HEALTHY COMMUNITIES**

Factors that influence the health and well-being of individuals



10%  
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

Housing and community



40%  
SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC FACTORS

Education, job status, family/social support, income and community safety



20%  
HEALTHCARE

Access to care and quality of care



30%  
HEALTH BEHAVIORS

Tobacco use, diet and exercise, alcohol use and sexual activity



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Preventing asthma exacerbation

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Asthma attacks resulting in emergency department (ED) visits can be affected by many factors, including the environment, seasonal trends in community-level infectious diseases, routines of daily living and patient-specific factors. Ascension has the opportunity to identify underlying factors impacting asthma patients resulting in the opportunity to reduce asthma-related ED visits.

In FY23 and FY24, there were close to 4,000 asthma-related ED visits at Ascension hospitals. The project objective is to produce daily predictions of asthma-related ED visit risk among underinsured patients in order to identify rising risk, prioritize patients for intervention and prevent the need for subsequent ED visits. The team is working to predict how likely the patient is to have an asthma-related ED visit within the next 30 days.

**During FY24, the project team used data to design pre-emptive communication strategies to give patients information about how to manage asthma and prevent asthma-related emergencies triggered by local weather, pollution patterns and other SDOH factors.**



## ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT AND SUSTAINABILITY PILLAR

# HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

### Food insecurity

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Ascension joined the White House Commitment to End Hunger and Build Healthy Communities by 2030. The work will focus on identifying, engaging and addressing SDOH needs impacting health equity with an emphasis on high-poverty and vulnerable communities. Ascension will increase workforce access to fresh, affordable produce by providing hospital-based produce markets in 100% of their sites of care currently offering food retail locations and a food choice system to raise awareness of healthier food options.

Since 2021, Ascension invested in food and related initiatives equivalent to 80,000 individuals served in 11 states with a value of \$1.2 million. By 2030, in partnership with the Ascension Foundation and Ascension's community investment strategy, funds backing food-related solutions will double.



*Getting this box of food reminded me that I can take care of myself by nourishing my body with healthy foods. And finding ways to cook with new ingredients has given me a spark to try new recipes.*

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#### Ascension Food Insecurity Workgroup recipient

The Ascension Food Insecurity Workgroup and TouchPoint Support Services created a farmers market pilot program, focusing on hospitals located in or near low-income, low-access food areas. The monthly markets sell fresh produce and healthy food options to associates and visitors at reasonable prices, with a goal to understand and then remove the barriers that lead to food insecurity.

In addition, TouchPoint collaborated with Ascension dietitians to develop healthy recipes, incorporating the low-cost seasonal produce into recipes prepared by a TouchPoint chef during a Teaching Kitchen demonstration. The platform explores food, culinary and nutrition literacy to improve food choices and experiences while enhancing community engagement.

*Pictured left to right: Peter Leibold, Executive Vice President and Chief Advocacy Officer; Joe Impicicche; and Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray outside the White House.*

# ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT OFFICE WORKGROUPS

## Communications

The Communications workgroup elevates the messaging of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program through internal and external storytelling.

FY24 publications include the FY23 Environmental Impact and Sustainability annual report, 15 award applications, responding to reporters' interview questions, leader messages, and internal and external articles. This group helped facilitate the System-wide FY24 Earth Day and Feast of St. Francis activities and the corresponding communications materials. The workgroup developed resources for Ascension Green Teams, such as posters and toolkits.

## Governance and data

This workgroup coordinates Ascension's Environmental Impact Office, its 10 working groups and the Environmental Impact and Sustainability Executive Steering Committee to formalize sustainability planning and implementation across the ministry.

In FY24, the workgroup consolidated all Scope 1 and Scope 2 data sources; coordinated Scope 3 data tracking with The Resource Group; conducted Sustainability Executive Steering Committee and EIO team meetings; monitored sustainability reporting requirements, including external pledges and jurisdictional compliance; and leveraged the Environmental Impact Office governance structure to facilitate the Clinical desflurane elimination project.

**In FY24, Ascension continued to improve and streamline our carbon reporting strategy.**

Tasks included:



**Increasing access**  
to data sources across the organization, including anesthetic gases and refrigerants.



**Validating the collected data**  
to ensure it was accurate and comprehensive.



Continuing to maintain consistent assumptions in **reporting calculations**, such as emissions factors.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Practice Greenhealth awards

**Fifteen Ascension hospitals earned Practice Greenhealth's Environmental Excellence Awards for their achievements in sustainability. This national award is the premier recognition program for environmental performance in the healthcare sector. Practice Greenhealth is a member-based organization focused on delivering sustainability solutions for healthcare.**



The following hospitals received a 2024 Partner for Change award. A highlight from each hospital's application is included, with all information from 2023.

