Ascension

Environmental Impact & Sustainability

Ascension is positioning our sustainability program to minimize environmental impact

Ascension committed to the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program in 2021, built on the foundation of the Environmental Stewardship program that started in 2011. Ascension is positioning our sustainability program to minimize environmental impact with activities focused in three pillars of work: Net Zero Places, Responsible Supply Chain and Healthy Communities.

The program continues Ascension's efforts to address energy conservation, waste management, recycling and environmentally preferred purchasing. New areas of work include greening the built environment, employing renewable energy sources, moving our fleets away from fossil fuels, supporting sustainability in clinical areas, and reaching beyond our hospital campuses to create healthy communities.

This report illustrates successes and illuminates challenges to infuse sustainability into our daily work. Please help us celebrate the important strides we have made. As we look ahead, our opportunities include improving access to and validating greenhouse gas emissions and waste data to measure and track progress against commitments to reduce our carbon footprint; and engaging associates across Ascension to care for Creation.

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 to improve community health and the lives of individuals we serve.
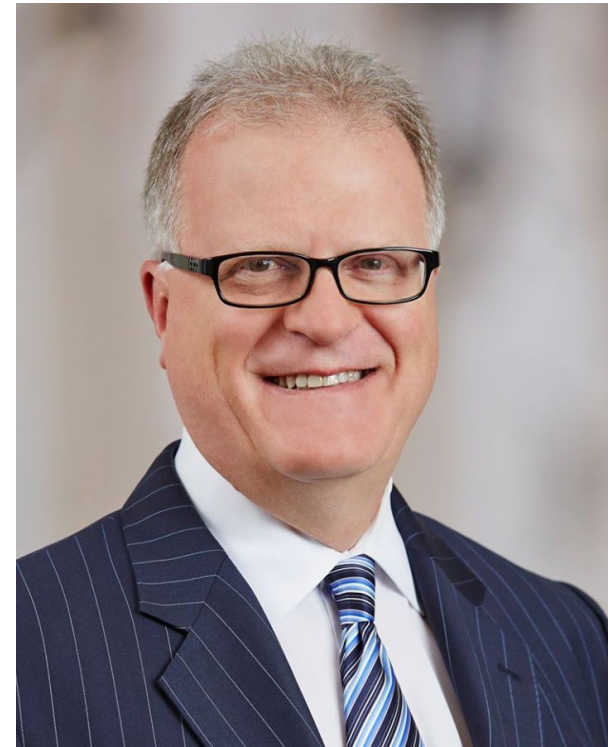
A message from Joe Impicciche

"In 2015, Pope Francis penned the Laudato Si', On Care for Our Common Home. In this letter to the churches he wrote, "Saint Francis of Assisi reminds us that our common home is like a sister with whom we share our life and a beautiful mother who opens her arms to embrace us."

In the FY23 Environmental Impact and Sustainability report, we share both our commitments and our achievements to living out St. Francis' message on caring for Creation, while improving and sustaining the health of our communities.

For the first time, we publicly reported our baseline Scope 1 and 2 emissions as part of our commitment to the United Nations' Race to Zero campaign. Ascension also continued our purchase of renewable energy to support our pledge to reduce our carbon emissions. This report also includes inspiring stories from associates — like their work to earn our sites of care 27 national awards for outstanding sustainability performance.

Ascension's call to environmental sustainability is Mission-driven, social and economical. Our focus is the patient, especially those who are experiencing poverty and vulnerability. It is an honor to work with our associates to live out St. Francis' boundless love for Creation through our care for the planet and those we serve.

Joe Impicciche
Chief Executive Officer
Ascension

FY21-23 goals achieved

Ascension set two FY21-FY23 goals: achieve 5% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions at the end of FY23 from our FY20 baseline, and 6% reduction of municipal solid waste (MSW) at the end of FY23 from our FY19 baseline, normalized by pounds of MSW per patient per day. We reduced our greenhouse gas emissions from acute care facilities by 9.4% and municipal solid waste sent to landfills by 5.34%. These goals helped kickstart progress toward our 2040 goals.

9.4%

GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS REDUCTION IN ACUTE CARE FACILITIES FROM FY21-23

Reduce energy consumption and transition to clean energy sources to reduce air pollution in the community.
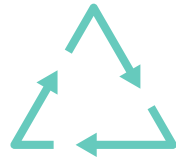
5.3%

MUNICIPAL SOLID WASTE REDUCTION FROM FY21-23

Reduce landfill usage in our communities and emissions from existing landfills.

OUR GOALS

2030
+
2040

Ascension's sustainability initiatives will help address the effects of climate change that impact the communities we serve. We are reducing emissions by using cleaner energy sources and diverting waste previously sent to landfills, thus positively impacting the areas where we serve.

We are developing science-aligned targets to achieve our 2030 and 2040 goals:

2030

Reduce carbon emissions by 50%. Reduce 50% of nonhazardous waste from all managed facilities.

2040

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

In support of greenhouse gas emissions reduction goals, Ascension successfully began the transition from energy efficiency tracking to carbon reporting. Tasks included:

Collecting new data sources across the organization (vehicles, anesthetic gases, refrigerants).

Engaging an external consultant to work with the Sustainability team and establishing a reporting methodology to manage internally.

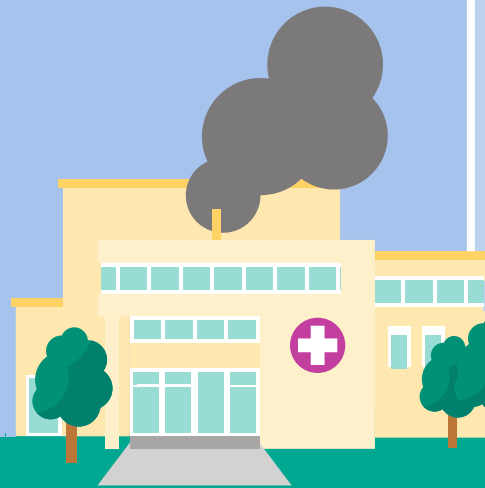Validating the data we collected was accurate and comprehensive.

Maintaining consistent management of assumptions, such as emissions factors.

