MEDIA ADVISORY
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:
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Hospitals for a Healthy Environment in Rhode Island (H2ERI)
presents
Rhode Island Environmental Sustainability Awards

PRESENTED BY:
Brown University, City of Providence, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management, and Health Care Without Harm

WHEN:  Thursday, March 21, 2013 - 6:00 - 9:00 p.m.
WHERE:  The Blue Wrap Blue Jean Ball
Roger Williams Park Casino
1000 Elmwood Ave, Providence, RI
http://biomed.brown.edu/Events/RIHforHealthyEnvironment2013/

Editor's Note: Photos of the award recipient will be provided after the event.

Rhode Island will honor environmental sustainability practices in healthcare through the first Rhode Island Environmental Sustainability (RIES) Awards from Hospitals for a Healthy Environment in Rhode Island, in partnership with Brown University, the City of Providence, Rhode Island Department of Environmental Management and Health Care Without Harm.

The Rhode Island Sustainability Awards are offered to healthcare individuals, institutions and agencies that have demonstrated leadership in sustainability initiatives and serve as models for their peers. We offered excellence awards in the following areas: 1. Sustainable Operation. 2. Environmental Champion.

The awards will be presented at the Blue Wrap Blue Jean Ball, a networking and fundraising event which besides featuring the RIES Awards, will feature a blue wrap design contest, exhibits on blue wrap and other sustainability issues, live music by “Bad Luck and Trouble”, and delicious food procured and prepared from local farmers, food distributors, and leading chefs from Rhode Island and sponsored by Sodexo. (blue wrap is material used in sterilization of medical procedure trays and a huge contribution to the waste stream).

Hospitals that qualify for the Sustainable Operation Award are ones that have
demonstrated leadership in advancing sustainability in a particular area of operations such as sustainable energy, safer materials/chemicals, waste management, green building, and healthy food by reducing their environmental footprint in unique and pioneering ways.

The applications received were scored for innovation, environmental sustainability, leadership and organizational commitment, potential for the program to be self-sustaining and replicable.

Kent Hospital’s “Keeping it Green” (KIG) team will receive the RIES Award for sustainable operation for their trailblazing work in environmental sustainability. The sustainability awards committee was especially impressed by the breadth and range of KIG’s sustainability initiatives – its recycling and waste reduction program, green clean program, environmental landscaping program with little to no fertilizer, irrigation, and pesticide use, staff garden, and weekly farmers market in the summer.

KIG started in 2008, spearheaded by the Departments of Engineering and Facilities, Environment and Purchasing documents, promotes and organizes sustainability initiatives. Their efforts are also made highly visible to the entire hospital community by the use an identifying logo which can be seen throughout the hospital on recycling bins, cloth bags, cups, and other displays.

KIG has a healthy recycling rate of 30% in 2012, up from 19% in 2009. They have saved $12,000 from their recycling and waste reduction program. They recycle a wide range of products: 90% of patient trays, yard waste, paper, bottles and cans, paper and cardboard, as well as some heavy toxics chemicals such as mercury devices, lead and nickel cadmium batteries, hydraulic oil, fluorescent and mercury light bulbs. In 2012 they have started a green cleaning program with the use of microfiber cloths to allow for non-chemical cleaning in some areas. They have also kept 34 tons of towels out of the waste stream by cleaning and recycling them.

Kent is known foremost for its environmental landscaping program for its beautiful, lush and colorful rain and healing gardens that draws its staff and patients outdoors to its quality open space that supports wildlife with a wide array of primarily native plantings. These low maintenance native plantings require no pesticide, irrigation and little fertilization, while it absorbs and filters its storm water drainages. They offer landscape walking tours throughout the summer. Their investment in sustainable landscaping has saved them $4000 by eliminating irrigation and routine maintenance. If this is not enough, KIG also has Staff Gardens to encourage healthy outdoor activity and eating among Kent’s staff. They offer plants and bouquets for patients from their staff garden through their Petals for Patients program. They delivered an estimated 50 bouquets to patients last summer. KIG also holds a farmers market with produce from the Staff Garden as well as the local Westbay Community farm. In 2012, Eileen O’Donoghue successfully ran a six-week Wellness Program for healthy eating.

"On behalf of Kent Hospital, we are extremely pleased to be recognized with this award for our green efforts," said Joseph Dipietro, Esq., Senior Vice President & Chief Administrative Officer and legal counsel, who oversees Kent’s Keeping It Green team.
"This honor reflects the hard work, dedication and commitment this team and the entire hospital places on the importance of recycling, sustainability and overall corporate social responsibility. We look forward to furthering these efforts in the months and years ahead."

The Miriam Hospital’s “Greenway’s Team” will receive an honorable mention at the RIES Award for their sustainability initiatives in paper and waste reduction, blue wrap recycling, pharmaceutical waste collection program, and good community relations. Miriam has put in an impressive effort in employee engagement and leadership in their Greenways Team. They hired a sustainability coordinator, Monica Anderson, last year, and since then the green team has grown to a 61-member multidisciplinary team that meets monthly. Greenways following an environmental audit has kick started many recycling projects, paper reduction program, and doubled the recycling rate, in a year. Their innovative blue wrap recycling program, also the theme for our event this year, started in 2012 alone diverting 2140 pounds of blue wrap (plastic 5, polypropylene) from landfills. Ms. Anderson even has a larger vision of expanding this program state wide though H2ERI. (Quote) Miriam’s community relations has also awarded over $80,00 to its community partners since 2008 for various environmental projects.

The Environmental Champion Award is given to an outstanding healthcare worker in Rhode Island who displays leadership and exemplifies excellence in environmental health and sustainability in healthcare.

Sylvia Weber will be honored as an Environment Champion in Rhode Island for her dedication and commitment to environmental health. Sylvia needs no introduction in Rhode Island, since her commitment to the environment and health is visible everywhere. Sylvia formed the RI State Nurses Associations Environmental Affairs Committee and they hope to take the message of how environment affect health and our day to day lives to healthcare facilities throughout the state. She is a strong advocate for environmental legislation and has testified both at the state and at the national level on countless environmental issues. Presently, she is working with Chairman Handy and Chairwoman Sosnowski to develop a resolution encouraging RI government to suspend hydraulic fracturing until there is transparency on the part of the industry and health promoting standards are developed.

H2ERI is just one of the honors that Sylvia has received. Sylvia received the Outstanding Young Women of Rhode Island award and was the first recipient of Sigma Theta Tau, Delta Upsilon Chapter’s Louisa White Award for outstanding and innovative leadership in nursing. In 2000 she received the American Nurses Credentialing Center’s advanced practice nurse award. Sylvia has written several professional articles and authored a book, “A Guide for Compassion in Political Power” published by Balboa Press. In April Sylvia will receive a lifetime accomplishment award from RI State Nurses as she’s inducted into their Hall of Fame.

Who knew our local hospitals were so environmentally sustainable and that there are many powerful and determined environmental advocates in healthcare?