**Ascension St. Vincent's East** (Birmingham, Alabama) More than 90% of furniture purchases were compliant with the Healthier Hospitals Initiative — Safer Chemicals.

**Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham** (Alabama) Purchased reusable patient linens, sharps containers and other surgical instruments in the operating room. These reusable items were deemed clinically preferable and helped divert waste from the landfill.

**Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County** (Middleburg, Florida) Sent unneeded products to local colleges for educational clinical practice, reducing the amount of waste sent to landfills.

**Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola** (Florida) Purchased locally grown and produced foods and beverages. Practice Greenhealth defines local as grown/raised and processed less than 250 miles from the facility and 500 miles for meat, poultry and seafood.

**Ascension Saint Alexius** (Hoffman Estates, Illinois) Participated in a source reduction program through The Resource Group and a vendor. This vendor consolidated orders into one box, rather than shipping each order in an individual box, which resulted in less waste entering the hospital.

**Ascension Alexian Brothers** (Elk Grove Village, Illinois) 50% of furnishings and furniture purchases were free from Practice Greenhealth's five target chemicals, such as formaldehyde.

**Ascension Via Christi St. Teresa** (Wichita, Kansas) Reduced potable water use with low-flow faucet and shower fixtures.

**Ascension Via Christi St. Francis** (Wichita, Kansas) Utilized reusable sterilization containers for surgical instrumentation to reduce the need for disposable sterile wrap.

**Ascension Genesys Hospital** (Grand Blanc, Michigan) Recycled over 430 tons of items from the hospital. Examples of items included mixed metals, cardboard, shrink wrap and fluorescent lamps.

**Ascension St. John Medical Center** (Tulsa, Oklahoma) Collected over 4 tons of single-use devices through Ascension's medical device reprocessing program, per FDA guidelines.

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Practice Greenhealth awards

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**Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital** (Baltimore, Maryland) Reduced food waste through menu forecasting, rework strategies for leftover products and proper stock rotation.

**Dell Children's Medical Center** (Austin, Texas) Recycled over 10 tons of cooking oil. This increased from 2022 when the hospital recycled over 8 tons of cooking oil.

**Ascension Seton Medical Center Austin** (Texas) Recycled over 340 tons of cardboard.

**Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus** (Appleton, Wisconsin) Managed rainwater via green roofs and several small retention ponds on campus, which hold rainwater until it slowly drains into the subsurface.

**Ascension All Saints - Spring Street Campus** (Racine, Wisconsin) Diverted over 16 tons of plastic from the landfill as a result of participating in the reusable sharps container program.

*The number of award recipients is the most achieved by Ascension hospitals in one year and is a testament to how we are leading the way in healthcare sustainability. These awards demonstrate our commitment to caring for the earth and improving the health of the communities we serve.*

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**Dan Scher**  
Vice President of Strategic Planning and Sustainability, Medxcel



Ascension St. Elizabeth, Appleton, Wisconsin

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Energy awards

**Eighteen Ascension sites of care received ENERGY STAR® Certifications in 2024, our greatest number to date. These sites demonstrate outstanding performance in facility operations with a focus on energy efficiency.**

### 2024 ENERGY STAR® Certifications

- Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)
- Ascension St. Joseph (Chicago, Illinois)
- Ascension St. Vincent Carmel (Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Clay (Brazil, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Clay Medical Office Building (Brazil, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Evansville Medical Arts Building (Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Fishers (Fishers, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Jennings (North Vernon, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Salem (Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension St. John Owasso (Oklahoma)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hickman (Centerville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Providence Hospital (Waco, Texas)
- Ascension Seton Edgar B. Davis (Luling, Texas)
- Ascension Seton Hays (Kyle, Texas)
- Ascension Seton Williamson Hospital (Round Rock, Texas)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus (Oshkosh, Wisconsin)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus (Appleton, Wisconsin)



*Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County,  
Middleburg, Florida*

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Energy awards

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### 2024 ASHE Sustainability Champion Awards

These sites of care demonstrate outstanding leadership in healthcare sustainability. Requirements include achieving an ENERGY STAR® score of 75 or above; receiving an ENERGY STAR® certification; and tracking energy, water and greenhouse gas emissions. Hospitals have a Green Team and a sustainability champion, and publish a sustainability statement.

- Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension Seton Williamson (Round Rock, Texas)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus (Oshkosh, Wisconsin)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus (Appleton, Wisconsin)



### 2024 ASHE Energy to Care Awards

The Energy to Care Award honors healthcare facilities for achievements in healthcare sustainability, such as lowering energy use year-over-year.

- Ascension Sacred Heart Emerald Coast (Miramar, Florida)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hickman (Centerville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital West (Nashville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Seton Shoal Creek (Austin, Texas)

# ACCOMPLISHMENTS

## Energy awards

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### 2024 ASHE Sustained Performance Awards

These hospitals were recognized for demonstrating three consecutive years of low energy use.

- Ascension St. Vincent's East (Birmingham, Alabama)
- Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)
- Ascension St. Vincent Clay Hospital (Brazil, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Fishers Hospital (Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Jennings Hospital (North Vernon, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Francis Hospital (Evanston, Illinois)
- Ascension St. Joseph Hospital (Chicago, Illinois)
- Ascension St. John Owasso (Oklahoma)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hickman (Centerville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Seton Edgar B. Davis Hospital (Luling, Texas)
- Ascension Seton Hays (Kyle, Texas)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus (Oshkosh, Wisconsin)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin - St. Elizabeth Campus (Appleton, Wisconsin)

# ASSOCIATE ENGAGEMENT

## Earth Day 2024

**This spring, associates across Ascension embodied Pope Francis' message in Laudato Si' to care for God's creation by participating in Earth Day events.**

More than 150 associates attended the Earth Day Lunch and Learn with Continuing Education Units, Care for our Common Home: Honoring Earth Day in Practice. Associates also shared Earth Day Huddle Cards at the beginning of team meetings to reflect on caring for our common home.

More than 45 care sites participated in tree plantings, campus and neighborhood cleanups, Earth Day fairs and Stop Food Waste Day as a sign of solidarity with our environment:

- Evansville, Indiana associates with Community Outreach, Medxcel Facilities and Medxcel Landscaping volunteered at the Seton Harvest Community Garden. The team cleaned vegetable beds and planted cabbage and lettuce. The community garden provides local families the opportunity to participate in growing and harvesting organic vegetables.
- The Medxcel Landscaping and Ascension Volunteer Services teams held an Earth Day cookout at Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola (Florida). The event included performances by the Landscaper's Band; a gift bag giveaway; and fruit, vegetable and tree plantings.



*Departments across Ascension St. Vincent Hospital (Indianapolis, Indiana) came together to collect over 45 bags of trash from nearby roadways in honor of Earth Day.*

# ASSOCIATE ENGAGEMENT

## Stop Food Waste Day 2024

**As part of its ongoing pledge to reduce food waste, TouchPoint observed the eighth-annual Stop Food Waste Day on April 24. Associates at sites across the country became Food Waste Warriors who worked to raise awareness of the global food waste crisis.**



To minimize food waste throughout its operations, TouchPoint equips teams with the tools and resources needed to make a difference. Among them is Waste Not 2.0, a program designed to track, measure, and reduce food waste at the site level. Data collected through the system is analyzed to identify problems and find long-lasting solutions. By monitoring food waste, TouchPoint possesses the knowledge required to implement operational changes and improvements to meet its food waste reduction goals.

During Stop Food Waste Day celebrations, TouchPoint's registered dietitians and culinary teams set up booths on-site to promote the initiative. Incorporating resources provided by Compass Group, associates engaged and educated guests and staff about the importance of stopping food waste. Healthy recipes were also distributed to visitors. And, while a delicious recipe is always great to have on hand, it's even better when it helps minimize food waste. Recipes shared during Stop Food Waste Day contained all the details necessary to make a tasty meal with no food waste.



*Coffee grounds shared with associates during Stop Food Waste Day celebrations at Ascension cafeterias.*