Emissions baseline

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 to measure against.
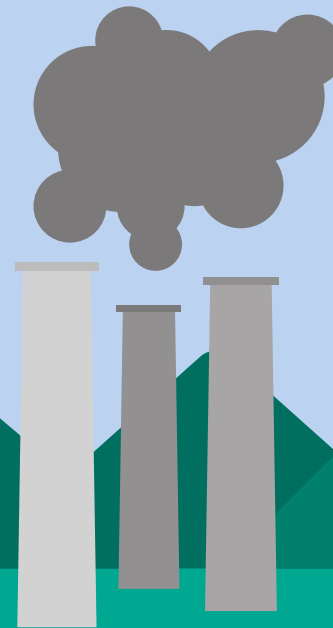
SCOPE 1

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 commitments

RACE TO ZERO

Ascension continued our commitment to the United Nations' Race to Zero campaign signed in FY22. As a signatory and member of the Health Care Climate Council, Ascension pledged to achieve net zero carbon emissions by 2050. Our goal is to achieve this 10 years sooner, by 2040.

Ascension acute care campuses in Alabama, Michigan, Indiana and Texas purchased green energy from local electric utilities in FY23, totaling more than 205 million kWh. The Energy team estimates 100,300 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent will be mitigated by these clean renewable energy purchases. The transition to renewable energy sources, such as solar and wind, is key to Ascension meeting our 2030 and 2040 goals to achieve net zero carbon. We are reducing our carbon footprint with the completion of green energy supply agreements.

In FY23, Ascension submitted calendar year 2019 baseline Scope 1 and 2 data to Race to Zero via the Health Care Climate Challenge's platform. Scopes 1 and 2 are emissions that are owned or controlled by Ascension. Scope 3 encompasses emissions that are not produced by Ascension, and are not the result of activities from assets owned or controlled by Ascension. Ascension currently calculates scope 3 emissions from other sources and actively advocates with partners to reduce them. However, given the reliance on external data, Ascension does not publicly report these estimates.

Factors included in Scope 1 calculations are natural gas usage, diesel fuel for backup generators, emissions from fleet vehicles and emissions from refrigerants and anesthetics. Measurements for Scope 2 calculations include steam usage, chilled water usage and electricity purchased from utilities.

Ascension emissions data for calendar years 2020-2022

YEAR	SCOPE 1 AND 2	PERCENT REDUCTION
2019	1,249,937	–
2020	1,221,207	2.3%
2021	1,202,317	3.8%
2022	1,157,723	7.4%

Ascension will submit calendar years 2020-2022 carbon data later this year. Above is Ascension's calendar year 2020-2022 emissions data. Measurements are in metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent ($MTCO_2e$).

External commitments

Ascension also signed the Office of the Assistant Secretary of Health, Health and Human Services, Health Sector Climate Pledge last year. By signing the pledge, Ascension committed to meet the administration's climate goal of reducing emissions by 50% by 2030, achieving net zero emissions by 2050 and anticipating the needs of groups in our communities that experience disproportionate risk of climate-related harm. This pledge aligns with Ascension's goals to achieve net zero carbon and zero waste by 2040.

As a pledge signer, Ascension will publish a climate resilience plan by December 2023. This pledge ties closely with our Healthy Communities pillar, focused on creating improved health outcomes in communities where our sites of care are located.

Ascension is using lessons learned from extreme weather events to ensure that our acute care hospitals are resilient and available as a place of refuge 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. With a comprehensive emergency management program tailored to each region we serve and by partnering with federal, state and local partners, we work to maintain full services at our sites of care. Further, as we understand the factors affecting those who are at an increased risk for negative health impacts associated with climate and climate change, we are able to identify vulnerable populations, educate our communities, and develop action plans to mitigate the impact of intense weather events.

Ascension is developing a Health & Climate Resiliency Template as part of our strategy. Resources include municipal climate action plans, Ascension's Emergency Preparedness Plan and Community Benefit Team tools. Our goal is to achieve a deeper understanding of who our patients are, where they live and the barriers they face each day. By intervening upstream, Ascension can support underserved populations while complementing the care of our clinical teams.

External commitments

LAUDATO SI'
Action Platform

Ascension signed the Laudato Si' Action Platform in FY22 in response to Pope Francis' 2015 Encyclical On Care for Our Common Home. The seven-year global program was formed as a collaboration among the Vatican, Catholic organizations and individuals around the world. The platform's seven goals guide actions to redefine and rebuild relationships with each other and our common home, using a Reflect - Act - Evaluate framework.

Ascension submitted a reflection to the Laudato Si' Action Platform in FY23 to demonstrate the connection between the platform's goals and Ascension's Mission to care for our communities. Ascension received a Laudato Si' U.S. Champion honorable mention award from the Catholic Climate Covenant for furthering Laudato Si' goals.

"In Laudato Si' (Praised Be), Pope Francis tells us it is a responsibility to be better stewards as he emphasizes our interconnectedness to all living things on this planet: 'Our relationship with the environment can never be isolated from our relationship with others and with God.'

As a ministry of the Church, we have the opportunity to live out this call. There is an unlimited potential to inspire communities with each sustainability initiative implemented. Through culture-driven individual behavior change to nationwide management of resources, we can reduce our impact on the environment and in the communities we serve, and create a more holistic healing ministry across the healthcare continuum.

The virtuous servant leadership of the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program has led to significant financial benefits while also engaging associates, serving the common good, and living out the Mission at an innovative level.

Our shared Values are integrated into strategic decision-making that better protects our common home. We as Ascension care for God's creation because we serve God's call and all of God's people."

—Chris McClead
Chief Mission Integration Officer
Ascension Michigan

Ascension's Environmental Impact and Sustainability program is positioned to minimize environmental impact with activities focused in three pillars:

Net Zero Places

Responsible Supply Chain

Healthy Communities

The **Net Zero Places** pillar is focused 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 as well as sustainable transportation.

The **Responsible Supply Chain** pillar is focused 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 lower environmental impact and provide social good.

