RECYCLING INITIATIVE: IMPLEMENTING WASTE SEGREGATION

Singapore Healthcare Management 2022

Team Members: Carol Ng Xing Rou[1], Tenny Chow[1], Ratnasari[2], Tan Ho Yih Jeu[3], Dr Yuen Heng Wai[4]

Departments: Environmental Services[1], Dermatology Clinic[2], Renal Medicine Clinic[3], Otorhinolaryngology – Head & Neck Surgery[4]

Changi General Hospital (SingHealth)

BACKGROUND

Over the years, there is an increase in usage of clinical consumable items in the Specialist Outpatient Clinics (SOCs), which are commonly sealed in plastic packaging or packed in small cartons / paper boxes. Often, these clean plastics and paper packaging are disposed into general waste bins which increases the volume of general waste.

AIMS

a) To educate, promote and increase staff awareness on recycling through proper waste segregation at Changi General Hospital (CGH), Medical Centre (MC) SOCs.
b) To reduce the amount of general waste volume.

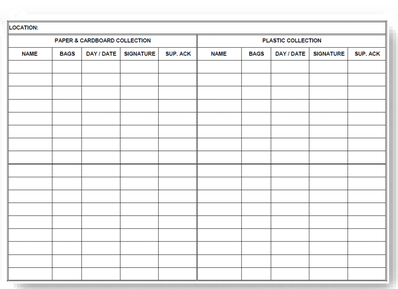
METHODOLOGY

By deploying 2 specific recycling bins (1 for Paper / Small Carton Boxes and 1 for Plastics) around the various SOCs, staff are encouraged to use the dedicated recycling bins instead of disposing the recyclables directly as general trash.

Locations of the recycling bins are shared through various communication channels to all SOC staff for promoting the recycling initiative and raising awareness on the importance of environmental sustainability.

However, during the initial phase, some staff were unsure on the correct ways of segregating and identifying recyclable items. Many discarded items were not properly sorted out which has resulted in contamination of recyclables. Vibrant and clear visual aid guides for paper and plastics were pasted on the bins' lids for reference to educate staff. The examples in the visual aids are the common items used in the clinics.

The housekeepers working in SOCs were similarly engaged and educated on the common types of clinical waste that can be recycled. They are also required to record down the amount of recyclable waste (Paper / Plastics) generated from the individual SOC so that the initiative can be monitored closely.
Feedbacks were also gathered from all stakeholders on this new initiative.

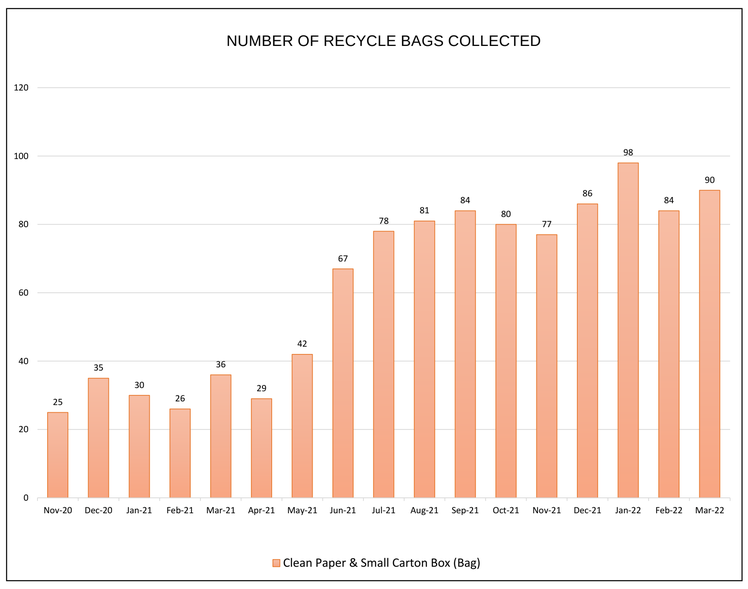


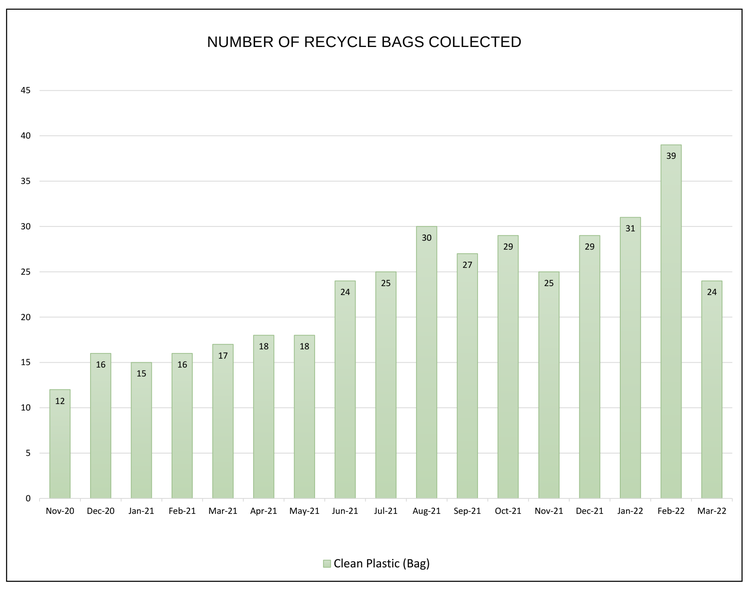
RESULTS

For the initial start, Environmental Services (ES) despatched the recycling bins to the various SOCs. Subsequently, the initiative was extended to several phases so that more users can adopt this green effort as follows:

a) The Integrated Building (IB) SOCs and Main Building (MB) SOCs
b) MB procedural areas, MC Admin Offices and Child Care Centre and various Satellite Pharmacies in MB, MC and IB

ES monitors the monthly collection for paper and plastic from Nov 2020 to March 2022.





Material	Number of Bags	Total Weight
Paper / Carton Box	1,048	3,144 KG
Plastic	395	790 KG

With the amount of recyclables collected, there is reduction in the tonnage of general waste disposal and some cost savings derived amounting to $297.80 (3.934 tonnes).

CONCLUSION

This green initiative has raised positive awareness and desirable results in reducing general waste and increasing recyclables through proper waste segregation.

Staff have adjusted their mindset and adopted the new practice in waste management.

Through collaborative efforts by various stakeholders, the initiative is well received and have achieved the aim of driving sustainability in CGH.