# ASSOCIATE ENGAGEMENT

## Feast of St. Francis 2023

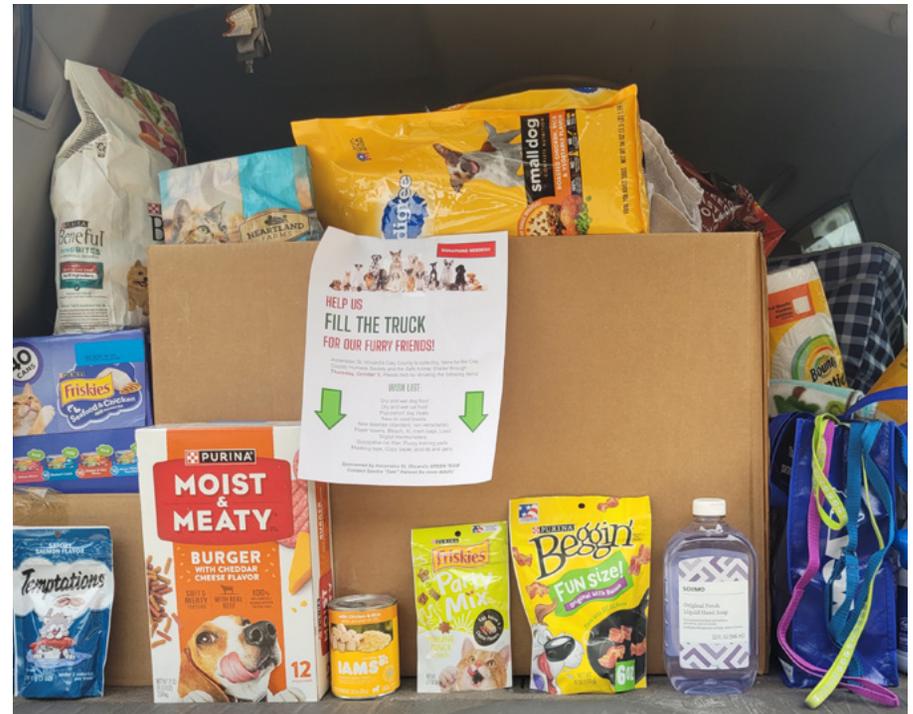
Ascension associates united in prayer and action to protect our Common Home during the 2023 Season of Creation.

### Feast of St. Francis 2023

The Season of Creation began on the World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation (Sept. 1) and concluded on the Feast of St. Francis (Oct. 4), which celebrates St. Francis, patron saint of animals and the environment.

#### Associates participated in a variety of Season of Creation activities:

- Associates attended the virtual Feast of St. Francis Prayer Service and Pet Blessing on Oct. 4.
- Posts with #sustainability or #petblessing were added to Ascension's internal board to demonstrate our shared Mission commitment to support the planet, and all those who call it home.
- Associates helped take care of our Earth's resources by committing to the Go Green Pledge. This pledge includes activities to support sustainable living in our workplaces, homes and communities.
- Associates across our markets participated in individual events, as well. The Green Team at Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida) held its second annual donation drive for a local animal shelter.



Supplies donated by associates from Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida) were delivered to a local animal shelter in honor of the Feast of St. Francis.

## FY25 INITIATIVES

Each Environmental Impact Office workgroup has developed science-aligned targets to drive success toward Ascension's 2030 and 2040 goals in these areas.



CLINICAL

WASTE  
DIVERSION

HEALTHY  
COMMUNITIES

## FY25 INITIATIVES



## CLINICAL

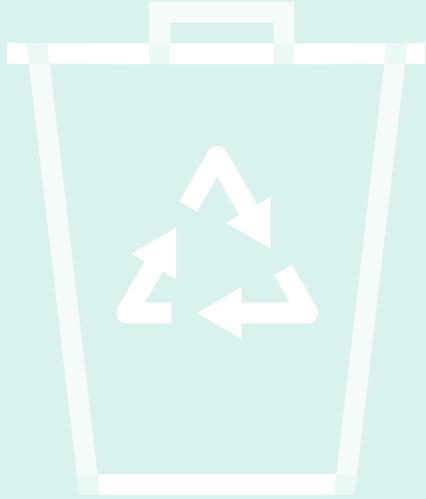
In FY25, the Clinical workgroup will focus on their next project: Reducing nitrous oxide emissions, another greenhouse gas.

*Our successful FY24 project to remove desflurane from the formulary demonstrates multidisciplinary collaboration and the strength of the clinical organization's relationship with The Resource Group and Medxcel.*

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**Thomas Aloia, MD, MHCM, FACS, FACHE**  
Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer

## FY25 INITIATIVES



## WASTE DIVERSION

Standardizing waste diversion initiatives is the FY25 focus for the Waste workgroup.

The Waste workgroup will launch pilots in FY25 to learn how to effectively standardize different initiatives to reduce waste sent to landfills. The purpose of pilots is to study challenges and determine best practices. These findings are then formalized into programs and expanded across Ascension sites.

*Standardizing our waste diversion programs will help forge a successful path to achieving zero waste by 2040. We could not conduct these critical pilots without the help of hospital Green Team chairs, clinicians, TouchPoint Environmental Services, Medxcel, The Resource Group and hospital leaders.*

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**Michael Argir**  
CEO and President, Medxcel

## FY25 INITIATIVES



## HEALTHY COMMUNITIES

Three workgroups — Resiliency, Environment & Health Equity, and Community Engagement — constitute the Healthy Communities pillar.