Healthy Communities is at the core of the entire Environmental Impact and Sustainability Program — making a difference for the health and well-being of the communities we serve. Most of Ascension's sustainability work to this point has focused on realizing energy savings and thinking differently about how we construct and operate our facilities. Healthy Communities is focused on the relationship between sustainability and social determinants of health, linking this to Ascension's Mission to sustain and improve the health of individuals and communities the ministry is privileged to serve.
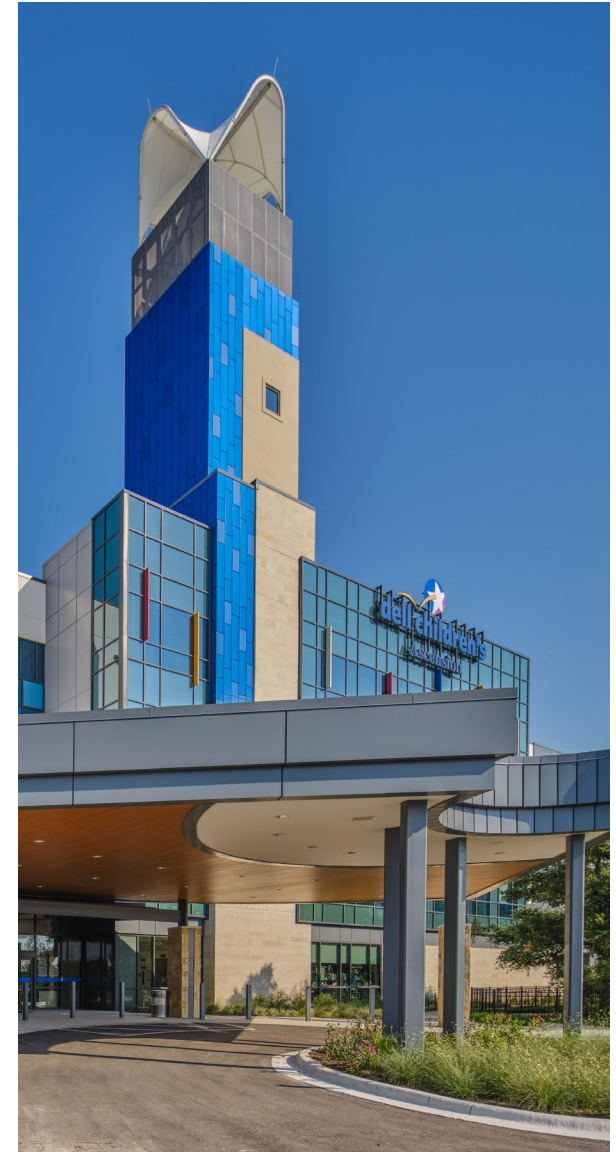
Net Zero Places

Built Environment

Energy efficiency has been the backbone of Ascension's sustainability work. The Built Environment workgroup continues this effort by increasing operational efficiencies at our sites of care.

In FY23, the workgroup launched a dashboard to expand local access to energy usage data and published a Construction Waste and Demolition Specification. The team piloted training programs in sterile processing, high pressure steam systems, boilers and chillers to teach Medxcel associates to run equipment efficiently and reduce energy usage.

FY23 strategic capital projects with sustainable attributes

Ascension completed several major capital projects during FY23 in the facilities listed below. By complying with Ascension Design and Construction standards, the projects automatically incorporate multiple sustainability attributes ranging from the building exterior; to mechanical, electrical and plumbing strategies for energy and water efficiency; to interior finishes that reduce exposure to chemicals of concern.

- Ascension Saint Thomas Hospital – Midtown (Nashville, Tennessee) Surgery and Critical Care Tower

- Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County (St. Johns, Florida)

- Dell Children's Medical Center North (Austin, Texas)

- Dell Children's Medical Office Building (Austin, Texas)

Pictured: Dell Children's Medical Center North Campus (Austin, Texas)

Net Zero Places

FY23 strategic capital projects: Specific enhancements

- Exterior vertical shading fins reflect and absorb solar energy before it penetrates windows, contributing to reduced cooling loads and energy savings.

- No-wax sheet vinyl and vinyl tile floors reduce exposure to volatile organic compounds (VOCs) for patients, associates and visitors. No-wax flooring eliminates chemical use and reduces downtime and expense previously required to strip and wax conventional flooring.

- Operating rooms employ occupied/unoccupied modes to safely reduce airflow, temperature, energy use and cost when not in use.

- Operating room floors are 100% free of rubber, polyvinyl chloride (PVC) and phthalates.

- Carpet and ceiling tiles contain recycled content and have achieved multiple sustainability certifications.

- Paints and adhesives are all low- or no-VOC and low-odor.

- Modular casework can be relocated in the future, reducing waste and cost. All casework substrates use low-VOC materials and are produced without urea-formaldehyde.

- Mechanical/electrical/plumbing strategies for energy and water efficiency include LED lighting fixtures with dimming and occupancy controls. Lights in stairwells dim to 50% when they are unoccupied.

- Mechanical switchgear employs energy reduction modes, control units and meters to manage energy use, ensuring reliability and efficiency.

- Air handling units use airside economizers to utilize free cooling when outside air conditions are optimal.

- The heating/hot water system controls steam and water pumps to optimize energy and water efficiency.

- Ascension projects in general do not use vinyl wallcoverings, which contain PVC.

Pictured: Dell Children's Medical Center North Campus (Austin, Texas)

Net Zero Places

Redeploying underutilized equipment

The Medxcel Marketplace platform provides sites of care with the ability to list and claim underutilized equipment. The program can reduce capital costs, save time spent on specifying and ordering equipment, and promote sustainability.

The intent is to reuse assets with additional life remaining, avoid new asset purchases, and remove surplus assets from storage. The marketplace includes items such as switchgear, fire alarms, building automation systems (controls and devices), and cooling towers.

Energy efficiency efforts

Maintaining energy efficiency is a strong focus at Ascension hospitals, such as Ascension St. Vincent's Chilton in Clanton, Alabama. Technology and energy efficiency measures ensure our sites of care are heated and cooled in an effective manner and that air in patient rooms does not become stale.

Energy efficiency efforts include continuous insulation, LED lighting throughout the facility with occupancy sensors to turn the lights off when rooms are unoccupied, and timers to dim lights in parking lots and front lobby areas. Hospitals employ variable frequency drives that allow motors in pumps and air handlers to be adjusted to run at lower capacity depending on demand.

