

Furniture and furnishings procurement



Health Care Without Harm's Healthy Interiors criteria eliminates the use of priority chemicals of concern in furniture and furnishings. In order to achieve the goal of having 30% of annual purchases meet the criteria, resources are available to find and select compliant products.

The opportunity

Every day, patients and employees are exposed to a wide array of chemicals in hospitals and health care facilities, and the priority chemicals of concern have been shown to have a lasting negative impact on individual health, public health, and the environment. Furnishings can be a significant contributor to poor health in interior spaces, like hospitals, with chemicals migrating out into dust, food, air, water, and ecosystems during their life cycle. Additionally, if harmful chemicals are used to make furnishings, communities that host manufacturing facilities can be exposed to those chemicals.

Getting started

- 1: Review the Practice Greenhealth [Healthy Interiors Goal](#) to learn about the commitment and the furniture and furnishings included in the scope, such as seating and work surfaces.
- 2: Share the [Healthy Interiors guidance document](#) with your suppliers, which further explains the hazards associated with these priority chemicals of concern as well as the supplier requirements.
- 3: Request that your suppliers identify and share their compliant product options. More than 90 suppliers have already created [lists](#) of products that meet the Healthy Interiors criteria, but even in those cases, still, confirm with those suppliers for the very latest information.

How Practice Greenhealth can help

The Practice Greenhealth [website](#) provides a wealth of resources for our network partners, and our sustainability specialists may provide more personalized support on [safer furnishings](#). A sample of these additional resources include:

- Guidance on incorporating language for RFPs, contracts, and design standards.
- Ongoing peer support for continual improvement through the Healthy Interiors peer cohort where discussions center around lessons learned, best practices, changes in the marketplace, and how to tackle any challenges in achieving the [Healthy Interiors Goal](#).

Success story

Partners HealthCare, the largest hospital system in Massachusetts, was an early advocate for removing priority chemicals of concern from furnishings. Partners is one of the first adopters of the Practice Greenhealth Healthy Interiors goal. When Partners completed its new Assembly Row facility in Somerville, Mass., it became a national model for healthy furnishings in new construction with 70% of the \$22 million spent on interior furnishings meeting the Healthy Interiors criteria. This move produced considerable cost savings as the addition of flame retardant chemicals in seating products traditionally requires an upcharge. The health system even played a role in shifting local policy, testifying at a Boston City Council hearing in favor of eliminating the need for flame retardant chemicals in furnishings.

Let Practice Greenhealth help you lead change in your hospital. To get started today, email join@practicegreenhealth.org.