**Benefits**

- Financial benefits: Targeted savings of $3 million in FY 2012 with net annual savings potential of over $6 million
- Environmental benefit: Estimated 20 tons of waste diverted from landfills in FY 2012

**The Problem**

Third party reprocessing of medical use devices labeled as single use is a safe and regulated process that can reduce volume of waste generated by hospital and significantly reduce operating costs to the organization. Reprocessing is regulated by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and third party preprocessors must meet the same standards as original device manufacturers. We identified significant opportunities to reprocess medical devices throughout Vanguard Health Systems in order to reduce both waste and costs.

**The Strategy Selected**

Vanguard Health Systems is a sponsor of the Healthier Hospitals Initiative and all Vanguard facilities are Practice Greenhealth members. Device Reprocessing was chosen as a system wide sustainability initiative in July 2011 as an opportunity to reduce waste and achieve significant savings across the system.

**Implementation Process**

In July 2011 we formed a cross-functional program team with clinical and operational leadership from across the company. The program team then executed a charter with identified metrics and reporting system. Reprocessing team meets and markets report metrics monthly. In partnership with Practice Greenhealth a system wide video-conference and webinar on reprocessing targeted to surgeons was presented by Dr. Martin Makary of Johns Hopkins Medical Center in January 2012. The system wide reprocessing team created and released Vanguard Reprocessing Policy to ensure conformity with FDA guidelines and Vanguard Quality standards. All Vanguard facilities are to manage their local reprocessing operations under strict standards set with the Vanguard Reprocessing Polity. Facility level measurement systems and control mechanisms are in place to enable sustained results.

**Challenges and Lessons Learned**

- Patient safety and outcomes concerns from quality, safety and infection prevention teams: → Addressed with data showing no statistically significant difference between new and reprocessed devices.
- Surgeons and other clinicians concerns over potentially compromised device usage: → Addressed with tours to the reprocessing facilities and demonstration of high standards of operations.

**Demographic Information**

Vanguard Health Systems owns and operates 28 acute care and specialty hospitals and complementary facilities and services in metropolitan Chicago, Illinois; metropolitan Detroit, Michigan; metropolitan Phoenix, Arizona; San Antonio, Texas; Harlingen and Brownsville, Texas; and Worcester and metropolitan Boston, Massachusetts.