Keep steam in the pipes

Ascension hospitals participate in a steam trap replacement program. Leaking or failed steam traps can lose a significant amount of steam. Replacing this part results in less natural gas needed to meet heating loads, directly contributing to our carbon reduction goals.

$600K
Savings by keeping steam in pipes

Since this initiative began in FY22, 3,150 traps were surveyed and 415 were replaced or repaired. Over $600,000 and 70,600 MMBTU were saved as a result of keeping steam in the pipes at our sites of care. The Energy team is implementing a "Steam in the Pipes" program that will include steam traps, steam blankets, and condensate repair and recovery, as well as a high pressure steam to hot water program rolling out in FY24.

Net Zero Places

Renewable Energy

This workgroup is planning and strategizing upcoming efforts to meet Ascension's 2030 carbon reduction goal.

In FY23, efforts focused on locations with access to cost-effective renewable energy tariffs through their local electric utility company. A Request for Information was distributed to solar energy providers to identify partners that can provide solutions for additional locations.

Mobility

Ascension seeks to reduce pollution by moving away from fossil fuels within our vehicle fleet and landscape equipment.

The Mobility workgroup continued piloting two electric vans in Anderson, Indiana, and Wichita, Kansas. Electric vehicle (EV) graphics on the vans illustrate Ascension's sustainability initiative to the public. In addition, four hybrid vehicles were ordered in 2023. An Ascension charging station survey was completed to understand the current state of EV charging across sites of care.

Responsible Supply Chain

Sourcing

The Resource Group, Ascension's resource and supply management solution, leads this work. In FY23, the workgroup assessed greenhouse gas emissions of 61 suppliers using publicly available Carbon Disclosure Project data.

Additionally, The Resource Group enhanced its contracting decision-making process to include evaluation of sustainability attributes.

Supplier Sustainability Symposium

A virtual Supplier Sustainability Symposium held by The Resource Group in FY23 was attended by 40 unique suppliers and 70 attendees, representing $2.9 billion in annual supply and service spend. The event focused on aligning suppliers with Ascension's sustainability goals, created a collaborative environment to learn from one another, and concluded with a call to action within the supplier community.
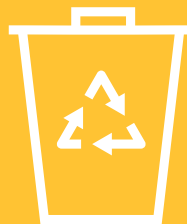
Breakout sessions covered MSW reporting, carbon emissions reporting, customer engagement and industry differentiation. Suppliers indicated they are considering sustainability and are eager to find solutions to issues such as reducing MSW sent to landfills. All attendees reported satisfaction with the event, per a post-event survey.

Medical device reprocessing

Ascension continues to demonstrate success with its FDA-approved medical device reprocessing program. In FY23, Ascension hospitals collected 822,761 devices, resulting in $19.95 million in savings and 167,990 pounds of waste diverted from landfills. Our third-party vendor also partnered with the National Forest Foundation to plant 1,961 trees on behalf of Ascension.

Reusable totes

A national reusable tote program with our medical-surgical distributor avoided the equivalent of 8 tons of cardboard waste in FY23 and 19 total tons of cardboard waste since the program was launched in August 2021.

84 tons

Amount of waste diverted from landfills thanks to medical device reprocessing program

Responsible Supply Chain

Clinical

The Clinical workgroup was established in FY23 with a dedicated Sustainability staff member and the appointment of Thomas Aloia, MD, as executive sponsor.

In FY23, the group performed a current state analysis and determined the most feasible and impactful opportunities to pursue, such as the reduction of anesthetic gas emissions, optimized regulated medical waste segregation, and clinician education and engagement.

Additionally, The Resource Group completed a custom operating room procedure pack review that identified and removed supplies not typically used, which reduced purchase and disposal fees, as well as the environmental impact from manufacturing and disposing of the supplies.

The project resulted in Ascension removing 335 items from custom procedure packs, including gauze, syringes and drapes, resulting in $414,000 in annual savings.

Waste

The Waste workgroup focused on maximizing recycling efforts at Ascension hospitals in FY23. The team is re-establishing previous single-stream and cardboard recycling programs at Ascension hospitals as well as initiating recycling efforts in hospitals without programs.

New initiatives include:

- Collaborating with municipal waste-to-energy plants to convert municipal solid waste from Ascension Saint Agnes Hospital in Baltimore and Ascension St. Vincent Hospital in Indianapolis into energy.

- Establishing pilot programs to expand collection of recyclable clinical materials at Lourdes Hospital in Binghamton, New York, and Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County in Middleburg, Florida.

- Developing recycling best practices, training sessions and informational posters. To do so, the team is working in close cooperation with Green Teams and environmental champions from TouchPoint Support Services, Medxcel, and Ascension clinicians and leadership.

> **"Pilots allow us to initiate and improve recycling programs, while documenting best practices to sustain successful programs. The best practices can be shared first with selected sites, and eventually System-wide, as a way to achieve Ascension's waste reduction goals."**
>
> — Paul D'Annunzio
> *Manager of Sustainability,* Medxcel

Responsible Supply Chain: Waste

Food waste digesters

At many Ascension hospitals, food waste is disposed of with other MSW, accounting for up to 15% of the total MSW sent to landfills. In FY23, 69 food waste digesters were in operation across Ascension hospital kitchens to help achieve the FY23 waste diversion goal to reduce MSW sent to the landfill by 6%. Communications materials, such as Quick Reference Guides and posters, were distributed to Medxcel and Food & Nutrition Services associates and 17 site visits were completed to support operationalizing the digesters.

456 tons Amount of food waste digested in FY23 through food waste digesters

Digesters are proven technology used for over 20 years in many industries. The machines use organic microorganisms and oxygen to digest food leftovers. The resulting gray water is discharged to local municipal wastewater treatment plants.

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, fees for MSW pickups may be reduced, and the need for pest management on the loading dock is minimized. As a result of this project, 456 tons (912,000 pounds) of food waste were digested in FY23.

Jacksonville hospitals transition from Styrofoam to paper cups for patients

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside, Ascension St. Vincent's Southside and Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County in the Jacksonville, Florida, area have reduced Styrofoam usage by transitioning patient cups to paper. This collaborative effort was led by the hospital's Directors of Food & Nutrition and Environmental Services, Green Team Chair, and executive leaders. The transition away from Styrofoam began at a small scale by using paper cups for pill delivery in patient areas. Small paper plates were implemented in cafeterias, and larger paper plates and paper cups are offered upon request as an alternative to Styrofoam. These innovative efforts supported a 65% decrease, or 3,400 units per day, in the use of Styrofoam across these three sites of care.

