

USGBC is Set to Green the Healthcare Market

The new LEED® for Healthcare rating system targets plumbing and other specific requirements for medical facilities.

At a time when rapidly escalating healthcare costs are putting pressure on healthcare providers to reduce expenditures, and the news is full of stories about hospital patients catching potentially lethal “superbugs,” environmentally friendly initiatives may not appear to be a top priority for medical facilities.

Yet, the green movement is gaining momentum in the healthcare market. That’s partly because professionals are determining that their facilities can save money with systems such as water- and energy-efficient plumbing products, while promoting healthier, more hygienic environments.

The U.S. Green Building Council (USGBC) is tailoring sustainable objectives to medical facilities’ unique requirements with its new LEED for Healthcare (LEED-HC) rating system, which is due for formal release later this year.

According to Peter Jahrling, director of engineering for plumbing manufacturer Sloan Valve Company, the USGBC’s new rating system gives facility management better information about when and where to install low-consumption plumbing systems. “The healthcare industry can ease the environmental burden their facilities have on their local communities by dramatically reducing water consumption and, ultimately, their own operating costs by incorporating fixtures that promote sustainability while maintaining required hygiene standards,” he says.

LEED-HC will be based on components taken from LEED for New Construction (LEED-NC) Version 2.2 and the voluntary, sustainable best practices outlined in *Green Guide for Health Care* Version 2.2, which follows the same principles as LEED. The LEED-HC rating system will apply to inpatient care facilities and licensed outpatient and long-term care facilities, as well as to medical offices, assisted-living facilities, and medical education and research centers.

Five new health-based credits are expected to be in LEED-HC. The Water Efficiency (WE) section, for example, will reflect healthcare facilities’ widespread usage of potable water for mechanical systems and medical equipment processes.

The number of points awarded by the WE section has not changed from LEED-NC, but the points have been reallocated across two new credits and two modified credits. One of the most notable changes is in WE Credit 3: Potable Water Use Reduction: Domestic Water, where only one point is given to maximize potable water efficiency.

The credit has two specific requirements. The first is to install sensor-operated faucets on all hand-washing sinks. Faucets for housekeeping sinks, compounding sinks and sinks in inpatient bedroom toilet rooms are excluded, however.

“Low-flow, sensor-operated faucets offer an easy way to cut water consumption, while allowing users to properly clean their hands and reduce germ transmission, which is especially critical in healthcare environments,” says Jahrling.

Second, WE Credit 3 requires the use of high-efficiency plumbing fixtures and fittings or fixture flow controls to keep plumbing water consumption within these levels: Lavatories should use no more than 1.5 gpm; showers, 2.0 gpm; urinal Flushometers, 0.5 gpf; and water closet Flushometers or pressure-assist single-flush toilets, 1.28 gpf.

There are a number of high-efficiency toilets (HET) that are at or below the HET maximum of 1.28 gallons per flush, including UPPERCUT[®] manual dual-flush Flushometers, *SMOOTH*[®] sensor-operated Flushometers and *FLUSHMATE*[®] pressure-assist toilets. Sloan Waterfree Urinals also fall within the HET category and significantly reduce potable water demand.

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To download a high-resolution image of hands washing under a sensor-operated faucet in a typical healthcare-type environment, go to:

www.interlinegroup.com/pressroom/sloanvalve/SloanGooseneckFaucet.jpg

To download a high-resolution image of the cover of a free architectural healthcare specification guide that is available from Sloan Valve Company, go to:

www.interlinegroup.com/pressroom/sloanvalve/SLVarchspecs.jpg

*NOTE about image resolution: These links will allow you to download high-resolution images. Reducing image size and converting from RGB format may be necessary, however, to achieve proper resolution and color.