The Healthy Communities workgroup will implement climate resiliency guides for each market to support the needs of our communities experiencing disproportionate risk of climate-related harm. Associate engagement will be promoted with activities on Earth Day in April and the Feast of St. Francis in October.

*Our innovation to synthesize community impact, resilience, emergency preparedness and community engagement is breaking new ground in healthcare sustainability as we work toward equitable access to resources to improve community health and the lives of individuals we serve.*

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**Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray**

Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer, Ascension

# CREDITS

## FY24 Environmental Impact and Sustainability Steering Committee

### **Eduardo Conrado**

President, Ascension

### **Dr. Tom Aloia**

Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Ascension

### **Michael Argir**

CEO and President, Medxcel

### **Scott Caldwell**

CEO, The Resource Group

### **Liz Foshage**

Executive Vice President and Chief Financial Officer, Ascension (retired)

### **Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray**

Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer, Ascension

### **Mark Hayes**

Senior Vice President, Advocacy and Policy, Ascension

### **Tom VanOsdol**

Executive Vice President, Mission Integration, Ascension

### **Fahad Tahir**

Senior Vice President and Ascension Tennessee Market Leader

### **Ashley Dickinson**

Chief Operating Officer, Ascension Texas

## FY24 Environmental Impact Office Workgroup members

### **Built Environment**

Michael Argir, Matt Keahey, Scott Czubkowski, Tom Vanlandingham, Steve Vock, Kathryn Holland, Kyle Sunderlin, Scott Reinecke, Andrew Fairbank

### **Renewable Energy**

Michael Argir, Jason Scheidler, Steve Vock, Steve Gilmore, Scott Reinecke, Scott Czubkowski, Kathryn Holland

### **Sourcing**

Todd Adams, Jennifer Ervin, Tom Kalla, Harrison Clark, Gerard Gonthier, Tom Hughel, Cindy Schanuel, Kyle Ross, Dejah Hilliard

### **Waste**

Michael Argir, Dan Scher, Paul D'Annunzio, Sean Stephens, Dessa Warner, Scott Reinecke, Aaron Collins, Gerard Gonthier, Nicole Martin, Tom Kalla

### **Clinical**

Dr. Thomas Aloia, Katie Wickman, Jennifer Ervin, Tom Kalla, Scott Reinecke, Dan Scher, Jonathan Taves

### **Healthy Communities**

Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray, Lois Sechrist, Nicole Commodore, Paul Maniscalco, Quentin Moore, Maggie Singleton, Renée Stratton

### **Communications**

Mark Hayes, Maggie Singleton, Katie Wickman

### **Governance, Reporting and**

### **Data Management**

Dan Scher, Scott Reinecke, Kaylann Loraine, Lois Sechrist

# CREDITS

## FY24 Green Team Chairs

### Alabama

Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham (Birmingham): Kendra Risse

Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton (Clanton): Jeffery Roberts

Ascension St. Vincent's St. Clair (Pell City): Jimmy Vaughn

### Florida

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast (Miramar Beach): Allen Prier and Amy Tovrea

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola (Pensacola): Jessica Barker

Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg): Sam Hanson

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside (Jacksonville) and Ascension St. Vincent's Southside (Jacksonville): Bruce Warner

Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County (St. Johns): Carolina Sklar and Christina Elias

### Illinois

Ascension Mercy (Aurora): Rey Rafols

Ascension Resurrection (Chicago): Belinda Crespo

Ascension Saint Mary - Chicago (Chicago) and Ascension Saint Elizabeth (Chicago): Paul Gomez

### Indiana

Ascension St. Vincent Anderson: Mike Jones

Ascension St. Vincent Evansville: Todd Lohse and Debbie Flake

### Michigan

Ascension Macomb-Oakland Hospital, Madison Heights Campus and Ascension Macomb-Oakland Hospital, Warren Campus: Alexandra Walowicz

Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital: April Parker

### Tennessee

Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital - West (Nashville): Tina Shaw-Cox

### Texas

Dell Children's Medical Center (Austin): Vanessa Voce Strackbein

### Wisconsin

Ascension All Saints Hospital - Wisconsin Avenue Campus (Racine) and Ascension All Saints Hospital - Spring Street Campus (Racine): Kevin Shutz

For more information, visit  
[ascension.org/environmental](https://ascension.org/environmental)



**Ascension**