Medical library recycling initiatives

Ascension is making a switch in library services from print to electronic materials, and our librarians are removing unneeded material from their collections. This transition is a collaboration with Medxcel and our environmental services vendor to ensure we recycle these materials. FY23 projects in Texas, Illinois and Wisconsin resulted in diverting 24 tons of materials from landfills.
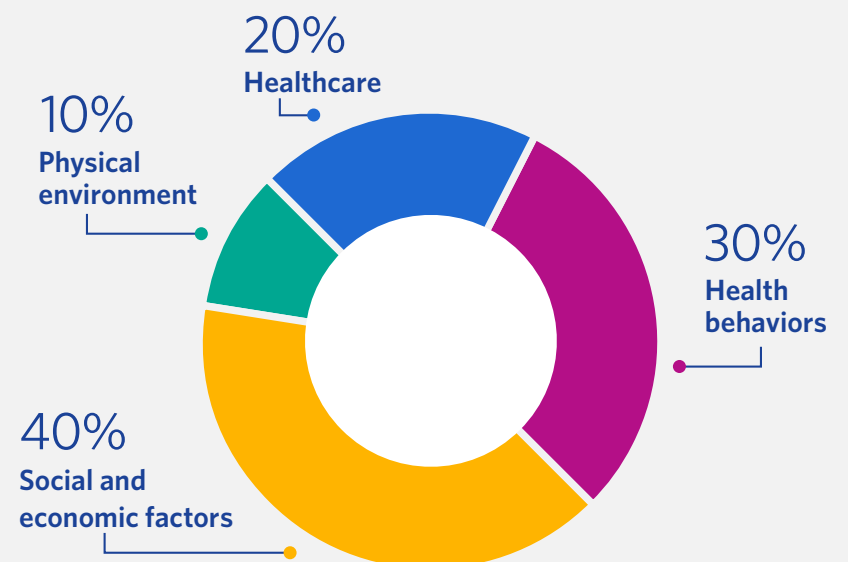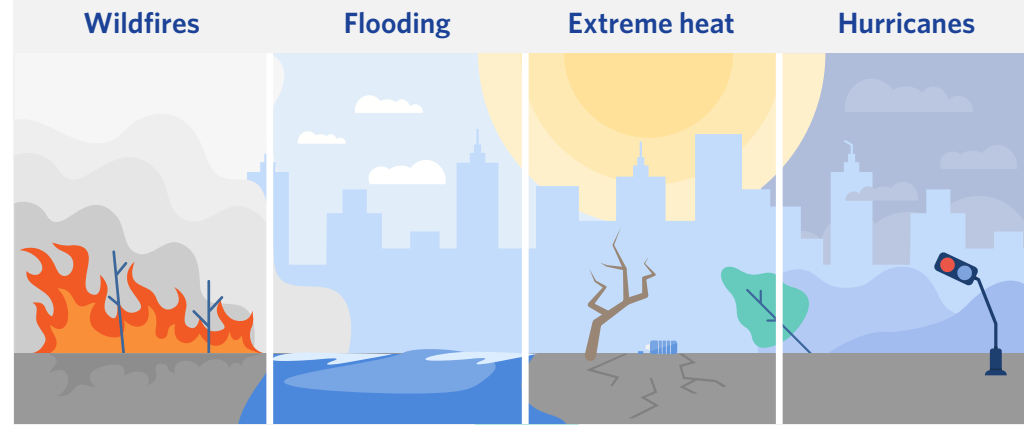
Healthy Communities

The call to lead Catholic healthcare in environmental sustainability is Mission-driven, social and economical. The focus for Ascension is the patient, especially those who are experiencing poverty and vulnerability. Healthy Communities works to make a difference for the health and well-being of the communities we serve by linking to Ascension's Mission and focusing on the social determinants of health.

In FY23, the Healthy Communities workgroup expanded its focus to System-wide, scalable action items. The team is addressing climate change by using resources from the Ascension Data Science Institute, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services, and the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency to design pre-emptive strategies that benefit the communities we serve. The team is also developing a project to predict asthma-related emergency department visits in vulnerable pediatric and adult patients by utilizing air pollution and weather impact data sources.

Later in 2023, the workgroup will help prepare Ascension's Department of Health and Human Services, Health Sector Climate Pledge submission by outlining Ascension's achievements supporting the connection between health and climate resilience.

Impacts of climate change are worsening and will profoundly affect the social determinants of health

Wildfires   Flooding   Extreme heat   Hurricanes

20% Healthcare

10% Physical environment

30% Health behaviors

40% Social and economic factors

Healthy Communities

In 2022, the Healthy Communities workgroup aligned with the Ascension St. Vincent Hospital 86th Street Campus expansion project to forge community connections in Indianapolis. The team studied the city of Indianapolis THRIVE climate action plan to measure how we can use our resources to increase the climate resilience of communities as they experience the impacts of climate change. Alignments were demonstrated in the following areas:

Food and urban agriculture

Ascension's 86th Street Food Pantry and our food and nutrition services vendor have helped patients and associates for 30 years to address food insecurity. Our vendor also sources local food from diverse suppliers. Ascension provides Community Benefit funds to the Gleaners Food Bank.

Waste and recycling

Ascension installed food waste digesters at the Ascension St. Vincent Hospital – Indianapolis campus to reduce food waste sent to landfills. Medxcel Planning, Design and Construction employs a minimum 50% landfill diversion requirement for construction and demolition waste.

Built environment and energy

Ascension identified potential locations to install electric vehicle charging stations and energy-efficient building systems on the campus.

Economy

Ascension determined opportunities to drive construction spend to diverse and small businesses and to collaborate with the Crooked Creek Development Corporation neighboring the 86th Street campus.

Environmental Impact Office

Data Management

Communications

Change Management and Governance

The Data Management workgroup had a strong focus on connecting food waste digesters' data to a data portal for the Environmental Impact and Sustainability team to track progress toward Ascension's waste reduction goals.

This workgroup conducted pilots to determine how to improve reporting, such as with energy management and building automation.

