



Great Lakes Protection Fund

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Funded Project

Great Lakes Dioxin Reduction Project Through Design for the Environment

Project No.	473
Timeline	1998 – 2000
Award Amount	\$305,000
Team Leader	Fran Kurk, Minnesota Office of Environmental Assistance

This team developed a purchasing-focused screening tool to decrease the amount of potentially hazardous materials that are used in health care facilities and ultimately end up in medical waste streams. The Environmental Materials Management Tool (EMMT) quantified the environmental attributes of products by focusing on product materials, manufacturing, product use, packaging and distribution, end-of-life, and environmental management issues. The team applied it at 8 different case study sites in Wisconsin, Illinois and Minnesota—requests were sent out to 39 suppliers to evaluate 41 products. Medical supply purchasers used the tool to rank and select environmentally preferable alternatives.

Resulting reductions in pollution potential include actual one-time cumulative reductions of 1,075 grams of mercury for two hospitals, as well as annual reductions of 270 grams of mercury from 260,000 PVC items for two other hospitals. The American Hospital Association's AHRMM website made the tool available for public downloading. The University of Vermont produced a video describing the tool for the EPA and project results were published in the journal *Environmental Health Perspectives*.

This work enabled a targeted set of consumers to learn more about environmental materials management, and it supports the Voluntary Mercury Reduction agreement between the US EPA and the American Hospital Association.