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

FY23 publications included the FY22 Environmental Impact and Sustainability annual report; 10 award applications; a case study for Ascension's Race to Zero commitment; all-associate messages from Ascension leaders; and intranet and newscast stories directed to associates. The workgroup developed resources for Ascension Green Teams, such as training sessions, planning materials, posters and toolkits.

This workgroup was responsible for coordinating Ascension's Environmental Impact Office and its 10 working groups to formalize sustainability planning and implementation across the ministry.

FY23 accomplishments included gathering, reviewing and submitting Ascension's 2019 baseline Race to Zero carbon footprint data; submitting Ascension's reflection to the Laudato Si' Action Platform; establishing a dedicated team member to lead the Clinical workgroup; and collecting Ascension's 2020-2022 carbon footprint data to support Race to Zero reporting.

Accomplishments

Texas Environmental Excellence Award

Ascension Texas was recognized as a 2023 Governor's Texas Environmental Excellence Award recipient in the "Innovative Operations/Management" category for changes in operation or management that benefit the environment.

"This award recognizes the work by Ascension Texas to support Ascension's Mission to sustain and improve community health and the lives of individuals," said Andy Davis, Senior Vice President, Ascension, and Ministry Market Executive, Ascension Texas. "Ascension Texas understands healthcare's impact on the environment is significant and directly linked to the health of communities, associates, visitors and patients."

Examples of sustainable activities highlighted in the award application:

- **Dell Seton Medical Center at The University of Texas (Austin)** promoted healthy food choices with monthly cafeteria promotions and teaching kitchens for the community.

- **Ascension Seton Northwest (Austin)** associates renovated an interior courtyard containing vegetable and herb beds to celebrate Earth Day in 2022.

- **Dell Children's Medical Center (Austin)** was the first Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) for Health Care Platinum Hospital in 2007. Its 3rd Bed Tower (2013) and 4th Bed Tower (2023) projects targeted LEED Platinum certifications as well.

- In 2020, **Ascension Seton Smithville (Smithville)** was awarded first place in the Small Hospital Category for the Texas Association of Healthcare Facilities Management Energy Roundup.

Accomplishments

2023 ENERGY STAR® Certifications

The following Ascension sites of care received ENERGY STAR® Certifications, demonstrating outstanding performance in facility operations with a focus on energy efficiency.

- Ascension NE Wisconsin – Mercy Campus (Oshkosh)
- Ascension NE Wisconsin – St. Elizabeth Campus (Appleton)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hickman (Centerville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Seton Hays (Kyle, Texas)
- Ascension Seton Williamson (Round Rock, Texas)
- Ascension St. John Owasso (Owasso, Oklahoma)
- Ascension St. Vincent Jennings (North Vernon, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Clay (Brazil, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)

2023 ASHE Energy to Care awards

The Energy to Care Award honors healthcare facilities for achievements in healthcare sustainability.

- Ascension Health System Office (St. Louis)
- Ascension Saint Thomas Hickman (Centerville, Tennessee)
- Ascension Seton Shoal Creek (Austin, Texas)

2023 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 NE Wisconsin - Mercy Campus (Oshkosh, Wisconsin)
- Ascension Seton Williamson (Round Rock, Texas)
- Ascension St. Vincent Fishers (Fishers, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville, Indiana)
- Ascension St. Vincent's Clay County (Middleburg, Florida)

2023
Practice Greenhealth
ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE
— AWARDS —

Practice Greenhealth awards

Practice Greenhealth is an educational and networking organization focused on sustainability solutions in healthcare. Practice Greenhealth's 11 impact areas range from Buildings, to Greening the Operating Room, to Sustainable Procurement. Each impact area contains tools that help implement these best practices.

Nine Ascension hospitals received national recognition through Practice Greenhealth's Environmental Excellence awards for their superior sustainability performance. A highlight from each hospital's application is listed at right, with all information from 2022.

2023 Partner for Change Award recipients

- **Ascension Alexian Brothers (Elk Grove Village, Illinois)** – Diverted over 200 tons of construction and demolition waste from landfills from a capital construction project.

- **Ascension All Saints Hospital - Spring Street Campus (Racine, Wisconsin)** – Reviewed 100% of custom operating room procedure packs. Removing unused items from the packs can help reduce purchase fees, disposal fees, and environmental impact from manufacturing and disposing of the supplies.

- **Ascension Genesys Hospital (Grand Blanc, Michigan)** – Recycled over five tons of shrink wrap from shipping, receiving and food service.

- **Ascension Sacred Heart Pensacola (Florida)** – Collected over five tons of single-use devices through Ascension's medical device reprocessing program, per FDA guidelines.

- **Ascension St. John Medical Center (Tulsa, Oklahoma)** – 50% of the hospital's meat and poultry purchases were sustainably produced, defined by achieving third-party certifications for quality and sustainability practices.

- **Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham (Alabama)** – Recycled over 320 tons of cardboard from shipping, receiving, food service and packaging used throughout the hospital.

- **Ascension Via Christi St. Francis (Wichita, Kansas)** – Diverted 37 tons of plastic from landfills by participating in the reusable sharps container program.

- **Dell Children's Medical Center (Austin, Texas)** – Diverted kitchen waste from landfills by recycling nine tons of cooking oil and processing 11 tons of food waste in its food digester.

- **Lourdes Hospital (Binghamton, New York)** – Conducted green laboratory practices by triple rinsing all plastic containers, such as alcohol bottles, to allow recycling.

Green Teams

Green Teams are composed of associates interested in mitigating the impact of their site of care on the natural environment. Green Teams with cross-functional participation promote associate engagement, linked to Ascension's Mission to sustain and improve the health of individuals and communities we serve.

Green Team spotlight
The 25 Green Team members at Dell Children's Medical Center (Austin, Texas) represent departments across the hospital, including, but not limited to, nursing, environmental and dietary services, Medxcel, and hospital executive leaders. The group meets monthly to implement projects using toolkits developed by the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program.

The Dell Children's Green Team members share best practices and educate associates on how to reprocess eligible supplies with The Resource Group, recycle cardboard and recycle batteries. In FY23, the hospital collected 700 pounds of batteries each quarter, exceeded its reprocessing targets and received a Partner for Change award from Practice Greenhealth.

Earth Day

Earth Day 2023 highlights:

- Raised bed planters were installed for Callaway Elementary School's third grade classes at Ascension Sacred Heart Bay (Panama City, Florida) to help with their "Life Cycle of Plants" curriculum.

- As a way to recognize nurses and nursing support professionals for their leadership in sustainability, trees were planted at Ascension hospitals in Jacksonville, Florida (pictured above).

- Associates held a campus cleanup and planted shrubs at the Four Sisters statue at Ascension St. Vincent's East (Birmingham, Alabama).

The Healthy Communities workgroup connected the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program, Ministry Formation, Ascension Marketing and Communications, and Medxcel to implement four System-wide activities for Earth Day.

- An Earth Day Prayer Service with a theme of "A Call to Creation and Our Communities" shared reflections on creating environmental impact through prayer.

- Associates selected activities from the Go Green Pledge that reflect their commitment to help care for our earth's resources. This pledge includes activities to support sustainable living in workplaces, homes and communities.

- Ascension ministries participated in tree plantings at 41 sites of care. An additional 16 sites held Earth Day fairs, campus cleanups, and neighborhood tree and flower plantings.

- Stop Food Waste Day in Ascension cafeterias highlighted concerns with food insecurity and minimizing food waste.

Ascension aligned efforts across departments to reduce our carbon and waste and promote healthier communities in FY23. Each Environmental Impact Office workgroup developed science-aligned targets for FY24-26 to drive success toward Ascension's 2030 and 2040 goals.

FY24

Dan Scher, Vice President of Strategic Planning and Sustainability, Medxcel, oversees the Environmental Impact and Sustainability program and the Environmental Impact Office.

"At Ascension, we know sustainability is an essential component to caring for our patients and all of God's creation," he said. "Our associates are driven to support the health of our communities and the planet."

Healthy Communities pilot project

"The Healthy Communities team is addressing climate change-related social determinants of health (SDOH) by using data to design strategies to reduce preventable asthma-related Emergency Department visits. SDOH include healthcare access and quality; education access and quality; social and community context; economic stability; and neighborhood and built environments.

"Air pollution and weather patterns will be tracked to inform high-risk patients of their elevated health concerns. The goal is to integrate patient and community-level data with real-time weather and pollution patterns. Diagnoses occurring at the Ascension hospital nearest the patient can help estimate the person's risk of having asthma events that would lead to a preventable emergency department visit.

"Indiana, Michigan, Texas and Florida have the highest asthma-related ED visit volume. In FY23, Ascension experienced nearly 4,000 asthma-related ED visits among vulnerable and underinsured patients in these markets. Ascension has the potential to prevent nearly 2,000 ED visits related to asthma and reduce revenue shortfall among underinsured patients by $1.2 million."

—Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray
Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer
Ascension

INITIATIVES
FY24

Clinical workgroup launch

In FY24, the Clinical workgroup will implement the programs they had organized and planned in FY23. These initiatives include reducing anesthetic gas emissions by removing desflurane from Ascension's drug formulary, improving regulated medical waste segregation, and educating clinicians about conserving resources.

"Ascension clinicians are crucial to engage in our sustainability efforts because they have a keen understanding of sustainability opportunities before us," said Dr. Tom Aloia, Senior Vice President and Chief Medical Officer, Ascension.

"The Clinical Work Group is collaborating with clinicians to embed sustainable practices within their daily activities, standardize processes, and increase efficiencies, all while ensuring safe, high-value care for our patients."

Improved data

The Environmental Impact Office is collaborating with multiple departments to improve data collection and establish Ascension's carbon footprint. As data collection and quality improve, with access to new information sources, and as new tracking systems and procedures arise, Ascension may restate its Race to Zero carbon baseline.

"Data provides essential support to all of the Environmental Impact Office work groups," said Mike Argir, CEO and President, Medxcel. "We continue to improve how we collect information in order to effectively manage, measure and report on our progress to achieve net zero carbon emissions and zero waste by 2040."

Enhance communications across Ascension

The Communications workgroup will elevate storytelling opportunities related to Ascension's carbon and waste reduction goals. By using multiple internal and external media formats, the workgroup can increase associate engagement with Ascension's 2030 and 2040 goals.

Credits

FY23 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

Michael Finegan, Vice President of Operations, Ascension Saint Anges (Baltimore)

Nick Ragone, Executive Vice President and Chief Marketing and Communications Officer, Ascension

Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray, Senior Vice President and Chief Community Impact Officer, Ascension

Kendra Risse, Director of Clinical Operations, Ascension St. Vincent's Birmingham (Alabama)

FY23 Environmental Impact Office Workgroup members

Built Environment: Matt Keahey, Scott Czubkowski, Tom Vanlandingham, Kathryn Holland, Kyle Sunderlin, Scott Reinecke, Andrew Fairbank

Renewable Energy: Jason Scheidler, Steve Vock, Steve Gilmore, Scott Reinecke, Scott Czubkowski, Kathryn Holland

Mobility: Heidi Ransford, Heather Stader, Cas Mosier, Eric Waller, Stephen Gaar, Greg Gumberts, Mike Wood, Chase Barber

Sourcing: Jennifer Ervin, Thomas Kalla, Casey Rodriguez, Gerard Gonthier, Harrison Clark, Ryan Easter, Sara Barker, Tom Hughel, Nicole Martin, Dejah Hilliard

Waste: Dan Scher, Paul D'Annunzio, Dessa Warner, Scott Reinecke, Aaron Collins, Gerard Gonthier, Thomas Kalla

Clinical: Dr. Thomas Aloia, Katie Wickman, Jennifer Ervin, Scott Reinecke, Dan Scher

Healthy Communities: Dr. Stacy Garrett-Ray, Chris McClead, Lois Sechrist, Nicole Commodore, Paul Maniscalco, Quentin Moore, Bridget Randazzo, Renee Stratton; Partnerships with: ABIDE, Ministry Formation, Advocacy and Community Impact

Communications: Bridget Randazzo, Maggie Singleton

Data Management: J.D. Duigou, Dennis Craig, Nick Criswell, Rachel McKinney, Cliff Tinsley, Riddhi Shah

Governance and Reporting: Dan Scher, Scott Reinecke, Kaylann Loraine, Holly Bishop

Credits

FY23 Green Team chairs

Alabama

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

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

Ascension St. Vincent's East (Birmingham): Diana Scalici

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

Florida

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital Emerald Coast (Miramar Beach): Kelly Lash and Tina Snodgrass

Ascension Sacred Heart Hospital Pensacola (Pensacola): Chris Barker

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

Ascension St. Vincent's Riverside (Jacksonville), Ascension St. Vincent's Southside (Jacksonville), Ascension St. Vincent's St. Johns County (St. Johns): Bruce Warner

Illinois

Ascension Alexian Brothers Behavioral Health Hospital (Hoffman Estates), Ascension Saint Alexius (Hoffman Estates): Tim Mathews

Ascension Resurrection (Chicago), Ascension Saint Mary - Chicago (Chicago), Ascension Saint Elizabeth (Chicago): Barb Kranz

Indiana

Ascension St. Vincent Evansville (Evansville), Ascension St. Vincent Warrick (Boonville): Andy Shekell, Joe Gardner

Ascension St. Vincent Mercy (Elwood): Dillon Huffman

Michigan

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

Ascension Providence Rochester Hospital (Rochester): April Parker

New York

Lourdes Hospital (Binghamton): Diane Politowski

Oklahoma

Ascension St. John Medical Center (Tulsa): Shannon Stoneman, Cherie French-Edwards

Texas

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

Wisconsin

Ascension NE Wisconsin – St. Elizabeth Campus (Appleton): Jill Hill

Sustainability 101 — Glossary of terms

Carbon dioxide (CO_2), Carbon dioxide equivalent (CO_2e): Greenhouse gases emitted when fossil fuels are burned in vehicles, buildings and industrial processes that contribute to the greenhouse effect.

Carbon emissions: The total greenhouse gas emissions caused directly and indirectly by an individual, organization, event or product.

Carbon footprint: Emissions of greenhouse gases (in carbon equivalent) for an activity or organization over a given period of time.

Carbon neutral: Achieving net zero carbon emissions by balancing carbon emitted with an equivalent amount sequestered or offset, or buying enough carbon credits to make up the difference.

Carbon offsetting: Reducing emissions of greenhouse gases by buying credits through emissions reduction projects or carbon trading schemes.

Carbon sequestration: The capture and storage of carbon from the atmosphere, for example by planting trees.

Circular economy: A philosophy to eliminate waste and pollution by designing products and services to be regenerative instead of the "take - make - waste" model of production.

Decarbonization: The reduction or elimination of carbon dioxide from energy sources, i.e., avoiding the combustion of fossil fuels to reduce the emissions of carbon dioxide to the atmosphere.

Fugitive emissions: As stated by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, "Emissions that could not reasonably pass through a stack, chimney, vent, or other functionally equivalent opening," such as unintentional emissions leaking from equipment.

Global warming: An increase in the average temperature in the atmosphere and the Earth's surface which can contribute to the changes in global climate patterns.

Greenhouse effect: Around 60% of greenhouse gas emissions is reabsorbed by the oceans and vegetation, yet 40% stays in the atmosphere where it traps energy from the sun into the climate. This is called the greenhouse effect.

While the greenhouse effect is indispensable to life, since the Industrial Revolution, the amount of CO_2 in the atmosphere has increased by 14%, leading to higher concentrations than in the last 4 million years, boosting the greenhouse effect.

Greenhouse gases: Gases that trap heat in the atmosphere, including carbon dioxide, methane, nitrogen oxide, water vapor and fluorinated gases. Greenhouse gases are naturally occurring. Human actions, primarily the burning of fossil fuels, have added greenhouse gases to the atmosphere at a rate that is unprecedented and unsustainable in the history of our species.

Municipal solid waste: Commonly known as trash or garbage; everyday items we use and then throw away, such as product packaging, furniture, clothing, bottles, food scraps, newspapers, appliances, paint and batteries.

Net-zero emissions: A condition that occurs when human emissions of greenhouse gases are balanced out completely by human removal of greenhouse gases from the atmosphere; often set as a target over a specific time.

Sustainability 101 — Glossary of terms

Paris Agreement: The landmark Paris Agreement signed at the 2015 United Nations Conference of the Parties was the first legally binding global agreement to limit climate change. A total of 190 parties signed on to the agreement, which set out a framework to limit warming to "well below 2°C" with the aim to pursue strong emissions reductions to limit global temperature rise to 1.5°C compared to pre-industrial levels.

Recycling: The recovery of useful materials, such as paper, glass, plastic and metals, from trash used to make new products, reducing the amount of raw materials needed.

Regenerative: Design and production methods that have lower and even net-positive environmental and social impacts. Typically, recycled materials result in products with a lower quality than the original item. Regenerative design seeks to maintain the same or higher quality.

Resilience: The capacity of an organization or individual to survive or even thrive in the face of unforeseen changes. Sometimes used in place of "sustainability," resilience looks for ways to manage in an imbalanced world, whereas "sustainability" seeks to put the world back into balance.

Science Based Targets initiative: A partnership between the Carbon Disclosure Project, the United Nations Global Compact, World Resources Institute and the World Wide Fund for Nature that drives climate action in the private sector by enabling organizations to set science-based emissions reduction targets.

Social determinants of health: Per HHS, these are grouped into five domains: Economic Stability; Education Access and Quality; Health Care Access and Quality; Neighborhood and Built Environment; and Social and Community Context. These are conditions in the environments where people are born, live, learn, work, play, worship and age that affect a wide range of health, functioning, and quality of life outcomes and risks.

Sustainability: Meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their needs. Sustainability includes three main pillars: environmental, social and economic, often also referred to as planet, people and profit. This definition was created by the United Nations Brundtland Commission in 1983.

Sustainable Development Goals: The United Nations blueprint "to achieve a better and more sustainable future." The 17 goals target specific global challenges around sustainable development to be achieved by 2030.

Triple bottom line: The separate financial, social and environmental "bottom lines" of companies. In principle it is designed for companies to value their social and environmental profits and losses, as well as the financial ones.

Value chain: A series of activities that a business performs in order to deliver a valuable product or service for the market. It is similar to supply chain in principle but focuses on key points that generate value for a business.

For more information, visit ascension.org/environmental

Ascension